

qualtrics^{XM}



What people really want from flexible work

How to align new ways of working with people's needs & expectations to attract, engage & retain talent.



Introduction

Over the last two years, employees and employers have endured unprecedented levels of uncertainty, a global pandemic, an increasing cost of living, and geopolitical pressures. The psychological impacts of this ongoing stress must not be underestimated.

Along with fundamental changes to the way people live and work, global challenges continue to result in a shakeup of priorities and a critical review of employees' value alignment with their employer. Having become accustomed to flexible work arrangements and adjusting their work schedules to fit the demands of their lives, people are now looking for their employers to align with their needs and expectations.

In a competitive hiring environment which has left many industries short-staffed and in a constant race for talent, rethinking traditional ways of working will play a huge part in attracting and retaining employees.

As employers navigate the shift toward new working models, they have a once in a generation opportunity to redefine the future of work for the current workforce, and those that follow.

This means it's critical employers deeply understand what employees expect in order to ensure newly adopted programs have a positive long-term impact. For example, the increasingly touted 'four-day work week' has gained momentum with pilots taking place across the globe and plenty of headlines in the media, though our research reveals employees don't view this as a complete solution.

The four-day work week is a reduction from a standard work week where employees retain 100 per cent of their pay while reducing their work hours to 80 per cent, provided they commit to maintaining 100 per cent productivity – it's also known as a 100:80:100 model.

We conducted research across a number of industries throughout Asia Pacific & Japan and share our findings from the study here to help leaders identify what people really want at work and to ensure the programs being delivered align with the needs and expectations of valued employees. The way forward will be defined by leading with empathy, and listening to employees' real needs while taking action to address them. Ensuring that employees feel heard and their voice matters is something every leader must do now.

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SECTION 1

Four-day work week, or greater flexibility?

Four-day work week, or greater flexibility?

Despite the considerable buzz of a four-day work week, our research shows that what people are really seeking is greater flexibility in their approach to work. While 84% of respondents would support their employer implementing a four-day work week, if given a choice 60% of employees across Asia Pacific and Japan would prefer to have a flexible approach to work versus 40% preferring a four-day work week.

Workplace flexibility means



Working a predetermined number of hours



Running errands and going to doctor appointments during the workday



Working the hours and days chosen



Working from any location

Predominantly, employees cite improvements to their mental health and wellbeing as the reasons for seeking flexibility. Recent studies have confirmed that employees seek flexible work options primarily due to the benefit of allowing life's priorities to co-exist more peacefully while reducing employee stress levels. Our research backs this up, with respondents saying they would anticipate benefits to their health and wellbeing from a four-day work week - yet greater flexibility is still ultimately preferred over a reduced number of days.



Whilst meeting the needs & expectations of your employees for more flexibility & empowerment over their work is certainly a start, our findings highlight that employees themselves don't see a four-day work week as a full solution. Three quarters (71%) say that if they adopted a 4-day work week they would have to work longer hours and days to make up for the lost time. Over half of employees (59%) have concerns that a shorter week would likely frustrate customers and clients. And more than half (57%) say it would have a negative impact on sales and revenue goals at their company.

When considering the potential impacts of a shorter work week, leaders need to find a way to balance flexibility and employee expectations with business performance in a way that optimises the benefits of each. Employee concerns cannot be ignored, or overlooked by imagining a different schedule will provide the solution. These important employee needs directly impact every aspect of employee experience.

By looking at the benefits people expect from a four-day work week we can begin to tackle the root of the problem, versus the symptoms, and manage the very real concerns for employees' mental health and well-being.

While four-day weeks may address symptoms, they don't appear to solve the origins of the issue or the real problem any more than handing out more holiday time would. By addressing mental health as the major concern, we can better help employees without disrupting client relationships or negatively impacting business.

SECTION 2

Managing mental health and wellbeing in the workplace

Managing mental health and wellbeing in the workplace

When exploring work-life balance, the majority of respondents believed a four-day work week could improve work-life balance and mental wellbeing. However, these responses are countered by concerns regarding working longer hours.

