

MANAGING AND MOTIVATING FLEXIBLE TEAMS

AN INCLUSIVE RECRUITMENT GUIDE BY
AAI EMPLOYABILITY



Flexible work is here to stay.

What started as a must-have response to the pandemic has become a valuable method of improving productivity, attracting new talent, and improving employee retention.

80% of professionals would recommend remote working to a friend, according to Statista, the respected global data website, and nearly 1 in 3 employees now work exclusively for remote companies.

Whether you are embracing the trend of hybrid work, remote work, or just a condensed work week, it's important to have the right strategy in place.

As a leader, your management style will determine whether your employees continue to succeed in their role, regardless of where they might be working.

Fortunately, we have some strategies to help you make the transition to the age of remote work. In this report you will learn everything you need to know about adapting to the different forms of flexible work so that you can empower and enrich your workforce.

Joy Lewis
CEO
AAI Employability



THE RISE OF FLEXIBLE WORK

It's only recently that flexible work has begun to really take off.

As more organisations began experimenting with flexible work, the benefits of this approach became increasingly evident.

PwC reported around **4 in 5 employers** believe the shift to remote work has successfully helped maintain their teams' efficiency and productivity.



According to GitLab, around 56% of the remote workers in the world today changed their workstyle after the 2020 pandemic. During this time, remote and distance working strategies were necessary for most companies to keep teams operational.

While not every company can embrace a fully remote approach, new forms of flexible working styles have begun to emerge to suit different requirements too.

No matter what kind of company you run, it's impossible to ignore the rise of flexible work.

WHAT IS A FLEXIBLE TEAM? TYPES OF FLEXIBLE WORK

The first step in managing any flexible team is defining what "flexibility" will look like for your workforce.

GALLUP reports around **45% of employees** are now working completely remotely on a hybrid schedule, while a handful of other companies are looking into options like condensed work (the 4-day work week) or flextime options.





REMOTE WORK

When most people visualise flexible work, they picture remote work. This involves allowing individuals in your team to work outside a central office environment.

Remote work does not have to mean "working from home". While most remote workers use their homes as their office, others use flexible office spaces and collaborative environments. The key to a successful remote working team is ensuring your employees can effectively do their job from anywhere in the world, provided they have the right equipment.

Companies employing remote workers can reduce overhead expenses in their office spaces, and access talent from all over the globe, without geographical restrictions.

Remote work opportunities can also make your business more appealing to talent, especially Gen Z (people born late 90s to early 2010s), as, according to **Forbes**, around **60%** say they want to work remotely, either on a full or part-time basis.

HYBRID WORK

Some team members in a company may not be able to work consistently from home due to distractions in their home environment.

Others may sometimes need to work in-office to access specialist tools they cannot use at home.

Hybrid work is a way for team members to access the benefits of the office and the remote working environment. The methodology places importance on **how** employees work, rather than **where** they work, allowing staff to choose the best location for their needs at any given time.



**IT'S
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CONDENSED WORK (4-DAY WORK WEEKS)

A condensed work structure is one of the most recent developments in the modern workplace, capturing the attention of companies worldwide.

This methodology has already been tested in multiple environments across the globe, proving it may be possible to achieve **higher levels of productivity** by condensing the weekly schedule into four days instead of five.

Studies are beginning to show that four-day weeks can significantly improve work/life balance and stronger employee wellbeing. Employers can save money on overheads and attract a wider range of employees with the four-day week. On the other hand, employees complete more of their work in less time so that they can enjoy a long weekend for recuperation and rest.

FLEXTIME

Flextime is a form of working arrangement that allows employees more freedom to choose when working days and weeks begin and end, provided they meet their deadlines and work their contracted number of hours.

This form of working arrangement is often a viable choice for people who need more freedom to arrange their workdays around other commitments, like study or family life.



REALIGNING COMPANY CULTURE FOR FLEXIBLE WORK

Once you know what flexible work makes sense for your company, you will need to realign your brand culture.

Managing a flexible team is challenging if your distributed employees are not aligned around the same values and principles. However, relationships and trust developed from years of working together in person can be difficult to build when teams are not always face-to-face.

