

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY FOR CASE #2

FINAL QUESTION

What are the best practices for creating meaningful part-time roles and how can we change our company culture to better support this type of flexible work arrangement?

MEANINGFUL PART-TIME ROLES

Once on the job, “many of the needs of part-timers are exactly the same as [those of] full-timers. They want to receive fair and equitable compensation, do meaningful work, like the people they work with, have their opinions valued, and receive recognition for what they do.”¹ However, “given the variety of reasons individuals choose to work part-time, an attractive offer varies depending on the type of part-time worker an employer is hoping to hire.”²

General Advice:

- Create an attractive offer by providing competitive benefits coverage (esp. for older workers) or alternatively, less expensive “soft benefits” such as assisted child care; health, wellness, and convenience benefits; employer discounts; and flexible scheduling (esp. for women and students).³
- Since “job prestige, income, and career opportunity” are important to many professional women, companies should offer “new-concept” part-time employment options, also referred to as “customized work.”⁴ This is a growing trend, and in contrast to most part-time jobs, these are “high-status, career-oriented reduced-hours options that conserve pro-rated professional salaries and benefits.”⁵
- Create an equal opportunity for part-timers to have job autonomy; learning opportunities and challenges on the job where they can grow, learn, and advance; and involve them in team decision-making.⁶

Best practices:

- **Alcatel-Lucent**⁷: 1) Biggest obstacle to offering part-time jobs: not using *full-time equivalents*; 2) Overcame obstacle by having each individual manager conduct a cost-benefit analysis to determine whether the cost of utilizing a full headcount for a part-time position is worth the reward of staffing continuity and retaining the talent; 3) Headcount policy needs to support part-time work so the arrangement can benefit both the employer and the employee.
- **MITRE**⁸: 1) *Part-Time On-Call* (PTOC) is an innovative way to retain institutional knowledge and enable older workers to stay active in the workforce, mentor younger employees, and share technical expertise; 2) Participants in PTOC provide short-term project support for complex and highly specialized projects; 3) Administrative positions are also available.
- **BMW**⁹: 1) All employees maintain a *Personal Work Time Hours Account* and are responsible for tracking the hours they work; 2) Managers are responsible for entering the worked hours into a database and monitoring employees’ work-time balances for headcount planning purposes.
- **Deloitte**¹⁰: 1) *Mass Career Customization* (MCC) program provides a transparent process for employees to chart their individual career paths in ways that align with their personal and professional priorities; 2) Employees make choices around four major dimensions of career progression: Role, Pace, Location/Schedule and Workload; 3) For example, at 5-7 years’ tenure, an employee may have their first child and choose to reduce their workload and set restrictions on their work location/schedule.
- **PNC Financial Services Group**¹¹: 1) Part-time employees can vary their hours daily as long as they communicate their schedule to the manager and the team can meet its 24-hour turnaround service level goal; 2) Managers utilize several communication and information tools—frequent e-mail and instant messaging to keep the team connected and up to date on deadlines, daily goals and staff availability, as well as system logs and productivity reports—to track individual and team workload and performance.
- **Laughlin Constable**¹²: 1) Focuses on retaining women after childbirth by allowing new mothers to come back to work on a pro-rated basis after maternity leave; 2) Has yielded great results: of the four women who had children in the past few years, 100% have returned to work on a flexible part-time basis.

CHANGING COMPANY CULTURE

Part-time work is only one type of Flexible Work Arrangement (FWA). Therefore, in order to encourage part-time jobs, companies must first have a culture that values flexibility. However, there are some cultural challenges (Appendix 1) that might hinder the implementation of various FWAs. Thus, changing a company’s culture generally takes time and patience.

General Advice^{13, 14}

- Research to discover the unique needs of employees in your own organization
- Leadership support: authentic support at the highest levels creates a fertile environment for flexibility

- Deliver mandatory training programs that teach managers: 1) how to develop measurable employee performance goals that can be evaluated wherever someone is working, and 2) how to manage virtual work teams
- Tie manager performance evaluations to their ability to create a supportive work environment that retains valued employees
- Educate and train management and employees to allay concerns on both sides
 - Make the business case: estimate the cost to replace employees who might leave with no flexibility
 - Showcase some employees who have been very successful while working flexibly
- Set clear strategies for the rollout of the programs with information about who is eligible, who will be affected, and how to address glitches in the system
- Create guidelines clarifying responsibilities for all employees and communicating them in venues such as brochures, web sites and newsletters.
- Establish a method for tracking results—are we still reaching organizational goals?

