



Why have **workplace flexibility?**



"Flexibility allows us to employ some really interesting people and be an attractive employment brand and that's great for people coming into the company. This creates a more creative workplace where people come up with different ideas, different approaches and that adds a lot of energy to the company. Most importantly, flexibility allows us to do some really good things for our customers."

MIKE SMITH

CHAMPION AND MANAGING DIRECTOR, IBM NZ



Why **flexibility**?

Workplace flexibility is an essential enabler for managing the pace of change in today's world of work.

It allows you, as an employer, to attract and retain top talent (your people), achieve increased productivity (your business), and foster an agile response to changing market needs (your customers and environment). It's a diverse and in-depth strategy that goes beyond the traditional thinking of 'part-time work for new parents' to an integrated mindset and way of work accessible to all.

Every employee in New Zealand now has the right to request a flexible work arrangement and you, as an employer, have an obligation to consider this request.

By ensuring your work environment promotes a culture of trust and high performance, flexible working can be positive for everyone – the business, your employees and your customers.



"The nature of everyone's roles is changing: some roles won't exist so you will have to reskill or you'll be in a role that becomes more and more value-add and involve less of those less value-add tasks. The skills that will become really crucial are digital skills, people who are really adaptable and agile. You don't get trained in one thing and keep doing that for the rest of your life, you've got to keep adapting."

ANTHONY HEALY
CHAMPION AND CEO, BNZ

The workforce of the **future** is a **flexible** one

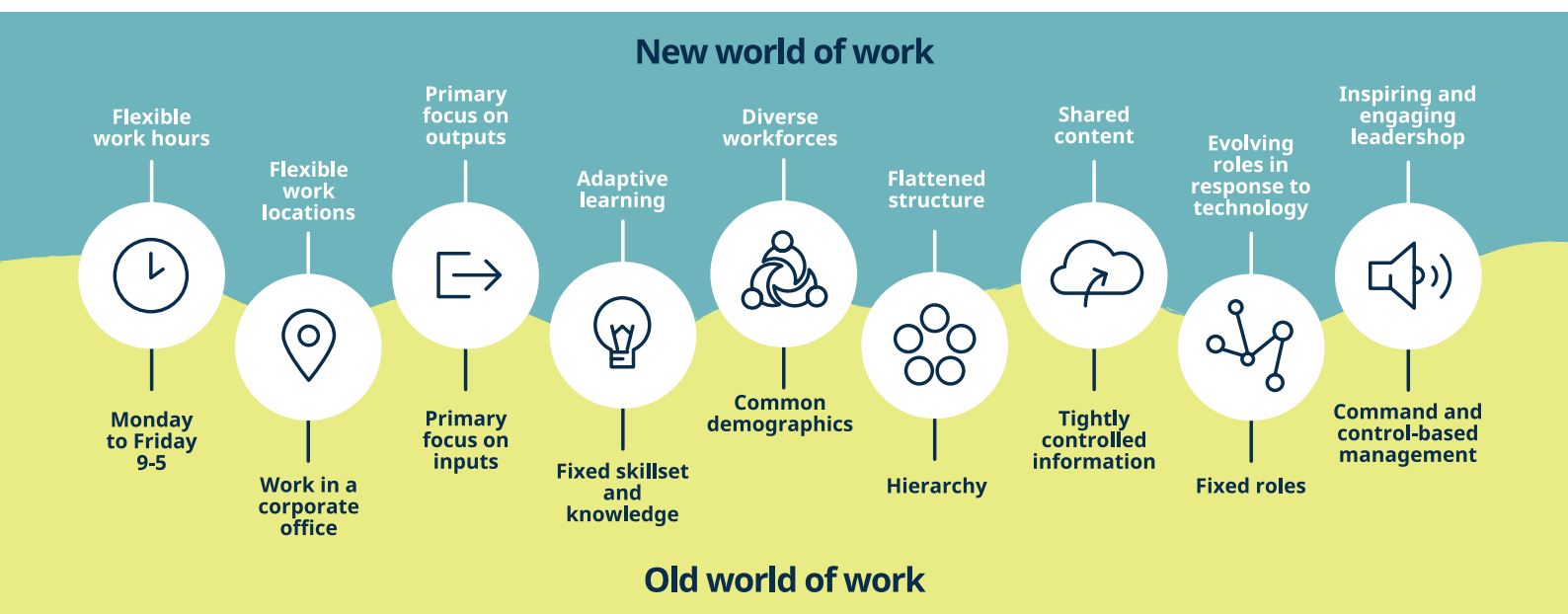
The workplace has changed over the past 20 years and is evolving quickly as technology advances.

Technology has made us more mobile as laptops, tablets and smartphones enable us to work from different locations at any time. Work is now what you do, not where or when you do it. Companies are being increasingly focused on outcomes rather than input or hours spent at your desk.

Flexibility is about having choices. It is about achieving the work/ life harmony that individuals want while recognising business requirements. High-performing organisations encourage flexible mindsets.