A four-day work week would

PROS

83%

improve my work-life balance

79%

improve my mental wellbeing

78%

make me more productive

77%

help our company recruit talent

CONS

71%

work longer hours and days to make up for the lost time

59%

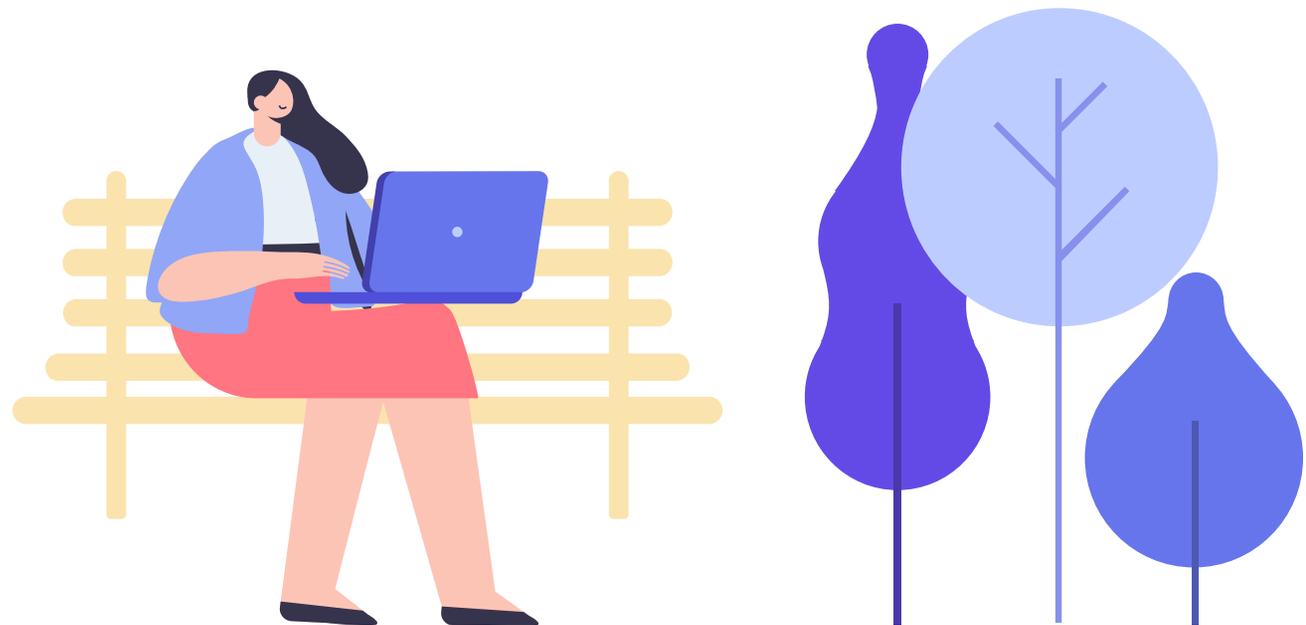
likely frustrate customers and clients

57%

have a negative impact on sales and revenue goals

While 68% of people across the Asia Pacific & Japan region responded that their job is the main source of their mental health challenges, in May 2022 similar volumes of respondents said working remotely has had a positive (26%) and negative (24%) impact on their mental health.

This clear divide in employee experience makes it essential to ensure employees are enabled to succeed in both physical and digital environments and understanding the personal needs and expectations of every talent segment is critical as organisations embrace hybrid working. In order to make certain these new ways of working are a productive experience, it is critical that no-one is left behind.



Top 4 suggestions on how employers could help improve the mental health of employees

01

Understand the complete drivers of health and wellbeing to take targeted, meaningful action.

02

Make mental health a company value, embedding its importance in day-to-day working as well as considering company-wide mental health holiday days.

03

Model healthy-work life integration through new ways of working.

04

Recognise employee wellbeing as a key performance indicator of mental health and track trends in wellbeing over time for useful insights that would make it easier for employers to care for staff, when and where help is most needed.

An overwhelming majority of respondents also welcomed their employer offering paid mental health days, with 92% saying that would be a good long-term solution to ensuring good mental health.

Empower every employee to drive positive well-being at work with Qualtrics' scientifically backed methodology.

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SECTION 3

Moving your EX program upstream

Moving your EX program upstream

With plenty of change afoot in the workplace, it is important employers understand the impact new policies and working conditions make. The most important part of any working model isn't simply the hours or days worked, but being able to meaningfully deliver what employees want and ensuring everyone benefits from the transformations underway. Regular listening and acting on employee feedback enables people leaders to stay aligned with employee's needs and lead with empathy - which is of critical importance at this time.



Downstream actions react to problems once they've occurred. Upstream efforts aim to prevent those problems from happening.

Dan Heath

*New York Times bestselling author of Upstream:
The Quest to Solve Problems Before They Happen*

For organisations rethinking traditional ways of working, these findings reveal the potential effect of the changes being considered and implemented. In this way, adjustments can be prioritised, making the most impact without sacrificing culture, retention, or results. With key data to hand, employers can take a more holistic approach to employee experience, delivering thoughtful solutions to how people are enabled, supported and measured. Flexibility will no doubt be a significant part of this and it's unlikely that a prescriptive, one-size-fits-all approach will work.



Increasingly, we're seeing people make career decisions and find fulfillment in their jobs by working for organisations that truly understand and respond to their needs, and where they feel they belong. That's why the most important part of any working model isn't simply the hours or days worked - it's being able to have conversations with individuals on a deeper level to understand and meaningfully deliver what people want and expect to ensure everyone benefits from the transformations underway.