Fortunately, there are a few ways business leaders can adapt company culture for a flexible working strategy.



Around 83% of HR professionals say their companies are embracing flexible work, but 50% are concerned about the impact this will have on company culture.

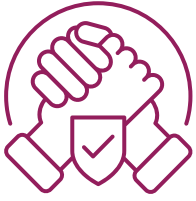
39% of C-level executives even believe company culture may have already been diluted due to flexible working during the pandemic.



INSTIL NEW VALUES

A strong company culture revolves around a strong set of shared values among your team members.

Start by building a culture of personal responsibility and accountability. Let your team members know they will be responsible for delivering results and proving they can make their flexible work schedule count.



ESTABLISH AN ENVIRONMENT OF MUTUAL TRUST

Trust is one of the most important parts of strong company culture in the age of flexible work. Unfortunately, People Management reports around two-thirds of employers say they don't trust their staff to deliver their best work when operating outside the office.

Employees cannot deliver exceptional results if they do not feel trusted by their managers.

The good news is, over the last couple of years, most companies have already discovered their fears about lack of productivity among remote employees to be unfounded. Countless staff members shifting to remote or flexible work have actually become more productive.



UPDATE YOUR COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

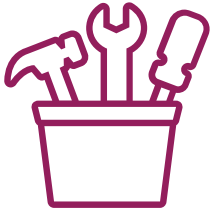
Companies working in a flexible world rely on effective communication. Reduced communication leads to feelings of isolation and can damage the sense of belonging among your team members. With this in mind, companies need to invest in new methods of communication and collaboration.

- Use messaging tools like Slack and Microsoft Teams to give your employees a fast-paced and asynchronous way to chat
- Set up schedules for regular team meetings over audio and video conferencing. Video meetings are particularly useful for flexible teams

According to one survey from **GIGAOM**, around **87%** of remote employees felt more connected to the rest of their team with access to video conferencing tools.

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INVEST IN THE RIGHT EQUIPMENT AND TOOLS

Building an effective company culture around flexible work requires companies to invest in the correct tools and resources for their workforce. **By 2025, around 70% of the workforce will be working remotely, at least part-time.** However, no employee can achieve their best results if they do not have access to the correct tools.

Some common requirements include:

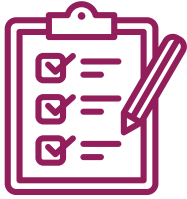
- **Office equipment:** Standard office equipment like desks, phones, cameras, chairs, and computers, are generally a must-have.
- **Connectivity:** Working in a flexible environment today requires a strong internet connection. If your employee does not have the best internet connection, you may need to offer advice and support.
- **Software:** Software solutions like access to specific programmes, often delivered over the cloud, will be crucial for any employee.



ADAPTING YOUR LEADERSHIP FOR FLEXIBLE WORK

The success of most flexible work strategies will depend highly on the skills and methodologies of your managers and team leaders.

Ensure all managers and leaders know how workplace successes will be measured and the expectations for each team.



FOCUS ON OUTCOME-BASED ASSESSMENT

In a flexible work environment where it is impossible to constantly check over an employee's shoulder, the focus needs to shift to the actual output of the team member.

Rather than worrying if employees are online and working at certain hours, business leaders need to start assessing team members based on what they are delivering each week.



CREATE STRATEGIES FOR ASSIGNING WORK

Sometimes, when employees are working remotely, it is hard to assess which of your team members are overworked and which are not.

To **ensure good well-being among staff members, boost staff retention, and enhance engagement**, team leaders must keep their fingers on the pulse of their workforce. This could mean regularly checking in with team members to see if they are comfortable with the amount of work they are receiving or having an open-door policy for people who need help.



IDEAS FOR MOTIVATING AND ENGAGING TEAMS

There's no one-size-fits-all strategy for keeping a flexible team engaged, motivated, and productive. For most companies, the right plan will involve a mixture of company culture changes and leadership skills. However, there are a few other ways to boost your chances of success with a distributed workforce.

Here are several quick ideas to help any team.

