

mobility and mistrust



An independent research report conducted by Sweeney Research and commissioned by Toshiba (Australia) Information Systems Division into the attitudes of managers and employees in Australia and New Zealand towards flexible working.

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Mark Whittard
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Introduction from Mark Whittard

It is no great revelation to say that the technological innovations of the last few decades have produced an extraordinary shift in the way we live our lives – the way we work, play and communicate.

The notebook computer was invented more than 20 years ago to allow people to access information from wherever and whenever they needed to. The huge advancements that have since been made in technologies such as the internet and wireless, have meant that this dream is very much now a reality.

Yet many organisations have not embraced the possibility of flexible working in Australia and New Zealand – one of the ultimate promises of the notebook computer. Academics and business analysts agree flexible working has enormous potential to improve productivity, increase employee job satisfaction and bring about direct cost-savings to the business. Moreover, with the workforce shrinking in Australia and New Zealand to the tune of 1.5 million over the next 25 years¹, practical solutions that assist organisations attract and retain staff will be fundamental to the way companies retain their competitive advantage.

In keeping with our vision, 'commitment to people, commitment to the future', and in a bid to understand the future needs of our customers, Toshiba commissioned the following research to explore organisational attitudes of flexible working. We wanted to investigate whether organisations understood and are achieving the benefits offered by the practice of flexible working, and if not, to assess what obstacles are hindering their progress.

Mobility and Mistrust highlights the fact that flexible working is about much more than technology. People, rather, are at the heart of the concept, and so for flexible working to be implemented effectively, the 'human' characteristics of the organisation – its culture, communication, human resource and management practices – require the most consideration.

Flexible working is promising to be the next revolution in our workplace. We hope the following survey stimulates debate and offers realistic suggestions for how organisations can ride the wave, realising the benefits that flexible working offers to the organisation and the individual.

Executive Summary

Flexible working is widely advocated as a way to facilitate a better balance between work and home life for employees in modern organisations. The practice also potentially offers significant cost and productivity benefits to companies, and can help address larger socio-economic concerns such as decreasing workforce participation rates and the pressures associated with over-urbanisation.

Innovations in information technology enable many organisations to offer more flexible work arrangements for their employees. Despite these gains, flexible workplace arrangements are far from the norm within Australian and New Zealand businesses.

Toshiba Australia's Information Systems Division (ISD) commissioned independent research company Sweeney Research to survey 600 workers across Australia and New Zealand about the reasons behind this slow uptake. In particular, the survey was intended to find out whether mistrust of flexible working arrangements was a primary barrier to their implementation.

Key findings

- Mistrust of flexible workers is prevalent among Australian and New Zealand organisations
- Most managers in non-flexible workplaces said they would be unlikely to let employees work flexibly, even though most employees would like to, if allowed
- A main obstacle to the uptake of flexible working is the perceived difficulty of monitoring and supervising employees, indicating scope to increase trust by using performance criteria rather than attendance-based evaluation techniques
- Most organisations do not have policies to support flexible working. Where policies exist, most are tailored to individuals rather than standardised across the organisation
- Technology is not considered a significant impediment to flexible work practices

Rates of adoption of flexible working in Australia and New Zealand

There is considerable scope to adopt flexible working in Australia and New Zealand:

- Only 38 per cent of Australian organisations and 35 per cent of New Zealand organisations have introduced flexible workplace arrangements, yet 39 per cent of personnel in non-flexible workplaces have jobs that could be undertaken flexibly
- Larger organisations (45 per cent in Australia and 41 per cent in New Zealand) are more likely to have flexible workplace arrangements than smaller companies (33 per cent and 25 per cent respectively)
- Only 34 per cent of employees in flexible workplaces have worked flexibly in the last six months, yet 89 per cent of managers have approved employees to work flexibly

Organisational attitudes towards flexible working

Management mistrust of flexible workers is a major concern in Australasian organisations:

- 56 per cent of managers and 53 per cent of employees admit that management is less trusting of flexible workers than those who work solely from the office
- 56 per cent of managers and 54 per cent of employees believe that flexible workers are perceived to be not working as hard as office-bound employees
- An even greater number of managers (88 per cent) agree that management is not keen to see employees working flexibly too often (compared with 79 per cent of employees)

Criticism and distrust between employees is also a key concern:

- Managers and employees perceive that flexible workers face criticism from their co-workers, including that they do not work as hard (71 per cent) and that they are subject to negative gossip (61 per cent)

Trust is a barrier to organisational uptake of flexible working:

- Trust is seen as a much greater issue in non-flexible workplaces (64 per cent cite management mistrust, 67 per cent cite employee gossip) than in flexible workplaces (41 per cent and 50 per cent respectively)
- 75 per cent of managers in non-flexible workplaces are unlikely to allow employees to work flexibly even if the organisation allows it, despite nearly one in two employees (47 per cent) saying they would take up the option if it was offered

There is a great deal of scope for organisations to share education and resources about best practice in the performance evaluation of flexible workers:

- 46 per cent of workers in flexible environments and 67 per cent in non-flexible environments feel it is harder to evaluate the performance of flexible workers
- Managers (65 per cent) and employees (59 per cent), particularly in large organisations, said the main barrier to the implementation of flexible working is the difficulty in managing and supervising employees. Without ongoing supervision and performance-based measurement techniques in place, this issue can lead to a misconception of a lower productivity and foster mistrust within the workplace

Written policies for flexible workplace practices

Only a small number of organisations with flexible workplace arrangements have standardised policies to assist staff in implementing and managing the practice:

- 26 per cent of organisations with flexible workplace arrangements provide written policies to support the management of flexible workers
- 12 per cent of companies without policies are likely to implement one in the near future
- The majority of staff members working flexibly do so under guidelines organised on an individual basis. Only 21 per cent of companies that have policies offer standard guidelines on working away from the office
- 65 per cent of people in organisations without a flexible workplace policy indicated they would like one

Technologies for flexible workplace practices

Technology is not a main barrier to the uptake of flexible working:

- 80 per cent of companies that offer flexible work options also provide technologies to facilitate the process
- The most common provisions include:
 - Company notebook computers (80 per cent)
 - Mobile telephones (76 per cent)
 - Remote email (63 per cent)
 - Full access to the company network (53 per cent)
- 63 per cent of managers and 57 per cent of employees did not consider that technology was a reason why flexible workplaces were not implemented
- There were significant differences between the facilities provided to managers and employees. Employees were 17 per cent less likely than managers to receive technologies that allow them to work flexibly

Definition of flexible working

In this study, 'flexible working' refers to the ability for people to work from whatever place offers the greatest suitability and productivity for the employee and their employer. Examples of flexible workplaces include home offices, branch offices, airport lounges, internet cafes, hotel rooms, business centres and other external venues. Flexible working is normally conducted during standard office hours, although in many instances staff may work at different times that offer greater convenience or productivity. This definition generally refers to fulltime office workers.

For other definitions and clarification of terms see the Glossary section at the end of this document.

Research Aims

The ongoing progress of mobile technology and telecommunications has the potential to significantly expand our choices about where, how and when we work. Many workers are now in a position to fundamentally alter their routine to produce appreciable benefits for both the business and the employee.

Have management practices in Australia and New Zealand kept up with the rate of technological change? Are these organisations measuring employees on their attendance or their performance?

In order to answer these questions, Toshiba commissioned independent research company Sweeney Research to seek answers to the following questions:

- What do managers and employees perceive as the benefits of flexible working?
- What perceptions do managers and employees hold about the productivity of flexible workers?
- Is management mistrust the main issue hindering the adoption of flexible working?
- How many companies in Australia and New Zealand have tackled these issues by developing formal policies on workplace flexibility?
- How many employees would like their companies to formalise flexible workplace policies?

Methodology

During April and May 2004, Sweeney Research conducted 600 confidential telephone interviews with managers and employees across Australia (402 respondents) and New Zealand (198 respondents). Participants were selected randomly to reflect a representative sample of the working population in these two countries.