Flexibility is the biggest enabler of building a diverse and inclusive workplace. New Zealand has the 5th highest participation level of women in the workforce in the OECD. This rise of dual-income households combined with an aging population means there is an increasing need to juggle work, personal commitments and family life.

Flexible working has been shown to be important to men and women, across the generations and at all stages of people's careers. The reasons for wanting it vary but flexible working is here to stay.



When managed well, **flexible learning** will...



Reduce turnover, lower absenteeism and increase job satisfaction



Promote diversity, inclusion and cross-training



Have a positive impact on workplace culture and morale



Foster better employee recruitment, engagement and retention

Why should employers want **flexibility**?



Business: increased productivity

Employees with an element of flexibility over their schedule are more engaged and therefore more productive. These are the people feel loyal to your company and who will go the extra mile.

An Australian study by EY shows that women in flexible roles waste less time than other employees. Given that 43% of the part-time workforce in Australia is female, this is a significant productivity bonus. By allowing employees to manage their schedule to include doing some life admin you are enabling them to be fully present when they are at work. This improves employee wellbeing, leading to less absence and staff turnover.

Flexible working arrangements allow for less to be spent on overheads like office space and power. With agile work environments typically catering for 80% of the total workforce you are able to factor in that there will always be people on leave, off sick or working from elsewhere.

A high-performing organisation is one that focuses on outcomes rather than face-time.



People: attracting and retaining top talent

In order to have access to the widest possible talent pool for your company, embracing flexible working is essential. Not only does this allow you to appeal to people who may not be able to commit to 8.30am–5pm every day but who are capable and qualified to add value to your business but it also sends a clear signal that your organisation is adaptable and forward-thinking.

Work-life balance and flexibility are important across generations from millennials starting out to baby boomers approaching retirement. The ability to work flexibly is key for both men and women for a variety of reasons including avoiding a long commute, caring for children or relatives, study or sporting commitments.

According to a 2015 survey by Diversitas and OCG, 46% of New Zealand employees in the 31-45 age group work flexibly representing a large slice of middle management and future leaders. By providing flexible work arrangements organisations are ensuring that the potential these people bring is not lost.

With 28% people already working flexibly and another 28% of people intending to apply for flexible working in the next twelve months, organisations that embrace and encourage flexible working are going to win the race for talent.



Customers/Environment: fostering agility

Flexible working is part of a flexible mindset. Organisations that embrace flexibility are seen as dynamic and responsive which is increasingly important in our fast-moving world.

Flexible working arrangements are the biggest contributor to increased diversity and inclusion within an organisation. Flexible thinking allows us to be curious, innovation and creative which helps us respond to changing customer needs.

Globalisation means that we are increasingly communicating across time zones. Having a flexible workforce enables you to have people available at times outside of the typically working day in New Zealand.



Why do employees want **flexibility**?

People desire flexible working for a variety of reasons: it is no longer the preserve of working mums. While caring for family members is the main reason that Generation X wants flexible working, it is not just children that they are looking after but also potentially their parents.

With people living longer, 'retirement' is becoming less defined and there are more of the older generation still actively employed although they may have less desire for full-time work.

Millennials want access to flexible working for more personal pursuits including sport and community work. As house prices increase, so has the distance to places of work.

The ability to work from another location or stagger hours to avoid peak traffic could give employees hours back in their day.

With 213 ethnicities represented in Auckland there are a lot of people with religious or cultural obligations that aren't necessarily accommodated in the traditional framework of 8.30am–5pm.

Giving employees flexibility enables them to observe their religious holidays or honour their community commitments without sacrificing their career and work duties.

FURTHER RESOURCES

EY: [Untapped Opportunity - The role of women in unlocking Australia's productivity potential](#)

WGEA: [Flexibility Business Case](#)

Bain & Company: [The Power of Flexibility](#)

Diversitas & OCG: [Flexible Work Design](#)



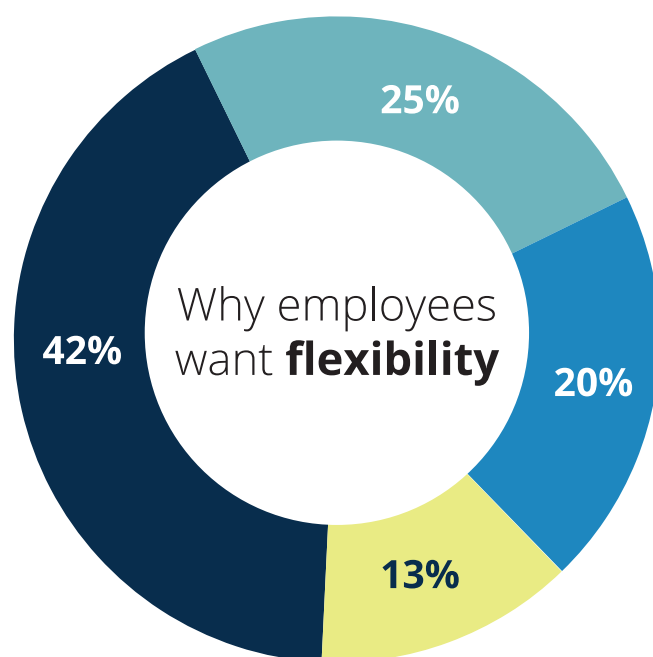
"Workplace flexibility has had the most visible impact on reducing the reasons why people opt out of the workforce."

