

Eyeing Productivity, Jobseekers Want Control Over Their Schedules and Employers May Agree

40-Hour Work Weeks Could Be a Thing of the Past

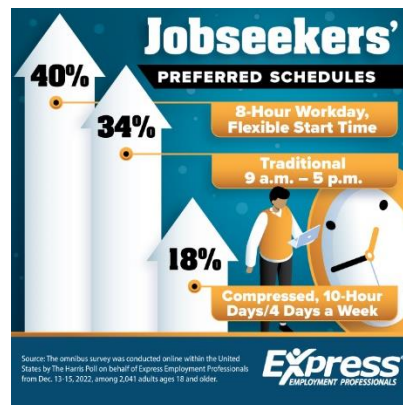
Latest Results from The Harris Poll

Note: If you would like to arrange for an interview with a local Express franchise owner on this topic, please go to ExpressPros.com to find the nearest location.

OKLAHOMA CITY, June 14, 2023—American jobseekers and companies may be rethinking the traditional 40-hour work week as long as productivity remains at, or exceeds, current levels.

This is according to a recent survey from The Harris Poll commissioned by Express Employment Professionals.

When given the option of working an 8-hour workday (but flexible start time), traditional 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. or a compressed schedule such as 10 hours per day for 4 days a week, jobseekers most commonly pick an 8-hour day with a flexible start time (40%). Nearly 1 in 5 (18%) would prefer a compressed schedule.



And, if given the ability to design their own work schedule (i.e., working non-traditional hours for the same pay), most feel they would be more productive (56%) or they would have about

the same level of productivity (39%).

And it appears that companies may also be embracing the idea of non-traditional work schedules.

More than 9 in 10 hiring managers (94%) report employees at their company are productive—with nearly half (48%) saying they are very productive currently. And, if given the ability to design their own schedules, hiring managers feel employees would have about the same level of productivity (53%) or even be more productive (35%).

Ultimately, it appears 40-hour work weeks are not necessarily needed to have a productive workforce. And, two-thirds of jobseekers (66%) agree they will soon be a thing of the past.

However, there still appears to be some hesitation in companies offering this amount of flexibility.

Three-quarters of hiring managers (75%) say they have some concerns about their company offering flexible work hours, including decreased productivity (30%), increased distractions (29%), delayed communications (28%) and an inability of employees to collaborate (28%).

Looking Ahead

“I do believe the 40-hour work week will become less and less of a focus for white-collar positions,” said Alyssa Chumbley, an Express franchise owner in Indiana. “Blue collar companies will have to be more flexible with their 40-hour work week schedule, which includes re-envisioning ‘shift work or swing shifts.’”

In Virginia, Express franchise owner Chris Cary doesn’t think 40-hour work weeks are in the past just yet.

“Most of the businesses we work with still do the standard 40-hour week,” he said. “Although, we are hearing from more and more of our people that having the ability to work fewer days would be fantastic.”

As a test of success, productivity and job satisfaction will come from the employee driving the “results,” not so much the hours per week they work to get to that result, according to Chumbley.

“People are driven by what they do and how well they do it, not for how long they do it,” she said. “It’s best to feed into that driving factor through positive reinforcement (fewer hours worked per week; perhaps even occasionally) instead of negative (work 40 hours or more, no matter what).”

Benefits and Consequences

Both franchise owners see the value of offering flexible schedules, especially in a tight labor market where any means to improve recruiting and retention are welcome.

“As long as the employer set the proper upfront expectations of what they expect from the employee, how they evaluate success and how they will hold them accountable, I do believe the workforce will benefit tremendously with taking control of their work/life schedules and finding peace and contentment both at home and at work,” Chumbley said.

For Cary, he believes workers of the past felt little control over their schedules, and companies that “get it right the quickest will have a competitive advantage with much happier employees.”

“Allowing flexible schedules would give employees much more autonomy and allow them the time to navigate all the ‘outside of work’ issues without feeling the pressure of the need to be ‘at work,’” he said.

But as with any new initiative, employers are still concerned with the potential impacts on workers, which, according to Cary, include a lack of accountability, more distractions from people that work from home, blurred lines of when work starts and home begins and distrust from other employees working a traditional schedule.

“Flexibility requires a whole lot of trust,” Chumbley added. “As a leader, you have to be willing to set proper expectations and hold each person accountable to not just their role and responsibilities but also their impact on the organization. If the leader isn’t willing to have the tough conversation and make the hard calls, the flexible work model may not be a good fit for their organization or leadership style if they’re wanting their business to thrive and not spin out of control.”

Overall, Chumbley says each stage of life is different for every employee, and it’s up to the employer to make a “one-size fits all” environment or choose to customize the work schedule individually and be that “employer for life” no matter the stage of life.

“Despite the return of some segments to the workforce, businesses are still desperate for workers, and figuring out what incentives work best for employees at individual companies is key,” Express Employment International CEO Bill Stoller said. “If production can remain high while offering flexible scheduling options, it may be worth it to try.”

Survey Methodology

The Job Insights survey was conducted online within the United States by The Harris Poll on behalf of Express Employment Professionals between Dec. 1 and Dec. 15, 2022, among 1,002 U.S. hiring decision-makers (defined as adults ages 18+ in the U.S. who are employed full-time or self-employed, work at companies with more than one employee, and have full/significant involvement in hiring decisions at their company). Data were weighted where necessary by

company size to bring them into line with their actual proportions in the population. Respondents for this survey were selected from among those who have agreed to participate in our surveys. The sampling precision of Harris online polls is measured by using a Bayesian credible interval. For this study, the sample data is accurate to within + 3.2 percentage points using a 95% confidence level. This credible interval will be wider among subsets of the surveyed population of interest.

The omnibus survey was conducted online within the United States by The Harris Poll on behalf of Express Employment Professionals from Dec. 13-15, 2022, among 2,041 adults ages 18 and older. Data are weighted where necessary by age, gender, race/ethnicity, region, education, marital status, household size, household income and propensity to be online, to bring them in line with their actual proportions in the population. Respondents for this survey were selected from among those who have agreed to participate in our surveys. The sampling precision of Harris online polls is measured by using a Bayesian credible interval. For this study, the sample data is accurate to within + 2.8 percentage points using a 95% confidence level.

If you would like to arrange for an interview with Bill Stoller to discuss this topic, please contact Sheena Hollander, Director of Corporate Communications and PR, at (405) 717-5966.

About Bill Stoller

William H. "Bill" Stoller is chairman and chief executive officer of Express Employment International. Founded in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, the international staffing franchisor supports the Express Employment Professionals franchise and related brands. The Express franchise brand is an industry-leading, international staffing company with franchise locations in the U.S., Canada, South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand.

About Express Employment Professionals

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