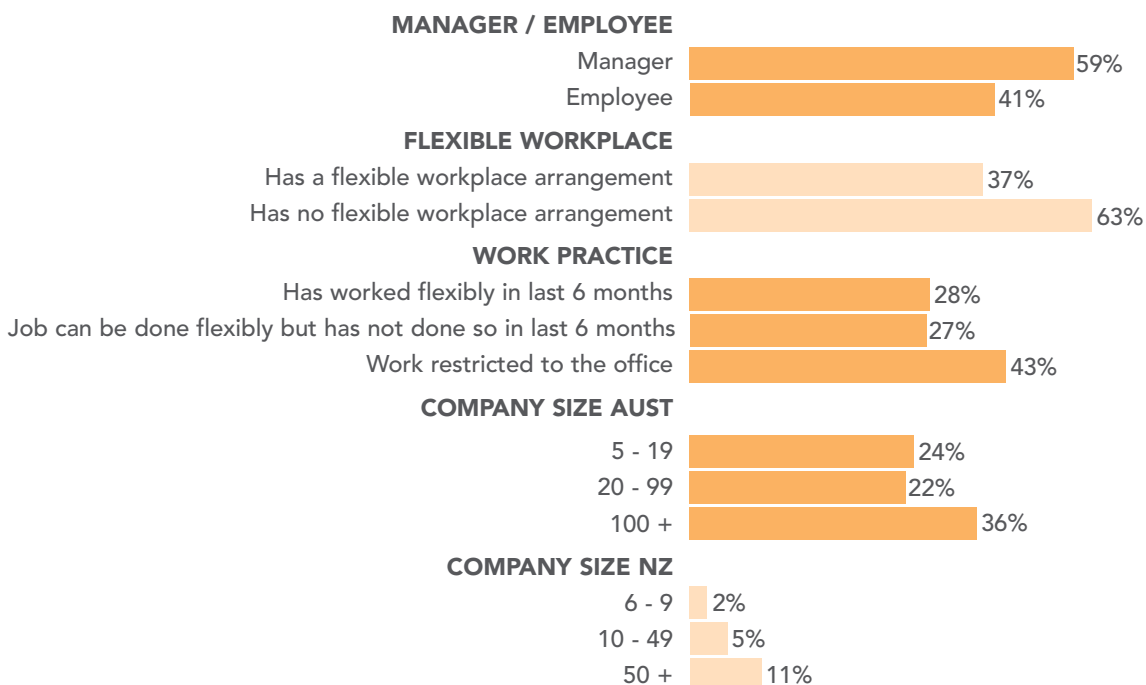
The research involved two distinct target segments: managers, or individuals who hold a managerial position within a company; and employees with no direct managerial responsibility over other people in the company.

The survey covered a wide range of industry sectors, including:

- Communication services
- Finance and insurance
- Government administration and defence
- Manufacturing
- Property and business services
- Retail and wholesale trade
- Transport and storage
- Utility supplies and services

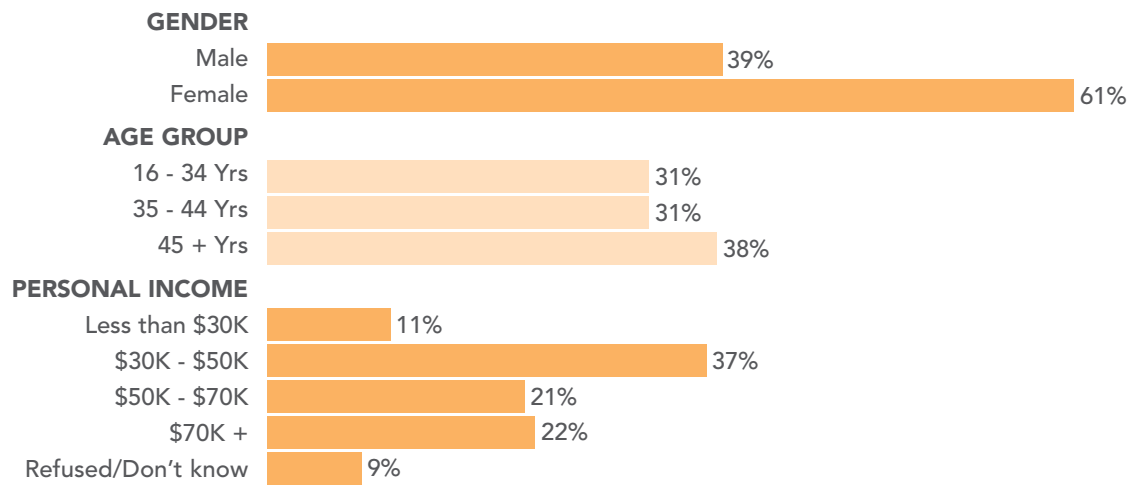
To ensure that the data was truly representative of the target population, the survey was weighted to reflect the relative sizes of the Australian and New Zealand employee populations based on company size. Chart 1.01 shows the makeup of the survey group.

Chart 1.01: Total sample profile by job description, workplace type and company size



Within their companies, respondents were chosen from a variety of departments and job functions. Chart 1.02 details the demographic constitution of the survey sample.

Chart 1.02: Total sample profile by gender, age and income



Findings and Analysis

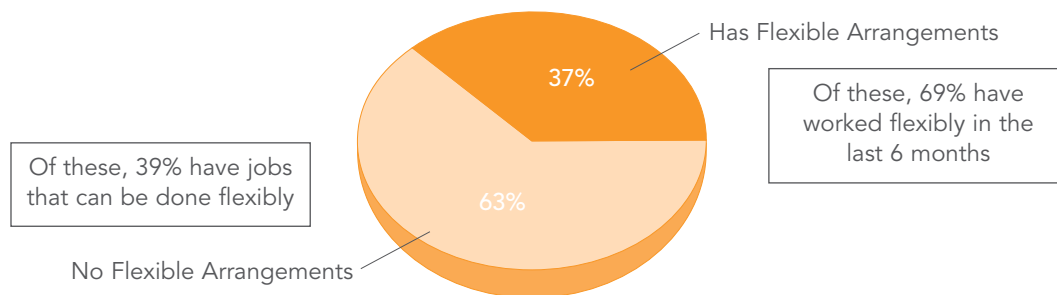
A. Flexible work practices: the current position

To assess the prevalence of flexible workplace practices in Australia and New Zealand, employees were asked whether they had the flexibility to work outside the office during normal working hours. Managers were asked whether they provided such arrangements for their staff.

Some 63 per cent of workers have no flexible workplace arrangement at their organisation at present, despite the fact that 39 per cent of them have jobs that can be undertaken flexibly. This highlights the untapped opportunity to implement flexible working in Australia and New Zealand.

Chart 2.01 shows these findings.

Chart 2.01: Incidence of flexible workplace arrangements



There was a notable difference of opinion between managers and employees as to whether flexible working is actually available at their organisation. Forty one per cent of managers said employees have the option to work flexibly, yet only 33 per cent of employees said they were aware of the option. This suggests that even in organisations that offer flexible working, the opportunity is not communicated to those lower in the organisational hierarchy.

In workplaces with flexible arrangements, the divergence between managers and employees is even more striking: 89 per cent of managers have approved flexible working for their employees in the last six months, yet only 34 per cent of employees in apparently flexible workplaces had actually done so.

Table 2.01: Actual rates of employees working flexibly / being approved to work flexibly in apparently flexible workplaces.

	Total %	Employer %	Employee %
Weighted sample size	224	144	79
Has worked/approved employees to work flexibly in 6 months	69	89	34
Has not worked flexibly in last 6 months	31	11	66

Manager, Engineering:

"Our (employees) will take a day off here, a day off there and we feel fairly informal about it. As long as they get their jobs done, they're performing to our expectations. At the same time, sometimes they need to work until 9 o'clock / 10 o'clock. It's a give and take which is fairly characteristic of the organisation – if you put the effort in, the organisation will serve you back when you need it."

These findings indicate that:

- Managers are not advising employees of their opportunity to work flexibly or not encouraging them to do so even when they are officially allowed to, either because they prefer to have staff under direction in the office or because they do not trust that workers can or will do their jobs as well when they are outside of the office
- Employees are reticent to work flexibly, owing to either management pressure, co-worker criticism or a lack of confidence in their own ability to be fully productive when working away from the office

These issues are discussed in greater detail on page 16.

Table 2.02: Flexible workplace arrangements by role and work practice

	Total %	Manager %	Employee %	Worked flexibly %	Possible but not worked flexibly %	Work restricted to office %
<i>Weighted sample size</i>	600	356	244	115	113	181
Has Flexible Arrangements	37	41	33	100	15	16
No Flexible Arrangement	63	59	67	NA	85	84

In environments that do offer flexible working, employees do not necessarily perceive that they can undertake their role outside of the office. Only 27 per cent of employees said that it was possible for them to do their job away from the office, yet 47 per cent of managers felt that their employees could work flexibly. Table 2.03 details these findings.

Table 2.03: Unused capacity to work flexibly by role and work environment

	Total %	Manager %	Employee %	Flexible workplace %	Not flexible workplace %
<i>Weighted sample size</i>	298	163	135	47	251
Possible to work away from office if option available	38	47	27	35	39
Not possible to work away from office	61	52	71	62	60

Comparing small and large organisations

Large organisations are more likely to have flexible workplace arrangements than smaller companies. Some 45 per cent of large organisations in Australia and 41 per cent in New Zealand offer the practice, versus 33 per cent and 25 per cent of small-to-medium businesses (SMBs) respectively.