Steve Bennetts

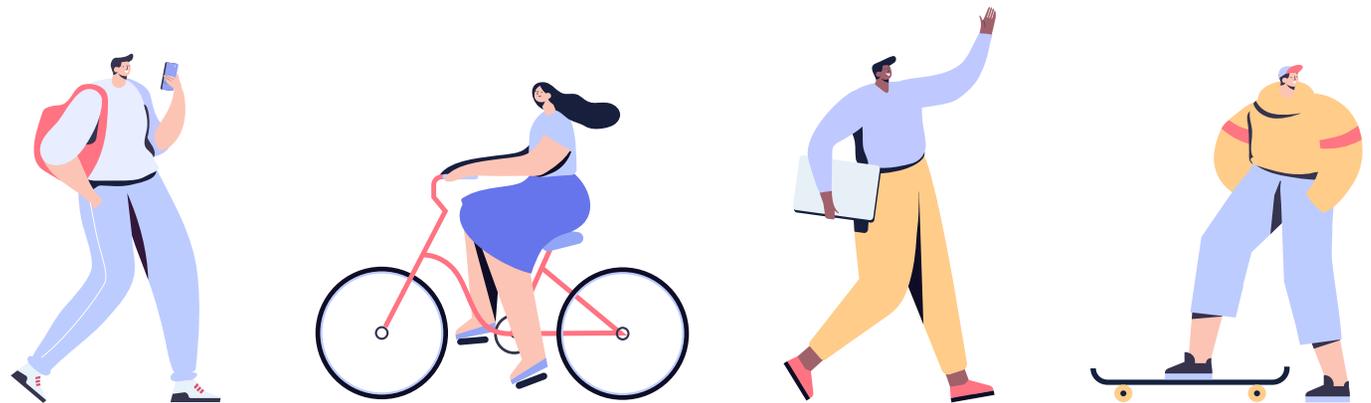
*Head of Growth & Strategy, EX Solutions,
Asia-Pacific & Japan | Psychologist*

Being proactive to understand how employees want to work - and the subsequent impact - will enable employers to make informed decisions ensuring the new ways of working adopted align with the varied needs of the entire workforce. This will help solve problems, such as current health and wellbeing challenges, while delivering a sense of belonging.

Watch Now On Demand: Moving your EX Programs Upstream

Learn how you can use upstream thinking and XM technology to proactively solve employee experience problems at their source.

WATCH NOW



SECTION 4

A new way to measure

A new way to measure

A shift toward a flexible approach to work is driving conversations regarding how to measure performance in this new work landscape. One potential solution to the challenges posed by new working models is having employee performance measured by results rather than hours and days worked.

83% of respondents were supportive of an outcomes-based approach and elaborated on the reasons they back this form of measurement.

- + Increased efficiency
- + Improved focus
- + Recognition for contributions and achievements
- + Reduced discrimination by creating even playing field among coworkers
- + Fewer hours worked if measured by performance

This approach will require many business leaders to build their capability in outcome-based management approaches, focusing on the results and empowering people to achieve them, trusting in teams to produce results.

Develop high-performing employees and stronger teams with 360-degree feedback insights that drive development, productivity and engagement.

[LEARN HOW](#)

Ready to take your employee experience to the next level with the Qualtrics XM Platform?

- + Empower your business with high-quality experience data
- + Stay aligned with the changing needs of your workforce
- + Engage employees and build a positive culture
- + Retain high performers and maintain business results
- + Make decisions on new ways of working with certainty

BOOK DEMO



APPENDIX

Methodology & Demographics

Methodology & Demographics

Methodology

The study was carried out in May 2022, and includes 9,546 respondents 18 years of age or older employed full-or part-time across a range of industries.

Demographics

This study spoke with employees across 11 countries in Asia Pacific and Japan. Numbers are based on the individual's selection of where they consider their country of residence, including regional distinctions.

- + Australia 1,073
- + Hong Kong 1,038
- + India 1,277
- + Indonesia 635
- + Japan 1,201
- + Malaysia 557
- + New Zealand 532
- + Philippines 596
- + Singapore 1,015
- + South Korea 1,010
- + Thailand 612

Industries:

- + Educational
- + Finance and Insurance
- + Government
- + Healthcare
- + Life Sciences
- + Manufacturing
- + Media and Advertising
- + Other
- + Professional Services
- + Retail
- + Technology & IT
- + Telecommunications
- + Travel, Hospitality or Food Services
- + Utilities, Energy, Resources & Industrials
(e.g., mining, oil, gas, power, utilities)

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Ready to
get started?

BOOK DEMO