INVEST REGULARLY IN TEAM BUILDING

Today, employee motivation is not based entirely on monetary benefits in the workplace. Teams are made up of human beings who want to feel comfortable and supported in their role. Team building activities can help your staff members to form bonds with their colleagues wherever they are, even if they are working remotely.

Simple strategies, like virtual game events or digital coffee mornings with your employees, can help build camaraderie, improving employee retention.

1. EXPLORE GAMIFICATION

It is easy to get disconnected from the goals and vision of the business when you are located outside of the office walls. Gamification is one of the best ways to bring people back on track in your flexible workforce.

Competitions can be a great way to keep team members motivated, with 97% of employees saying gamified activities improve the quality of their work. You can even use gamification methods to enhance team bonding by having certain groups work together to achieve goals.

2. SHOW EMPATHY

Empathy in the workplace is more important today than ever before. Many top candidates want to work with businesses that show a genuine interest in their wellbeing. Showing empathy simply by reaching out and asking how people are, or giving employees time off for mental health days, can make your team feel more engaged and connected.

Empathy is also a fantastic way to improve your chances of retaining current talent and attracting top staff members in the future. With the right degree of empathy, you can differentiate your employer brand and become more appealing to employees.

3. HIRE THE RIGHT PEOPLE

Not everyone who approaches your team will be well-suited to your new flexible work style.

Finding candidates who will be comfortable with the kind of schedules and working styles you offer is an extra layer in the recruitment process which is not always an easy task.

As an **experienced inclusive recruitment company**, we will work with you to help your organisation achieve success by finding the 'right' employees to work according to the values you will be instilling in your flexible staff.

Getting a little extra help with everything from recruitment to writing job descriptions and onboarding could be crucial for organisations trying to stay competitive in a candidate-led environment.

To find out how we can help you build your team this year with an expert, seamless recruitment process, get in touch today.

Joy Lewis
CEO
AAI EmployAbility

HAVE YOU LOOKED INTO HIRING WITH AAI? WE'VE SUPPORTED 1100+ GROWING BUSINESSES WITH THEIR RECRUITMENT NEEDS.

YOUR NEXT ACTIONS:

TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT OUR SERVICES, CONTACT US TODAY AT [AAI-EMPLOYABILITY.ORG.UK](mailto:TEAM@AAI-EMPLOYABILITY.ORG.UK)

GET IN TOUCH WITH THE TEAM: TEAM@AAI-EMPLOYABILITY.ORG.UK

GET IN TOUCH WITH THE CEO: JOY@AAI-EMPLOYABILITY.ORG.UK



ABOUT AAI EMPLOYABILITY



AAI is an award-winning social enterprise that supports the private, public and third sectors to access talent of all ages, skillsets and backgrounds. It also helps businesses to better attract and retain diversity.

AAI has been a highly respected name for 12 years now, offering tried, tested and flexible inclusive recruitment services from ad hoc, short-term projects, including internships and maternity leave, to permanent positions. It has worked with over 1100+ growing businesses of all sizes, including Scottish Government, the NHS, Phoenix, SMEs and an array of startups and charities.



AAI will support both employers and candidates before, during and after the post, as the need arises. It uses its surplus to support disadvantaged people and marginalised groups struggling to enter the workforce.



AAI also works with private-sector businesses offering tailored social-impact projects around the themes of gender and racial diversity, disability and supporting the third/voluntary sector. These projects are aimed at improving attraction and retention of staff as well as providing tangible and reportable social and financial impact.

ABOUT JOY LEWIS



Joy joined the Centre for Scottish Public Policy in January 2009 and spun out AAI EmployAbility (then, Adopt an Intern) a year later. The company has since gone from strength to strength, placing over 1700 graduates and returners into valuable paid work across the UK.

She served for 20 years in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and has lived and worked in Brazil, Argentina and Germany. Joy also worked for many years in fashion retail where she recruited, trained and mentored women for Sales Manager posts, culminating in a successful business in Germany.

After addressing their first employment injustice of unpaid graduate internships, Joy and the AAI team have widened their scope of inclusive employment to include diversity and inclusion services to help more businesses to grow and more talented people to access opportunity.