Best Practices

- **Phase Forward LLC¹⁵**: 1) Focusing on what employees actually produce; 3) Involving team/group of employees may lead to creative approach; 4) Top management not only supports flexibility but models it.
- **Aetna¹⁶**: Involving and encouraging line managers to pilot initiatives of flexibility and act as advocates for their peers.
- **MITRE¹⁷**: 1) Broad and transparent communication of all flexible options; 2) Online access to employee and manager guides about FWA; 3) Training of employees and managers on how to create a more flexible workplace culture; 3) Changes in HR information systems to facilitate flexible scheduling; 4) Consistent messages to reinforce the need to manage people differently and find the best ways to accomplish work.
- **Ennis, Pellum and Associates, CPAs¹⁸**: 1) All employees are plugged into each other’s online calendars so they can be a resource for the team when needed; 2) Networking system allows access to software and projects off-site, which employees can access following a 90-day probationary period.
- **KPMG¹⁹**: 1) Guideline for employees to use when requesting FWA suggests that employees write up a formal proposal explaining the flexibility they are seeking, how they will meet their responsibility, how their teams will be able to reach them, what kinds of resources they might need and how the company can measure the success of the arrangement; 2) Supervisor routinely check-in with employees every six months regarding FWA.
- **Deloitte Consulting LPP^{20, 21}**: 1) Integrating conversation about flexible work into employees’ annual performance evaluation; 2) Communicating FWA through e-learning sessions to enhance employees’ understanding, through newsletter stories highlighting how Deloitte’s leaders and people are making their career-life choices work, through an internal social networking platform, and also through “Talent Days.”
- **McKinsey & Company²²**: 1) *Flexibility counselors* offer one-on-one coaching and advice to consultants interested in designing FWA, and also connect the consultants with those who have successfully arranged a similar flexible program; 2) *McKinsey’s Flexibility Intranet* includes successful case examples and video testimonials, guidance on the flexible work models, formal policies and the steps to designing a flexible program.
- **Best Buy’s Results-Only Work Environment^{23, 24}**: 1) ROWE is a radical FWA that enables people to work whenever and wherever they want, as long as they get the work done; 2) Attempts to break down the traditional 9-5 corporate culture; 3) Implemented on department level in 3 phases: leadership training, team training, trial period & full rollout; 4) Suggestions: Start from a foundation of trust; be open to new ideas; include everyone; change language around FWAs to encourage participation.

CONCLUSION

Unfortunately for lower-level part-time employees, “the barriers to accessing managerial jobs are substantial” because senior level jobs are “almost invariably constructed as full-time jobs.”²⁵ This is partially an outcome of the negative stigma against part-time workers in a long-hours culture, where they are often considered “part-committed” or less driven, achievement-focused, and ambitious.²⁶ Some managers are concerned that if senior jobs which were normally constructed as full-time were advertised as part-time on job postings, they would be less likely to secure a strong field of candidates.²⁷ Yet ironically, there is a growing tendency for existing full-time employees to request reduced working hours, and these are precisely the people who “might be looking for part-time work on the open labour market if their requests at their current place of work had been declined.”²⁸

In order to create meaningful part-time roles, companies must be more innovative around job design.²⁹ Karen Mattison, founder of the UK-based part-timers’ recruitment website Timewise, stated in an article: “HR professionals are pivotal in making change happen...HR can sometimes have the opportunity to change the mindset of a hiring manager. Does a role really have to be done full time, or could the right candidate make this work with some flexibility?”³⁰ HR professionals must encourage senior leaders to work flexibly and to do so visibly.³¹ In addition, line managers must be empowered with the tools and training to implement flexible practices. This will in turn generate buy-in for a flexible work culture that permeates throughout all levels of an organization.

Appendix 1 ³² – Roadblocks and Strategies for Creating a Culture of Flexibility

ROADBLOCKS	STRATEGIES
<p>Managers do not understand that workplace flexibility is a strategic business tool.</p>	<p>Engage managers in a discussion of how flexibility can address their business concerns and is a key driver of profitability and shareholder value.</p>
<p>Managers are not accountable for creating a work environment where employees and work teams can thrive.</p>	<p>Tie manager performance evaluations to their ability to create a supportive work environment that retains valued employees.</p> <p>Develop a system for tracking flexibility usage; assessing employee and manager satisfaction; and measuring impact on key business factors.</p> <p>If a manager denies a request for flexibility, require that a business-based reason for the decision is documented.</p>
<p>Employees and managers have not received information and training on how to develop, implement and sustain flexible work environments</p>	<p>Assemble a company-wide task force that includes all employees at all levels of the organization to initiate and monitor a flexibility effort.</p> <p>Create guidelines clarifying responsibilities for all employees - managers, employee requesting flexibility and co-workers – and communicate them in venues such as brochures, web sites and newsletters.</p> <p>Develop a decision-making process for requesting, approving and monitoring flexible work options with a focus on meeting business objectives. Teach employees and managers how to negotiate and maintain successful flexibility arrangements with co-workers and work teams.</p> <p>Deliver mandated training programs that teach managers: 1) how to develop measurable employee performance goals that can be evaluated wherever someone is working, and 2) how to manage virtual work teams.</p> <p>Encourage short-term (i.e., 3 months) flexibility “pilots” or trial runs as a way to encourage managers to test the flexible arrangement, without making a long-term commitment, or to make adjustments for continuous improvement.</p>

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- ²² Mckinsey&Company website, Support for flexibility, extracted on 03/28/2013 at http://www.mckinsey.com/careers/mckinsey_life/diversity_networks/mckinsey_women/support_for_flexibility
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**Additional
suggested
readings**

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