



Champions for
Change

Developing a workplace flexibility strategy



"KPMG is committed to fostering an inclusive and diverse culture and increasing flexibility in working arrangements is vital to this. We believe flexibility is a crucial business strategy and that our approach to flexible working is key to attracting and retaining our talented people, encourages diversity and increases employee happiness and engagement."

ROSS BUCKLEY
CHAMPION AND EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN, KPMG



"A chief executive's most important role is to set the tone for the organisation's culture by demonstrating a commitment to diversity and inclusion. I have personally made flexibility a focus in order to accommodate different needs, as I believe it's what the modern employer needs to offer. Work is something you do, not necessarily somewhere you go."

ANNA STOVE
CHAMPION AND MANAGING DIRECTOR, GSK NZ

What is a workplace flexibility strategy?

As a step-by-step approach to creating a flexible organisation, a strategy helps you to resource and establish flexible workplace policies by enabling decision-making and supporting implementation. It recognises that building effective flexible workplaces is a broader organisational issue, and not simply about a series of individual working arrangements.

Your organisation's strategy will help to provide the best possible environment for your flexible workplace policies to operate in a way that is effective, fair and beneficial to both employee and employer. As such, there is no 'one size fits all' flexible work place strategy – the exact shape will depend on the unique needs of your organisation.



Why flexibility?

Workplace flexibility is an essential enabler for managing the pace of change in today's world of work.

It allows you, as an employer, to attract and retain top talent (your people), achieve increased productivity (your business), and foster an agile response to changing market needs (your customers and environment).

It's a diverse and in-depth strategy that goes beyond the traditional thinking of 'part-time work for new parents' to an integrated mindset and way of work accessible to all.

Why develop a strategy for your organisation?

By establishing a flexible workplace strategy that aligns with wider business objectives, your business can:

- » **achieve the benefits of a flexible workplace** by establishing the right systems, structures and guidelines
- » **demonstrate its commitment** to flexibility as a business driver
- » **get the entire organisation and leadership on board** with flexible working arrangements.

A considered and well-tested strategy is also key to establishing an effective flexible working policy as it will help to inform the different aspects that this policy should cover, like the most effective kinds of flexible working for a particular business or team and how any issues can be resolved.

Five steps to developing an effective flexible working strategy



A clear vision

Using your organisation's flexibility business case as a framework, develop a clear and inspiring vision of workplace flexibility at your organisation - what aspects of flexible working you'll bring on board and how this will help your business to thrive.



Fostering leadership

To be truly successful, a flexibility strategy needs to have the support of your executive leadership team. Establishing flexibility as a normal working practice will be much easier if your senior leaders role model flexible working to the rest of the organisation.

Focusing on developing a culture where people have a flexible mindset will make it easier to embed a different way of working.



Establishing goals and actions

How will you deliver your vision? How will you measure your progress and hold people accountable for delivering?

Establish a set of strategic goals and a timeline of actions to lead you to your vision. Identify which resources will be needed to achieve your flexibility goals - whether those are people or skill resources, or opportunities to develop your organisation's technological capabilities.



Creating an implementation plan

Use your established goals and actions to create a plan that will lead you to your vision of a flexible working environment.

While planning, take into account your organisation's change capability and be prepared to actively address any known issues that have been identified.



Testing and evaluating

Evaluate the success of your approach by constantly testing and assessing against your goals and vision. Each organisation will have different business drivers for introducing flexible working and you might not be able to offer all types of flexibility to start with. Don't be afraid to evolve your strategy as you learn more.

FURTHER RESOURCES:

[WGEA: Workplace flexibility strategy](#)

Ask yourself:

- » Where are you now and where would you like to get to?
- » Do you have a clear understanding of your priorities?
- » Can you anticipate possible road blocks along the way?
- » Do any of your existing work practices need to change to help your business do better and keep delivering to your customers?

Flexible working can mean a culture and mindset shift and this should be approached like any other change management programme. It is important to have the support of the senior leadership team from the start, to establish champions across the business, share success stories and not to be afraid of trying new ways of achieving your goals.

Technology as an enabler

Ensuring your team is equipped with the right technology is essential to the success of flexible working.

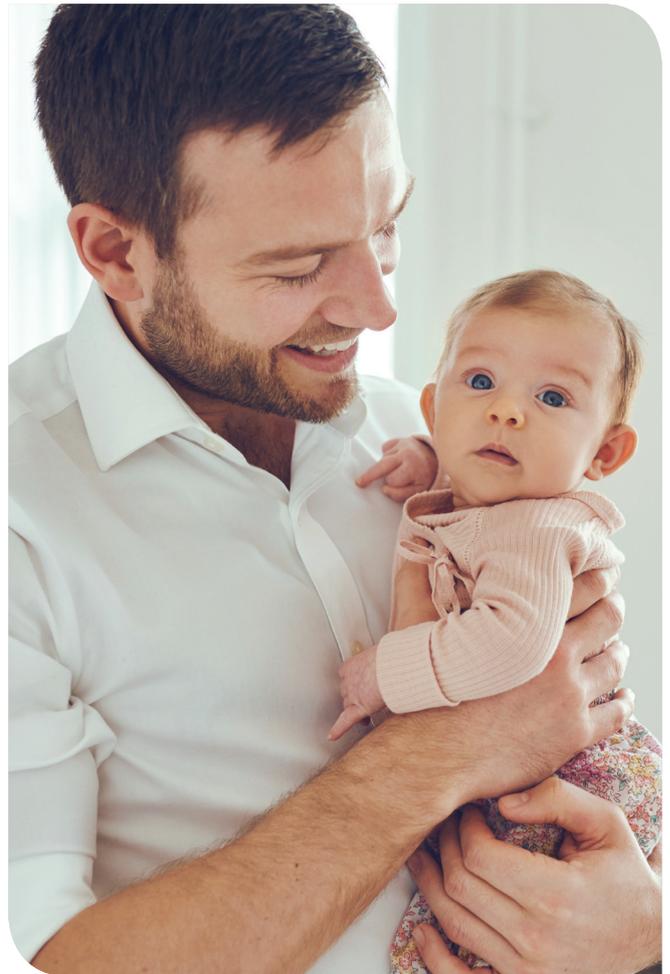
People will need to be able to access the right systems to do their job. This could be through a virtual private network (VPN) or through a cloud-based solution.

Will you provide your employees with smartphones, laptops, tablets etc or are you expecting them to provide their own device? Either way, you will need to consider the security implications and take steps to protect your organisation's data from malware, viruses and phishing attacks.

Your IT team will need to be equipped to manage devices remotely.

Tools like Skype for Business enable you to dispense with traditional phones and ensure that your employees can receive phone calls wherever they are, just the same as if they were in the office.

Collaboration tools are important. Consider file sharing systems that enable collaboration and reduce version control risk.



Convened and supported by Global Women, Champions for Change is a group of New Zealand CEOs and Chairs from across the public and private sectors who are committed to raising the value of diversity and inclusiveness throughout the wider business community.

www.globalwomen.org.nz



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