Employees in larger organisations are also more likely to work flexibly if they have the option. Eighty three per cent of workers in Australian large companies and 72 per cent in New Zealand large firms worked flexibly during the previous six months, where allowed. These figures were more than a third higher than those in SMBs in both countries (54 per cent and 63 per cent respectively). Even among workers who did not have the option to work flexibly, nearly two-thirds of employees in large enterprises said their job could be done flexibly, versus only a quarter of those in SMBs.

This difference may relate to the fact that personnel in smaller organisations tend to have more diverse roles while those in larger firms have more specialised responsibilities. Greater multitasking in smaller organisations may generally require greater face-to-face contact and team communication. Compared to smaller companies, larger organisations also tend to have more formalised and regulated human resource policies as well as dedicated IT support to facilitate flexible working.

Table 2.04 compares the flexibility of working conditions in companies of different sizes.

Table 2.04: Flexible workplace arrangements by company size

	Total %	AUS 5-19 emp	AUS 20-99 emp %	AUS 100+ emp %	NZ 6-9 emp %	NZ 10-49 emp %	NZ 50+ emp %
<i>Weighted sample size</i>	600	143	132	217	12	32	64
Has Flexible Arrangements	37	36	28	45	21	29	41
No Flexible Arrangement	63	64	72	55	79	70	59

Comparing Australia and New Zealand

The level of uptake of flexible working is fairly similar across both countries: 38 per cent of all Australian organisations offer the practice, compared to 35 per cent of New Zealand enterprises.

However, employees in New Zealand SMBs with flexible workplaces are more likely to exercise the option than their counterparts in Australia. Almost two-thirds (63 per cent) of New Zealand SMB employees have worked flexibly in the last six months where this was permitted, versus 48 per cent of their Australian contemporaries.

Reasons for not working flexibly

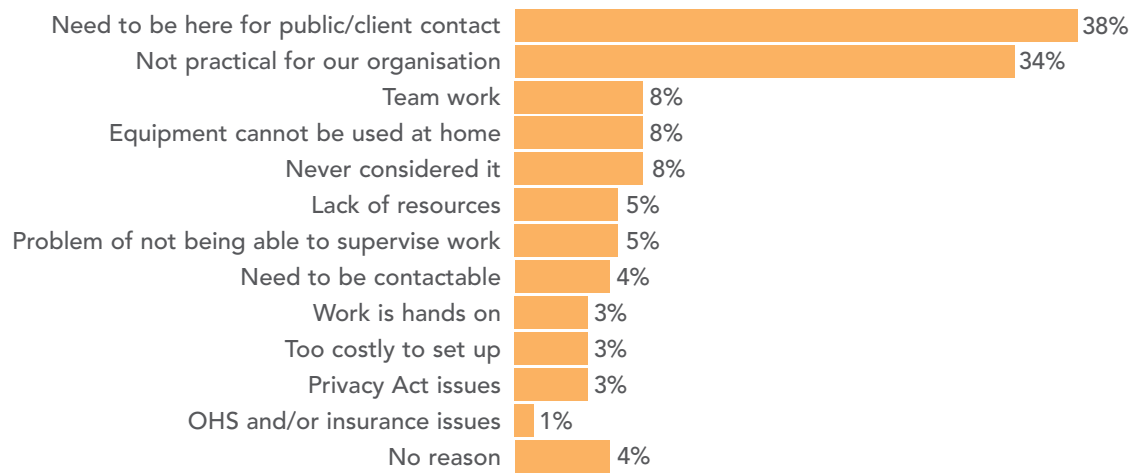
Those workers in organisations without flexible workplace policies were asked why they thought the option was not available in their organisation. There were two dominant responses: either they needed to be at the office for contact with clients or the public (38 per cent) or it was not practical (34 per cent), that is to say their work was restricted to the office and/or they did not have the necessary equipment available away from the office. Chart 2.02 shows the full set of reasons and their relative incidence.

Many employees citing these reasons were in administrative or secretarial roles that involved intensive communication with management or the public.

Outside the group with roles restricted to the office, a number of respondents suggested that they had not been given the option to work flexibly or they had not discussed it with management. This confirms the earlier finding (see page 11) that employees are often not informed about the opportunity to work flexibly.

These findings indicate managers generally perceive the need to keep staff nearby in order to maintain productivity. Yet this rather conservative management style is not in keeping with other modern managerial considerations. Many organisations enter into outsourcing and supplier arrangements that assess results through performance benchmarks, yet such performance assessment techniques are not necessarily extended to those closest to the organisation.

Chart 2.02: Main reasons for not providing flexible workplace arrangements



Likelihood of working flexibly if the option is provided

Employees in non-flexible workplace organisations were asked if they would be likely to work flexibly if the option was available to them. Managers were asked if they would allow employees to work flexibly if the company permitted such arrangements. Table 2.05 shows the response to these questions.

These results show that the majority of those without flexible arrangements are unlikely to work flexibly or be allowed to work flexibly even if it is an option.

A staggering 75 per cent of managers would be unlikely to allow employees to work flexibly if the option was available, despite the fact that 47 per cent of employees said they would like to work flexibly if the option was available.

In New Zealand, employees in medium and large companies without flexible workplace arrangements currently appear much more unlikely to work flexibly even if the opportunity is provided. Only 28 per cent of employees in firms with more than 10 people are likely to work flexibly compared with 40 per cent of those in firms with less than 10 people. This differs from Australia, where a consistent two-thirds of employees are unlikely to work flexibly, irrespective of company size.

Table 2.05: Likelihood of working flexibly if available by role

	Total %	Manager %	Employee %
<i>Weighted sample size</i>	376	212	164
Very likely	13	6	21
Somewhat likely	22	19	26
Somewhat unlikely	20	24	15
Very unlikely	45	50	38
Total 'likely'	35	25	47
Total 'unlikely'	65	75	53

B. Attitudes towards flexible working

In this section, respondents were asked to grade a series of positive and negative statements about flexible working on a scale of whether they strongly agreed to strongly disagreed with the statement.

Chart 2.03 shows the major findings.

Chart 2.03: Attitudes towards flexible workplaces

		Mean score				
Managers are not keen to see their employees working flexibly too much	OVERALL	33%	51%	12%	4	3.1
	MANAGERS	32%	56%	10%	2	3.2
	EMPLOYEES	34%	45%	16%	5	3.1
Flexible workplace arrangements provide a solution to maintaining work-life balance	OVERALL	41%	40%	13%	6%	3.2
	MANAGERS	44%	36%	13%	8%	3.2
	EMPLOYEES	36%	47%	12%	5	3.2
The opportunity to work flexibly creates a more happy workforce	OVERALL	37%	42%	16%	5	3.1
	MANAGERS	37%	41%	16%	6	3.1
	EMPLOYEES	38%	43%	16%	3	3.1
Employees tend to see their colleagues who work flexibly as not working as hard	OVERALL	25%	46%	21%	8%	2.9
	MANAGERS	25%	49%	19%	7%	2.9
	EMPLOYEES	26%	41%	24%	9%	2.8
People who work flexibly can often be the subject of negative gossip	OVERALL	17%	44%	26%	13%	2.6
	MANAGERS	17%	46%	25%	13%	2.7
	EMPLOYEES	17%	41%	28%	14%	2.6
It is more difficult for clients and colleagues to contact people who work flexibly	OVERALL	24%	35%	31%	10%	2.7
	MANAGERS	28%	32%	22%	18%	2.7
	EMPLOYEES	29%	28%	27%	16%	2.7
Managers are less trusting of employees who frequently prefer to work flexibly	OVERALL	28%	30%	24%	17%	2.7
	MANAGERS	16%	41%	33%	11%	2.6
	EMPLOYEES	23%	30%	38%	9%	2.7
It is harder to fairly evaluate the performance of someone who works flexibly	OVERALL	17%	38%	30%	15%	2.6
	MANAGERS	24%	33%	33%	10%	2.7
	EMPLOYEES	24%	38%	29%	9%	2.8
Company management tend to see people who work flexibly as not working as hard	OVERALL	19%	36%	35%	10%	2.6
	MANAGERS	15%	41%	28%	16%	2.6
	EMPLOYEES	21%	33%	32%	14%	2.6
People who work outside the office environment are able to better concentrate & focus on their work	OVERALL	25%	24%	30%	21%	2.5
	MANAGERS	11%	38%	35%	16%	2.4
	EMPLOYEES	14%	24%	50%	12%	2.4
Technology is one of the main limitations of working flexibly	OVERALL	12%	32%	41%	14%	2.4
	MANAGERS	21%	23%	34%	22%	2.4
	EMPLOYEES	32%	25%	25%	18%	2.7
Flexible workplace arrangements decrease productivity in the workplace	OVERALL	13%	20%	45%	21%	2.3
	MANAGERS	13%	19%	47%	21%	2.2
	EMPLOYEES	14%	22%	43%	21%	2.3

Employee, Health and Community Services:

“There would be more employee satisfaction with flexible working because they are able to accommodate family responsibilities as well as work. There would be more allowances for personal development and it would be satisfying to know that employers have taken a staff member’s individual circumstances into account.”



