



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REVISING YOUR FLEXIBLE WORKING INITIATIVE POST-PANDEMIC

The pandemic has changed the perception of flexibility from “a nice to have” to a business imperative. Prior to March 2020, some organizational leaders did not buy into workplace flexibility. Fast forward to 2021 and the conversations around flex are very different. Rather than asking why we need flex, more leaders are now focusing on how we can make flex as effective as possible. Organizations across all industries must think strategically about workplace flexibility in order to reap recruiting, retention, and business productivity benefits. To help you reboot your workplace flexibility policy, the Alliance has the following recommendations:

1. **Reflect, Reassess & Reimagine.** We urge all organizations to look back and carefully reflect on the past year. How has your mission, values, products/services and/or business operations changed? In what ways can flexibility help with these changes? What were the positive impacts of flexibility in terms of productivity, satisfaction/engagement and recruiting/retention? We recommend that organizations create a task force of diverse leaders on the future of work, and collect data on employee productivity/satisfaction now to understand what worked and what didn't. This will help revamp your flex policy post-pandemic, implement it effectively and create necessary infrastructure support. See our action step, [Paving the Way for Flexible Work After the Pandemic Now](#), for ideas on how to monitor/measure employee experiences.
2. **Ensure that Flex is Available to All.** During the pandemic, many organizations needed virtually all of their employees to work flexibly, even those that never did so in the past. As employees continued to work flexibly during the pandemic, many became more productive, satisfied and engaged with working flexibly. All employees should have the opportunity to work flexibly after the pandemic. While some employees may not be able to work remotely due to their function, organizations should make all forms of flex available (i.e. reduced hours, telecommuting, flextime, job sharing and compressed work week) so all employees can utilize some form of flex if they want. We suggest that organizations audit all of their positions to understand what types of flex each position can utilize.
3. **Ingrain Flex in Strategy, Systems & Processes.** Flex is more than an employee benefit – it is a business imperative that must be grounded in your strategic plan, systems and processes. You must think through the implications of flex on your talent

management, real estate, productivity and profitability. What additional technology is necessary? What office space will you need? What trainings are needed to foster individual success and effective management? To successfully transition to a flexible workforce, you'll need to recalibrate many of your systems/processes.

4. **Intentionally Foster Culture/Community**. Some leaders have voiced concerns that flexibility will contribute to a loss of culture. By creating infrastructure to support flex, organizations can reap the full benefits of flex while simultaneously building community. Organizations must be intentional about ways they help employees build relationships. Consider hosting regular department meetings/retreats, fireside chats, mentoring programs and committee meetings. Take a look at our action step, [Incorporating the 4 Es as Part of the Future of Work](#), which further discusses important considerations.
5. **Reconfigure Office Space**. Many organizations are considering a hybrid flexible working environment involving some telecommuting and some in-office time. When employees are in the office, it is crucial to ensure your office design promotes collaboration, communication and relationships. Do you have enough meeting space? Do you have robust in-office technology to foster collaboration between in-person and remote employees?
6. **Prioritize Organizational Boundaries**. During the pandemic, many employees reported working more hours than before. We must manage the line between productivity boosts and burn-out. Organizations can establish boundaries through trainings, policy/guidelines, and vacations. Consider creating events/days to highlight a commitment to boundaries – i.e. “Zoom-free Fridays” or “family day.” These simple gestures can go a long way.
7. **Greater Focus on Inclusion**. Historically, there have been fewer opportunities for diverse professionals to build crucial relationships, thereby making it more challenging for them to advance to the top. Unfortunately, in many ways the pandemic has magnified this effect. We need to be particularly mindful of inclusion when thinking through flex initiatives post-pandemic. We recommend looking at all of your talent systems/processes – recruiting, workload management, performance management, mentoring/community/integration and promotions. See where potential biases exist and systematically address them to reduce stigma.

The Alliance is here to help you reboot your flexible work initiatives post-pandemic so they can be as effective as possible. Members have access to several Alliance resources as part of their benefits: the [Resource Library](#), [Strategy Calls](#), [Policy Reviews](#), [Advisory Hours](#) and [Signature Seminars](#). Take a look at our action step, [Leverage Alliance Benefits](#), which discusses ways to partner with us and most effectively utilize your benefits. To discuss specific

strategic advice/resources regarding your flexible work policy post-pandemic, contact [Manar Morales](#).