

Findings of The Citrix Work Life Balance Index released

The Citrix Work Life Balance Index reveals a picture of lengthy commutes, inflexible working hours and job roles that are demanding and require frequent overtime...

The findings of the study, conducted by FreedThinkers to examine the working lives of 451 South African office workers, argues that a shift to more flexible working practices is the best means of tackling this culture.

20% of office workers are working longer hours than contracted - on average five-and-a-half hours per week. As a result, these office workers are putting in 286 hours of free time each year on average - equating to a loss in gross earnings of R22,440, based on the BankServAfrica Disposable Salary Index of June 2014.

The average commute for the South African worker is 63 minutes per day - 31% of respondents indicated that this is having a negative impact on their health.

Office workers could effectively 'lose' up to 559 hours of time per year - between the hours spent commuting to and from work, on average 5.25 per week, and unpaid overtime worked, 5.5 hours per week.

Flexible working

There is still a strong sentiment amongst workers that employers are reluctant to allow flexible working conditions, even though 54% of the workforce would embrace the opportunity if available.

Seven out of 10 workers have never worked in an environment where flexible working was allowed. Fifty-five percent believe that their employers are actively resisting or failing to embrace flexible working arrangements.

Employer resistance

According to employees, one of the main reasons for employers resisting flexible working is the belief that the workforce will take advantage of flexible arrangements, with few employees having the discipline to work unsupervised.

Interestingly, 54% of employees indicated that they would be likely or very likely to work from home if their employer allowed it - proving that the South African workforce is calling for a more flexible approach to working.

The average commute for the South African worker is 63 minutes per day with 31% indicating that this is having a negative impact on their health. Office workers reported that the length of their daily commute has negatively impacted their social lives (15%); their sleeping habits have suffered (12%) while a further 12% have reduced the amount of exercise they are getting.

Positive future



Office workers envisage the future of work quite positively, stating that there will be an increase in flexible working arrangements and business will be able to harness new technology to improve productivity. They also feel that these anticipated changes will improve communication and relationships between employees and employers.

Further, 66% of workers feel that technological advances, such as smartphones, tablets and phablets have already improved their work-life balance and that further advances will enable them to improve this balance.

Brendan McAravey

Brendan McAravey, Country Manager, South Africa of Citrix, said: "Technology now enables us to work from anywhere, at any time. It is time to move on from judging people on how long they spend at their desks to evaluating them on the work they actually deliver. By realising that employees do not have to be in the office from eight to five, employers will reap the benefits of an even more productive, contented workforce - potentially reaching a new, untapped pool of talent whilst retaining and motivating existing employees.

"Previous research conducted by Citrix into the economic impact of mobility in its broadest form - the movement of people, information and knowledge - showed that a 5% increase in the mobility of the population could increase South Africa's GDP by 40%. Flexible working plays a significant part in this broader issue and its advantages should not be underestimated."

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