Benefits associated with flexible working

A majority of respondents referred to advantages associated with flexible working:

- 79 per cent of managers and 84 per cent of employees felt flexible workplace arrangements provide a serious solution to maintaining the balance between work and life
- 78 per cent of managers and 80 per cent of employees agreed that flexible working contributes to the happiness of the workforce

In addition, most respondents did not believe that flexible working decreases productivity in the work environment: 68 per cent of managers and 64 per cent of employees disagreed with this statement.

Overall, workers in environments with flexible workplace arrangements were more likely to endorse the positive aspects and disagree with the negative aspects of flexible working, compared to counterparts in non-flexible workplaces. Sixteen per cent more workers in flexible workplaces agreed that flexible working aids work-life balance and facilitates workforce happiness, compared to those who are not allowed to work flexibly. Only 20 per cent of workers in flexible environments feel this flexibility can lead to a decrease in productivity, versus 42 per cent in non-flexible environments.

Manager, Transport and Storage:

"One of the main problems I would see in our office is resentment between staff, if one person is working flexibly and others don't have that opportunity. There is a huge element of trust involved. How do you know if an employee is doing what they say they are doing?"

C. The issue of trust

The issue of trust was a major topic of interest for the survey.

Management trust of flexible workers

More than 50 per cent of managers and employees agree that company management is less likely to trust personnel who work flexibly than those who do not (56 per cent managers, 53 per cent of employees).

Almost the same number believe that employees who work flexibly are not working as hard as those in the office (56 per cent of managers, 54 per cent of employees).

Managers also admit that they are not keen to see their employees working flexibly too regularly.

Eighty eight per cent of managers and 79 per cent of employees agreed with this statement, which could suggest that executives primarily consider flexible working to be an employee perk, rather than a viable and long-term business strategy.

If we assume that all respondents answered honestly, including managers who were asked to provide an assessment of their own practices, the levels of management mistrust revealed seem quite high. Overall, managers and employees acknowledged that company management does not trust those who work flexibly.

Tension between flexible and non-flexible working colleagues

In addition to management mistrust, most respondents felt that flexible workers face criticism and distrust from their colleagues. Managers, however, are somewhat more likely than employees to refer to distrust between employees as a barrier to the adoption of flexible working. Seventy four per cent of managers said that company employees do not believe their flexible colleagues work as hard, while only 66 per cent of employees agreed with the same statement. These results suggest that managers are more likely to cite worker rivalry as a reason for not implementing flexible workplace policies rather than address management mistrust of flexible workers.

Chart 2.04 graphs the main reasons why organisations resist flexible working.

Chart 2.04: Main issues preventing implementation of flexible workplaces



Table 2.06 provides a breakdown of inhibitors by workplace role and work environment.

Table 2.06: Inhibitors to flexible working by role and work environment

	Total %	Manager %	Employee %	Flexible Workplace %	Not flexible Workplace %
<i>Weighted sample size</i>	600	356	244	224	376
Hard to monitor/supervise employees	63	65	59	61	64
Lower motivation to do work/more distractions	43	42	45	43	43
Lack of trust in employee to complete work	40	42	36	38	41
Lack of technology to support flexible workplace	39	37	43	30	45
Difficult to contact employees working flexibly	35	34	36	31	37
Lower production from employees working flexibly	28	29	28	26	30

Manager, Banking and Financial Services:

"I would say there is a distrust of people who work at home. We've had consultants working and getting paid by the hour and sometimes they're not even doing a full day's work. It could be an hour or two on private email or telephone private calls during work hours, where you say, "hold on, you should be doing that in your lunch hour."

Table 2.07 offers an analysis of inhibiting factors according to company size.

Table 2.07: Inhibitors to flexible workplaces by company size

	Total %	AUS 5-19 emp %	AUS 20-29 emp %	AUS 100+ emp %	NZ 6-9 emp %	NZ 10-49 emp %	NZ 50+ emp %
<i>Weighted sample size</i>	600	143	132	217	12	32	64
Hard to monitor/supervise employees	63	50	66	74	68	61	62
Lower motivation to do work/more distractions	43	47	35	45	44	38	41
Lack of trust in employee to complete work	40	39	40	38	37	44	41
Lack of technology to support flexible workplace	39	37	46	38	44	35	41
Difficult to contact employees working flexibly	35	31	38	31	49	31	43
Lower productivity from employees working flexibly	28	28	24	33	30	24	26

Mistrust is impeding take-up of flexible working

Employee, Information Technology:

“There have been cases in our organisation where employees have worked flexibly, but actually it’s difficult to work out whether or not there has been any advantage taken from it. I think managers have tended to turn a blind eye to encouraging flexible working for fear of retribution from other workers.”

Trust is a greater issue in environments without flexible workplace arrangements than in those that have them. Respondents in workplaces without flexible arrangements are nearly twice as likely to believe that company management thinks flexible workers do not work as hard as their office-based counterparts (66 per cent versus 38 per cent). Those respondents were also more likely than their counterparts in flexible workplaces to believe that managers are less trusting of flexible workers (64 per cent versus 41 per cent).

Similarly, distrust among employees is widespread: 79 per cent of respondents in non-flexible workplaces said it was an issue, versus 58 per cent of those in flexible workplaces.

These findings suggest that mistrust is not only a barrier to those who have the option to work flexibly, but that organisations who do not offer the option consider mistrust to be a main drawback of the practice. This supports a conclusion that mistrust of flexible workers is a barrier to the overall take-up of flexible working.

Employee, Information Technology:

“If so-and-so worked from home that day but hasn’t been responding to email, it’s hard to say what the reason is. Has it been because they’ve been on the phone all day or on conference calls? It’s difficult for managers to confirm that.”

D. Managing flexible workers

This section explores management and employee attitudes towards supervision of flexible workers.

Performance evaluation

Forty six per cent of workers in flexible environments and 67 per cent in non-flexible environments perceive it is harder to evaluate performance for flexible workers than those solely based in the office. In other words, in workplaces that have experience in monitoring the performance of flexible workers, just over half of personnel are content with the organisation's procedures. However, this means the other half is not satisfied. This suggests there is great scope to further educate managers on how to monitor and manage their staff using performance-driven criteria.

It is worth noting the difference between flexible and non-flexible environments. These findings suggest that non-flexible environments perceive performance monitoring to be a greater challenge than it actually proves to be once flexible working is implemented.

Monitoring, supervision and motivation of staff

In a separate question, the difficulty of monitoring and supervising employees was the most commonly identified disadvantage of flexible working (indicated by 65 per cent of managers and 59 per cent of employees). Workers in large organisations in Australia find this particularly hard: 74 per cent of large enterprise respondents said it was difficult, versus 58 per cent in SMBs. Another 40 per cent of respondents from firms of all sizes said that the lack of trust in employees to complete the work was a barrier.

This accords with earlier findings about the lack of trust among management and employees regarding the productivity of flexible workers. If managers cannot see what their employees are doing and they have no performance evaluation techniques in place to monitor productivity and quality of work, it follows that the trust that they place in their staff may be tested, particularly if staff are working from home.

The second most common perceived barrier to flexible working is lower motivation among flexible workers to do the work and a greater number of distractions (cited by 43 per cent overall). This contrasts with the later findings (see page 29) showing that 10 per cent of workers – particularly those in large organisations – see fewer interruptions and distractions as one of the advantages associated with flexible working.

People with jobs that can be performed away from the office who have not worked flexibly recently were more likely to perceive issues around management trust and control than those who had recently worked flexibly or those whose work was restricted to the office. People whose jobs were restricted to the office tended to identify practical barriers to flexible working, such as lack of equipment or technology and the difficulty of contacting flexible workers.

Employee, Information Technology:

“Flexible working is increasing, but there are a combination of issues such as discipline, tools and probably a culture which says that people might be taking advantage when working from home which means it might not be taken up at a fast rate.”

E. Trends in flexible working

An overwhelming number of respondents felt that flexible working was an increasing trend (85 per cent overall). Flexible working was particularly accepted by those in workplaces that already allow the practice: more than 90 per cent of this group said the trend would become more common, against 81 per cent in non-flexible environments.