ROSS MILNE
CHAMPION AND CHAIR, DELOITTE



"It's a talent game, fairly simple from our point of view. We want to attract and retain the very best people and people want flexibility. Our clients expect to see great people so it's a reasonably easy goal."

GARY MCDIARMID
CHAMPION AND CEO, RUSSELL MCVEAGH



42% Family

Caring for family members (children and elderly)



25% Other

i.e. volunteering, community work, commute, transition to retirement, health or entrepreneurial activity.

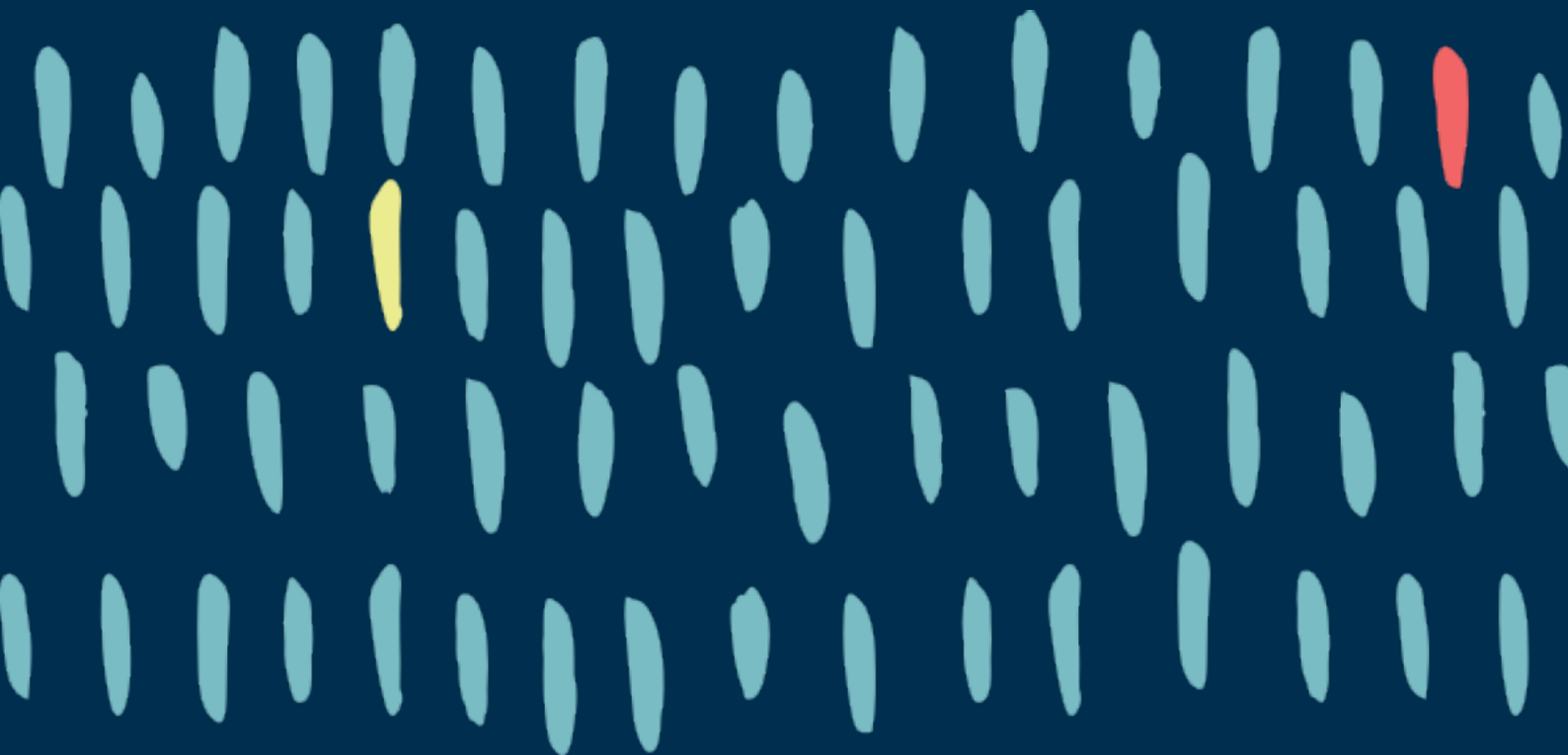


20% Personal

i.e. pursuits, sports or hobbies



13% Study



Convened and supported by Global Women, Champions for Change is a group of New Zealand CEOs and Chairs from across the public and private sectors who are committed to raising the value of diversity and inclusiveness throughout the wider business community.



This Champions for Change fact sheet is shared openly with the intent of promoting diversity and inclusion for improved societal and economic growth. We encourage the sharing of this content, however, please reference the Champions for Change initiative. We also acknowledge and thank all the Champion organisations that have collaborated to make this content publicly available.