There were slight differences between respondents in both countries. Nineteen per cent of respondents in small New Zealand companies believe the trend will decrease, compared with 13 per cent in small companies in Australia. Overall, respondents in small companies in both countries are the most negative about the future of the practice. On average, only eight per cent of workers in medium and large organisations in Australia and nine per cent in New Zealand feel that it will decrease.

Chart 2.05 shows expectations about the future of flexible work.

Chart 2.05: Future trends in flexible working



F. Policies for flexible work practices

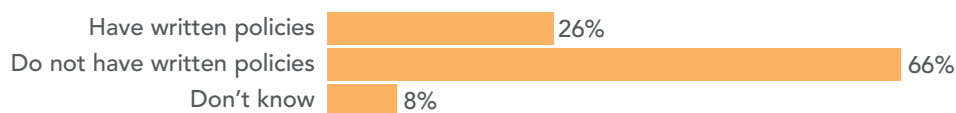
Current position

This section of the survey questioned respondents about whether their organisation provided written policies on flexible working in order to support and guide the practice. It investigated the types of policies in place and whether workers without policies would like to see them implemented.

Even in those organisations with flexible workplaces, only 26 per cent provide written policies to personnel. This poses questions as to whether organisations that offer flexible working provide enough support and information to managers to assist in its implementation.

Chart 2.06 illustrates the extent of flexible working policies.

Chart 2.06: Written policies regarding flexible workspace



Comparing small and large organisations

Both in Australia and New Zealand, larger organisations are more likely to implement policies than smaller ones. This is perhaps due to the more formalised requirements of running a larger organisation. Large companies in both countries were more than three times as likely as SMBs to have flexible working policies in place.

Table 2.08 provides a detailed breakdown of the incidence of written guidelines according to organisation size.

Table 2.08: Written policies for flexible working by company size

	Total %	AUS 5-19 emp %	AUS 20-99 emp %	AUS 100+ emp %	NZ 6-9 emp %	NZ 10-49 emp %	NZ 50+ emp %
Weighted sample size	224	51	37	98	3	9	26
Have written policies	26	14	12	39	25	4	32
Do not have written policies	66	79	82	53	67	96	52
Don't know	8	7	6	8	8	0	16

Individual versus standardised policies

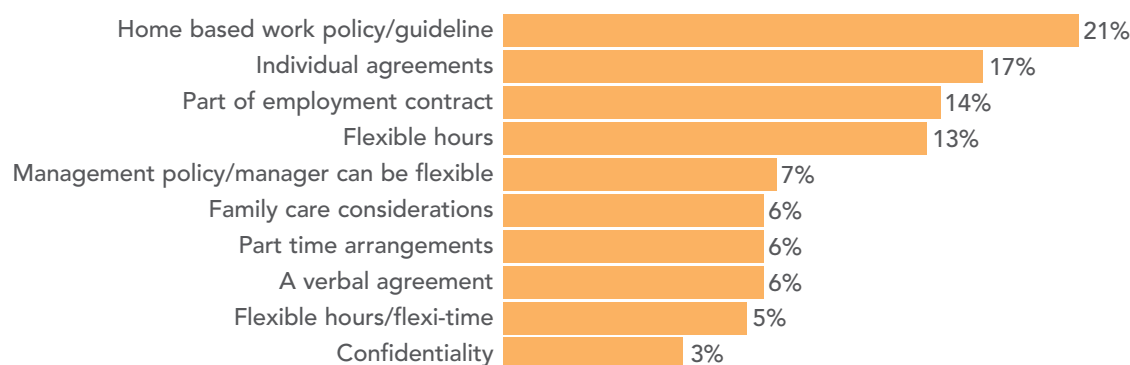
Where written policies are in place, individual agreements tailored to each staff member are more common than standardised policies set across the organisation.

Thirty one per cent of respondents said that the policy to which they adhered is either part of their employment contract agreement or a non-contractual, individual agreement.

Only 21 per cent of organisations with policies provide formal guidelines on home-based work practices.

Chart 2.07 shows these findings.

Chart 2.07: Nature of written policies regarding flexible working



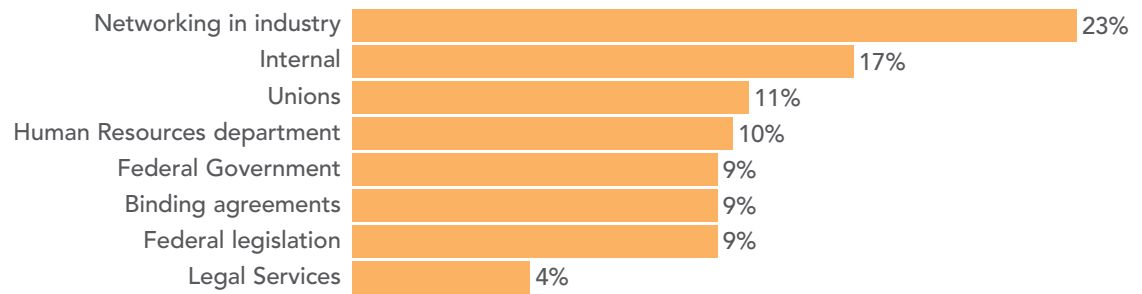
Sourcing information about flexible working policies

Organisations do not appear to have many support networks outside their industry that can provide information on flexible workplace policies. Nearly a quarter of enterprises said they look to industry associations for guidance on flexible working policies and procedures. Only nine per cent said that government legislation or directives provided assistance, while 11 per cent in both countries looked to trade unions for advice.

The fact that organisations lack resources and advice on best-practice policy, implementation and management of flexible workers suggests that organisations are not deliberately mistrustful of staff. Rather, many organisations do not have the awareness and resources to set up boundaries and a culture that supports flexible working.

Chart 2.08 identifies the sources enterprises use to guide flexible working policies.

Chart 2.08: Information sources of flexible workplace policies



Attitudes towards flexible working policies

Interestingly, two-thirds of people within organisations without a policy indicated they would favour one within their organisation. There was an equal preference among both managers and employees. This preference is particularly high among personnel who are allowed to work flexibly but have not done so recently: 72 per cent of this group said they favoured the implementation of a policy, with 31 per cent 'strongly favoured'.

The desire for formal policies is slightly higher in larger organisations, with 36 per cent of respondents in large companies across Australasia strongly favouring written guidelines, compared to an average 25 per cent in SMBs.

Table 2.09 shows responses to the question about desire for a formal workplace policy.

Table 2.09: Attitude towards formalised flexible workplace policy by role and work environment

	Total %	Manager %	Employee %	Flexible Workplace %	Not flexible Workplace %
<i>Weighted sample size</i>	416	260	156	165	251
I strongly favour a formalised workplace policy in my company	29	33	24	30	29
I somewhat favour a formalised workplace policy in my company	35	33	39	34	36
I don't really favour a formalised workplace policy in my company	19	18	22	24	16
I don't favour a formalised workplace policy in my company	13	14	11	7	17
Total favour	65	66	63	63	66
Total 'don't favour'	32	31	33	31	32

Table 2.10 shows these attitudes by company size.

Table 2.10: Attitude towards formalised flexible workplace policy by company size

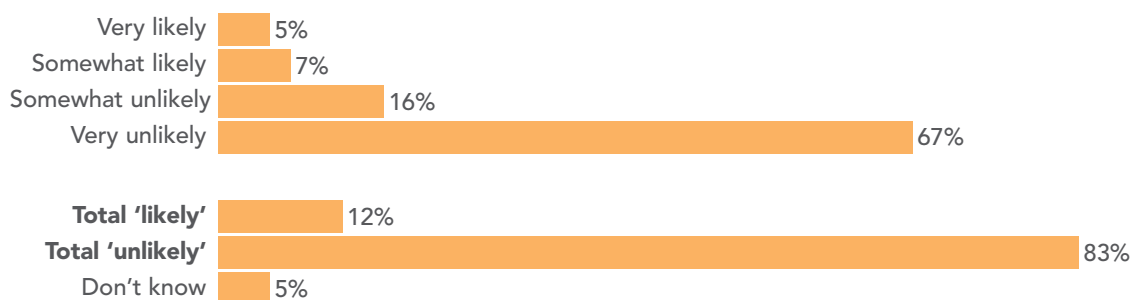
	Total %	AUS 5-19 emp %	AUS 20-99 emp %	AUS 100+ emp %	NZ 6-9 emp %	NZ 10-49 emp %	NZ 50+ emp %
Weighted sample size	416	121	74	114	12	32	64
I strongly favour a formalised workplace policy in my company	29	24	26	36	28	21	36
I somewhat favour a formalised workplace policy in my company	35	38	41	31	33	38	30
I don't really favour a formalised workplace policy in my company	19	22	15	14	26	28	23
I don't favour a formalised workplace policy in my company	13	13	12	14	12	14	10
Total 'favour'	65	62	68	67	61	59	66
Total 'don't favour'	32	35	26	29	39	41	33

Future intentions

Only 12 per cent of companies without flexible working guidelines are likely to implement a policy in the near future. Even in companies with flexible working arrangements already in place, only 30 per cent are likely to introduce guidelines if they are not already established.

Chart 2.09 shows the likelihood of organisations implementing flexible workplace policies.

Chart 2.09: Likelihood of implementing flexible workplace policies



Manager, Transport and Storage:

"Working flexibly is beneficial for the business. Take for example, someone on maternity leave. She can actually continue working from home with the technology we have these days."

Table 2.11 breaks down attitudes to flexible workplace policies according to role, work environment and current practice.

Table 2.11: Likelihood of implementing flexible workplace policies by role, work environment and practice

	Total %	Manager %	Employee %	Flexible Workplace %	Not flexible Workplace %	Worked Flexibly %	Possible but not worked flexibly %
<i>Weighted sample size</i>	541	306	235	165	376	107	111
Very likely	5	7	3	14	1	20	1
Somewhat likely	7	8	7	16	4	19	11
Somewhat unlikely	16	16	16	23	13	17	23
Very unlikely	67	65	68	35	80	32	64
Total 'likely'	12	14	10	30	5	39	13
Total 'unlikely'	83	82	84	58	94	49	87
Don't know	5	4	6	12	2	12	0

G. Technology for flexible working

Technology is not an inhibitor

The majority of respondents do not see technology as a principal limitation to flexible working in their organisation: overall, only 12 per cent strongly agreed it was a problem (see Chart 2.03). More employees than managers identify technology as any sort of limitation (56 per cent of employees versus 44 per cent of managers).

In a separate question (see Table 2.06), respondents were asked to choose decisive factors from a list of reasons for the absence of flexible working arrangements. Some 37 per cent of managers and 43 per cent of employees identified technology as a reason. The fact that managers were less likely than employees to identify technology corresponds with findings (see below) showing managers are more likely than their employees to have access to technologies that facilitate flexible working.

Technology to facilitate flexible working

Eighty per cent of companies that offer staff the option of working flexibly provide technologies to facilitate the process. This suggests that lack of technology cannot be a main reason for why employees who are officially allowed to work flexibly are not doing so.

The most common technology provisions include:

- Company notebook computers (80 per cent)
- Mobile telephones (76 per cent)
- Remote email (63 per cent)
- Full access to the company network (53 per cent)

However, there were significant differences between the facilities provided for managers and employees. Employees were 17 per cent less likely than managers to receive technologies that allow them to work flexibly. Table 2.12 shows this disparity.

Table 2.12: Company providing technology for flexible work by role and work practice

	Total %	Manager %	Employee %	Worked Flexibly %	Possible but not worked flexibly %
<i>Weighted sample size</i>	224	144	79	155	17
Company provides technology	80	86	69	86	56
No technology is provided	20	14	30	14	42
Don't know if any technology is provided	0	0	1	0	1

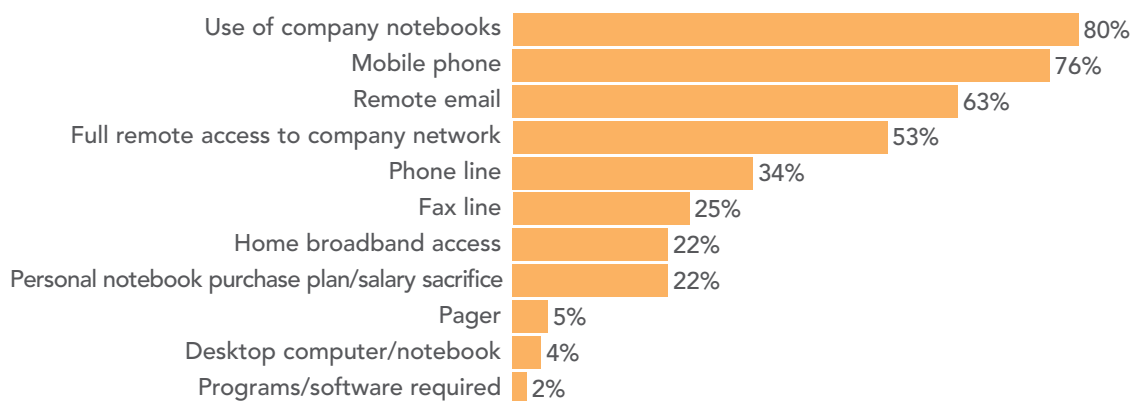
Comparing small and large organisations

Larger firms are more likely to offer higher-value technologies such as company notebooks and mobile phones. Salary sacrifice options were also more commonly offered to staff in large organisations: 25 per cent of staff in large Australian organisations and 32 per cent in New Zealand were given the option of reducing their take-home salary in exchange for more flexible work arrangements.

Smaller companies, on the other hand, are more likely to offer phone and fax lines. Small Australian firms are particularly high users of home broadband: 47 per cent of firms with less than 20 people had home broadband access for employees, which is more than triple the number of respondents in medium or large organisations (14 per cent and 13 per cent respectively).

Chart 2.10 shows the technology provided.

Chart 2.10: Technology provided to support flexible workplaces



Technology usage

Table 2.13 tabulates the different types of technology provided to managers and employees according to their position.

Table 2.13: Technology provided to support flexible workplace by role

	Total %	Manager %	Employee %
<i>Weighted sample size</i>	179	124	55
Use of company notebooks	80	81	78
Mobile phone	76	81	66
Remote email	63	65	58
Full remote access to company network	53	54	51
Phone line	34	35	32
Fax line	25	26	20
Home broadband access	22	21	25
Personal notebook purchase plan/salary sacrifice	22	23	20
Pager	5	5	5
Desktop computer/notebook	4	4	3
Programs/software required	2	2	1

Table 2.14 provides a breakdown of technology usage according to company size.

Table 2.14: Technology provided to support flexible workplace by company size

	Total %	AUS 5-19 emp %	AUS 20-99 emp %	AUS 100+ emp %	NZ 6-9 emp %	NZ 10-49 emp %	NZ 50+ emp %
<i>Weighted sample size</i>	179	31	31	87	1	6	23
Use of company notebooks	80	60	69	88	75	63	95
Mobile phone	76	72	69	75	75	81	95
Remote email	63	70	62	50	75	81	95
Full remote access to company network	53	56	52	41	75	56	95
Phone line	34	40	34	25	75	63	50
Fax line	25	28	28	16	100	63	36
Home broadband access	22	47	14	13	25	31	36
Personal notebook purchase plan/salary sacrifice	22	16	14	25	25	6	32
Pager	5	5	7	3	0	0	9
Desktop computer/notebook	4	7	7	3	0	0	0
Programs/software required	2	0	0	3	0	6	0

H. Benefits and disadvantages of flexible workplaces

Respondents were asked to identify, in their own words, what they felt were the benefits and the disadvantages of flexible working. These questions were asked at the beginning of the survey so as not to bias the responses to later questions. However, the responses offer some interesting endorsement of results found in earlier sections.

Note that these unprompted questions provide lower overall percentage responses than multiple choice questions.

The benefits of the flexible workplace

Of those benefits listed, four themes emerged: more time and productivity, balance between work and home life, workforce happiness and cost savings to the business.

Time and productivity: More than 33 per cent of respondents cited time and productivity gains as the main benefit of flexible working. The greatest single advantage (cited by 16 per cent of respondents) was 'more flexibility and time to do things'. Ten per cent of respondents also said 'less interruptions and distractions'. Twenty per cent of workers who had worked flexibly and 12 per cent of managers in both flexible and non-flexible environments correlated flexible working with increased productivity. Yet as a business advantage, this is acknowledged by only five per cent of all employees.

Twenty one per cent of employees also listed the advantage of reduced travel time. They said flexible working increased the number of productive hours in their workday and reduced their travel costs. Only seven per cent of managers identified this benefit.

Balance of work with family life: The second most commonly cited advantage was 'more time for family' (14 per cent), which was nearly equally rated by managers and employees. Sixteen per cent of employees and nine per cent of managers, particularly those who had worked flexibly, also identified the advantages for mothers, including less need for childcare.

Workforce happiness and staff retention: Eleven per cent of respondents recognised that flexible working leads to happier staff and greater job satisfaction. However, more than five times the number of workers who had worked flexibly (21 per cent) perceived happiness and job satisfaction as a primary benefit compared to those who either had not or could not work flexibly (four per cent).

Fourteen per cent of managers acknowledged the link between a satisfied workforce and the retention of good staff.

Cost savings: Managers particularly identified the cost savings offered to the business by flexible working. These include direct savings in terms of office space and overheads (four per cent of managers) and indirect savings including increased productivity (12 per cent of managers) and retention of experienced staff (14 per cent of managers). With some estimates suggesting the cost of replacing a good staff member can equate to 150 percent of a worker's annual salary², flexible work practices may provide significant savings for businesses.

Manager, Construction:

"The hardest thing with flexible working is knowing whether employees are fulfilling their job requirements. There are a lot of trust issues involved."

Employee, Communication Services:

"Flexible working allows you to work without interruption and that means getting more work done. You can lose two hours travelling sometimes, so working at home can allow you to work for longer, but with less intensity ensuring the work is of better quality."

Chart 2.11 shows the main benefits associated with workplace flexibility.

Chart 2.11: Main benefits of flexible workplace practices

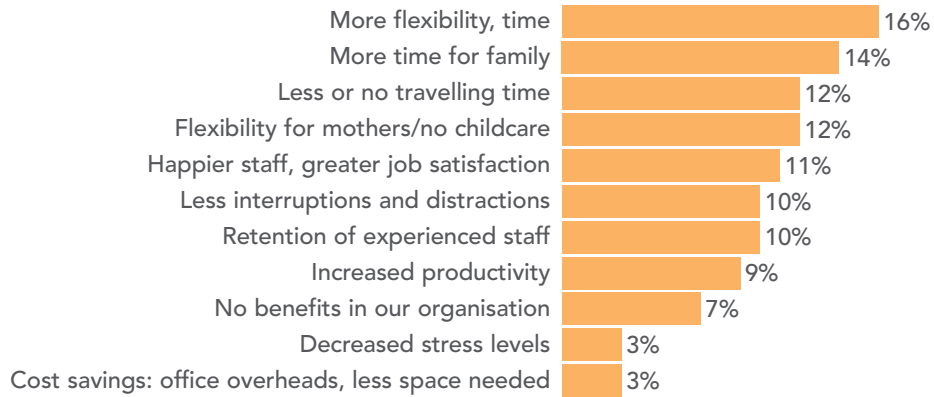


Table 2.15 shows a breakdown of the advantages cited by different groups of respondents.

Table 2.15: Main benefits of flexible workplace practices by role, work environment and practice

	Total %	Manager %	Employer %	Flexible Workplace %	Not flexible Workplace %	Worked Flexibly %	Possible but not worked flexibly %	Work restricted to office %
<i>Weighted sample size</i>	600	356	244	224	376	155	113	181
More flexibility, time	16	14	19	21	14	21	22	12
More time for family	14	12	16	18	11	18	17	12
Less or no travelling time	12	7	21	12	12	9	9	11
Flexibility for mothers/ no childcare	12	9	16	13	11	15	8	10
Happier staff, greater job satisfaction	11	10	11	17	7	21	4	4
Less interruptions and distractions	10	10	10	10	10	11	16	6
Retention of experienced staff	10	14	3	17	5	18	14	4
Increased productivity	9	12	5	15	6	20	6	3
No benefits in our organisation	7	10	3	3	9	4	5	7
Decreased stress levels	3	1	6	5	2	4	3	3
Cost savings: office overheads, less space needed	3	4	2	4	2	6	6	1

Non-flexible workplaces do not perceive the benefits

Respondents working in environments without established flexible workplace arrangements were much less likely to recognise the potential benefits. Among respondents in non-flexible workplaces, 33 per cent could not list any advantages, compared to only nine per cent of workers in a flexible workplace.

Comparing small and large organisations

Workers in smaller organisations had a much greater understanding of the benefits associated with flexible working than large organisations: 22 per cent of people in small Australian firms cited greater flexibility and more free time as advantages of flexible working, compared to only 13 per cent of workers in medium and large organisations. People in large organisations, on the other hand, recognised the value flexible working offered in retaining good staff (19 per cent). This was only recognised by three per cent of respondents from SMBs.

Perhaps understandably, workers in large organisations also perceived 'less interruptions and distractions' to be a primary benefit of flexible working. This reason was identified by 13 per cent of people in large organisations in Australia and 20 per cent in New Zealand.

These statistics offer an interesting contrast to the findings that workers in large organisations are more likely to work flexibly than those in smaller organisations.

Comparing Australia and New Zealand

Overall, New Zealand organisations are less able to identify the benefits of flexible working than their Australian counterparts. One-third overall could not cite any benefits, with small businesses in particular less likely to see the advantages: 44 per cent of people in New Zealand businesses with less than 10 staff could not cite any benefits. This compares with 18 per cent in the same category in Australia.

Table 2.16 tabulates the advantages cited according to company size and location.

Table 2.16: Main benefits of flexible workplace practices by company size

	Total %	AUS 5-19 emp %	AUS 20-99 emp %	AUS 100+ emp %	NZ 6-9 %	NZ 10-49 emp %	NZ 50+ emp %
<i>Weighted sample size</i>	600	143	132	217	12	32	64
More flexibility, time	16	22	11	14	18	23	20
More time for the family	14	14	7	16	12	19	16
Less or no travelling time	12	12	7	16	11	26	5
Flexibility for mothers	12	14	11	13	5	11	8
Happier staff, greater job satisfaction	11	7	11	15	5	8	8
Less interruptions and distractions	10	5	8	13	12	9	20
Retention of experienced staff	10	5	2	19	2	4	8
Increased productivity	9	6	8	13	11	6	10
Need benefits in our organisation	7	10	11	5	0	0	2
Decreased stress levels	3	3	6	1	4	3	7
Cost savings, office overheads, less space needed	3	4	1	3	4	4	8

The disadvantages of the flexible workplace

The disadvantages of flexible workplaces, as listed by respondents, can be broken down into three categories: lack of contact and communication, practical difficulty and weakened managerial control.

Lack of contact and communication: The greatest disadvantage associated with flexible workplaces is perceived to be a lack of contact and communication with team members. This was cited by 23 per cent of respondents, with an equal rating across managers and employees and companies of different size. Another eight per cent of workers stated that their job required face-to-face contact. Nine per cent of respondents also said that they did or could feel less part of a team. Managers were slightly more likely to list these disadvantages than employees.

It is interesting that communication and contact between co-workers or staff and clients was cited as the main challenge of flexible working when respondents were asked to provide their unprompted thoughts at the beginning of the survey. In later questions (see page 15), this issue was ranked as less of an issue than co-worker distrust of flexible-workers.

Practicality: Almost twice as many managers as employees (19 per cent and 10 per cent respectively) said flexible working was not practical within their organisation. This suggests that managers and employees have a significantly different understanding about what is required to make flexible working possible. It could also reflect employer apprehension or misunderstanding about flexible working that leads them to suggest it is 'not practical'.

The definition of 'practicality' does not generally extend to the need for technology or equipment, among either managers or employees. Only six per cent of respondents said a lack of appropriate resources or equipment was a drawback to flexible working. The notable exception to this rule was the response from large New Zealand companies where respondents were more likely to cite insufficient equipment at home as a downside to flexible working.

Lack of control: The third most common disadvantage perceived by managers, particularly those within large organisations, was lack of managerial control. Nineteen per cent of managers in large organisations in Australia and 10 per cent in New Zealand said lack of control was one of the main issues, compared with only eight per cent and five per cent of SMB respondents respectively.

Such 'lack of control' could be associated with the lack of policies in flexible workplaces, as discussed earlier (see page 20).

Interestingly, slightly more workers in organisations with flexible workplace arrangements perceived this lack of control than those without such arrangements. Those workers in non-flexible workplaces cited practical difficulties more often than emotive issues such as lack of control.

Chart 2.12 identifies the main disadvantages associated with flexible working.

Chart 2.12: Main disadvantages of flexible workplace practices

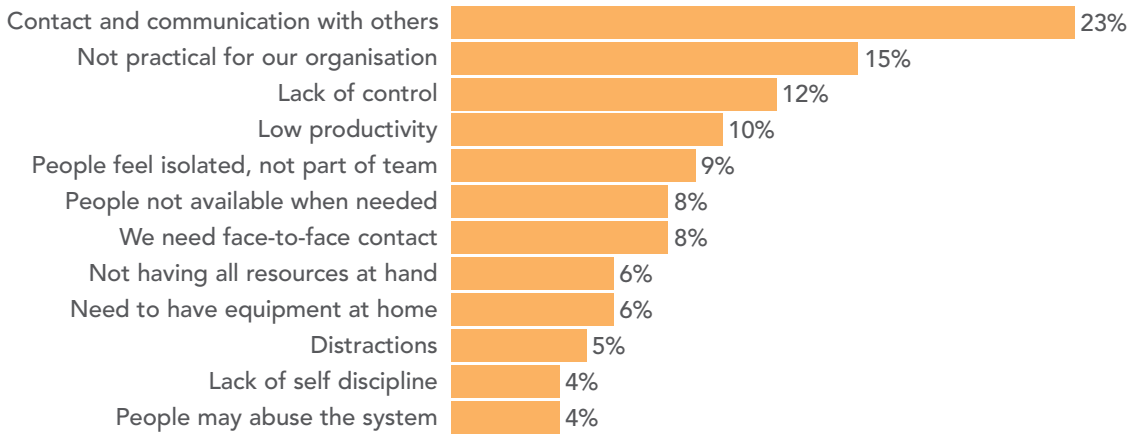


Table 2.17 shows this breakdown according to roles and workplace setup.

Table 2.17: Main disadvantages of flexible workplace practices by role and work environment

	Total %	Manager %	Employer %	Flexible Workplace %	Not flexible Workplace %
<i>Weighted sample size</i>	600	356	244	224	376
Contact and communication with other people	23	24	22	23	24
Not practical for our organisation	15	19	10	9	19
Lack of control	12	16	6	14	10
Low productivity	10	10	8	12	8
People feel isolated, not part of team	9	10	8	9	9
People not available when needed	8	8	8	10	7
We need face-to-face contact	8	8	8	8	7
Not having all resources at hand	6	5	8	7	6
Need to have equipment at home	6	5	8	6	6
Distractions	5	3	8	4	6
Lack of self discipline	4	4	5	3	5
People may abuse the system	4	5	2	4	4

Table 2.18 shows disadvantage factors according to company size.

Table 2.18: Main disadvantages of flexible workplace practices by company size

	Total %	AUS 5-19 emp %	AUS 20-99 emp %	AUS 100+ emp %	NZ 6-9 emp %	NZ 10-49 emp %	NZ 50+ emp %
<i>Weighted sample size</i>	600	143	132	217	12	32	64
Contact and communication with others	23	21	22	26	14	25	25
Not practical for our organisation	15	11	19	15	11	19	20
Lack of control	12	5	11	19	5	5	10
Low productivity	10	11	7	13	7	5	5
People feel isolated, not part of team	9	6	7	13	12	14	8
People not available when needed	8	11	4	4	14	10	25
We need face-to-face contact	8	8	7	4	16	10	18
Not having all resources at hand	6	8	5	5	14	10	8
Need to have equipment at home	6	6	9	3	5	8	15
Distractions	5	8	7	3	5	8	3
Lack of self discipline	4	4	6	3	9	10	5
People may abuse the system	4	3	6	4	2	3	3

Conclusion

Australian and New Zealand organisations are yet to realise the full potential of flexible working. Many have only a vague understanding of the advantages on offer, and those organisations that are implementing or seriously considering flexible working are often still grappling with how to put the theory into practice in a way that delivers maximum benefits to the organisation and its people.

The key findings of this survey include:

- Organisational mistrust of flexible workers is prevalent among Australian and New Zealand organisations
- Most managers in non-flexible workplaces would be unlikely to let employees work flexibly, even though most employees would like to, if it were allowed
- The difficulty of monitoring and supervising employees is perceived to be a main obstacle to the uptake of flexible working. This indicates scope to increase trust through greater use of performance criteria rather than attendance-based evaluation techniques
- Organisations are not providing policies to support flexible working. Where policies exist, most are individualised rather than standardised across the organisation
- Technology is not considered to be a main reason why organisations do not have flexible work practices

People are at the heart of flexible working; technology is simply a facilitator. Like any notion that involves personality, culture and change, organisations need to consider the processes, managerial practices, communication and policies that are relevant to their individual needs. There is no one-size-fits-all approach, although all organisations can certainly learn from others.

Despite confirming a general lack of uptake, this report finds reason for optimism. A number of organisations have implemented flexible working with success. Many are happy with the policies and performance evaluation techniques they have in place. This suggests monitoring and supervision of employees – and therefore trust – is not necessarily a problem in these environments.

There is a compelling argument that organisations need to offer benefits like flexible working in order to retain competitive advantage, particularly as the Australasian workforce diminishes. To do this, enterprises need to build their understanding of flexible working by studying best practice and adapting to a changing work environment.

With this in mind, Toshiba is producing a management guide to assist organisations in implementing flexible working. This outlines the range of considerations required for success and provides models and case studies.

Toshiba hopes that these insights and tools will ensure flexible working becomes much more accessible and advantageous to all businesses in Australia and New Zealand.

Glossary

Broadband

High-speed internet access provided via cable, digital subscriber line (DSL), integrated services digital network (ISDN), satellite or wireless technology. Broadband is faster than dial-up.

Employee

A member of staff with no direct managerial responsibility for other people in the company.

Flexible working

The ability for people to work from wherever is most suitable and productive for them and their employer. Examples of flexible workplaces include home offices, branch offices, airport lounges, internet cafes, hotel rooms, business centres and other external venues. Flexible working is normally conducted during standard office hours, although in many instances staff may work at different times that offer greater convenience or productivity. This definition generally refers to fulltime office workers.

Flexible workplace policy

Official company guidelines allowing fulltime employees who normally work in the office to work from home or somewhere else during usual office hours. Flexible workplace policies are generally defined across the whole organisation.

Manager

A member of staff with some managerial responsibility for other people in company.

Remote access

Access to the company network from a location outside the office.

Remote email

Access to a company email account from a location other than the office.

Salary sacrifice

When an employee gives up the right to receive part of the cash pay due under their employment contract. Usually the sacrifice is made in return for the employer providing the employee with some form of non-cash benefit.

Small-to-medium businesses (SMBs)

In Australia:

Small: 5-19 employees

Medium: 20-99 employees

In New Zealand:

Small: 6-9 employees

Medium: 10-49 employees

Teleworking

An arrangement allowing an employee to fulfil their regularly scheduled job responsibilities at any remote location, which assists productivity. This may include at home, a sister-office or on-the-road.

Telecommuting

An arrangement allowing an employee to work both at home and the office to fulfil their regularly scheduled job responsibilities.

Virtual private network (VPN)

Using encryption to provide a secure connection through an otherwise insecure network, typically the internet. VPNs are widely used by enterprises to create wide area networks (WANs) that span large geographic areas, to connect branch offices to the main office and to enable mobile users to access company networks remotely.

About the Companies

About Toshiba (Australia) Information Systems Division

Toshiba's Information Systems Division (ISD) is a division of Toshiba (Australia) Pty Limited which is a wholly owned subsidiary of Toshiba Corporation, the seventh largest integrated manufacturer of electric and electronic equipment, with around 165,000 employees worldwide, and annual sales of over US\$47 billion on a consolidated basis.

Australian mobile computing market leader, Toshiba ISD is unique among vendors, specialising exclusively in mobile solutions and services. It is also the only leading computer brand that is 100 per cent channel-centric. A global reputation for quality has been achieved through an R&D budget roughly equal to Australia's total expenditure as a country in this area.

Since it pioneered the notebook market in 1985, Toshiba reached another milestone at the start of 2004, hitting the one million mark for notebooks sold in Australia and New Zealand.

In recent years, Toshiba ISD extended its solutions offering for Australia and New Zealand with the inclusion of a range of projectors, Pocket PCs and personal storage products.

About Sweeney Research

Sweeney Research was established in Melbourne in 1972.

Since that time the organisation has grown steadily and is now one of the five largest research consultancies in Australia with an annual turnover in the region of \$10 million and offices in both Melbourne and Sydney.

With expertise in both qualitative and quantitative research, Sweeney Research offers a full range of research services to an extensive client base both in Australia and overseas with a focus on both business-to-business and consumer-based research.

In addition to ad hoc studies conducted in a range of sectors covering telecommunications, IT, insurance, health and government, Sweeney Research is also responsible for on-going publications including the Sweeney Sports Report, Sweeney Arts Report, and the recently launched Spin Sweeney Report – the most definitive study of 16-28 year-olds in Australia.

References

1. 'All in it together: A study undertaken for The Department of Aged Care by Access Economics' (June 2000), Access Economics.
2. Bliss, W (2000), "The Cost of Turnover May be Greater than You Think, Reports Bliss & Associates." February 15, 2000.

Resources

There are various studies indicating the cost of labour staff turnover as a percentage of the incumbent's salary. Estimates and tools for calculating the cost of replacing a lost worker can be found at the following websites:

Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency
http://www.eowa.gov.au/Information_Centres/Resource_Centre.asp
Accessed 26th August 2004

'Cost of replacing staff: an analysis'
Quay Appointments
<http://www.quayappointments.com.au/documents/newsletteraugust.pdf>
Accessed 26th August 2004

Training.com.au
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