

Let's Know Flexi Place Better!

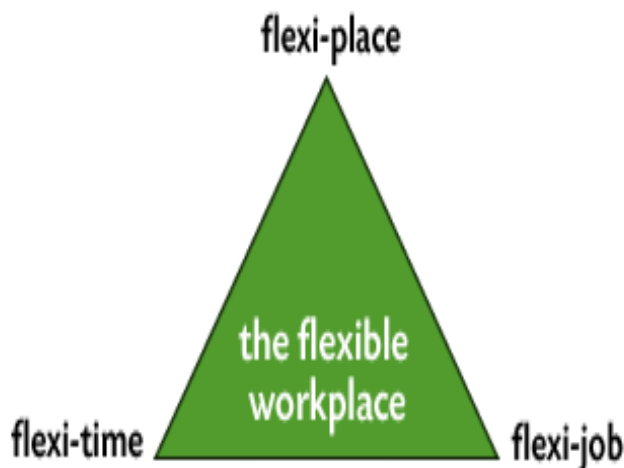
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Abstract: Provision of flexible place is not keeping pace with the demand. There is disparity in assess to schedule flexibility by workers demographic, work and job characteristics, This article focuses on a significant and neglected issue of and related to 'Flexi place'. Flexiplace variants have a range of effects onto make any adaptations by the positive features for employees and company. This article will be throwing light on flexiplace style of working, and further its objectives, eligibility, and implementation.

In a dynamic working environment, both the employer and the employee often struggle to agree on a point that can satisfy their demands. Employer wants maximum profit within limited resources and minimum cost, while employee wants comfortable, suitable and highly paid job. The problem is, most jobs that pay well are not that suitable and comfortable, and getting to comfort at work often results in under utilization of resources and loss of productivity. The potential and appropriate solution to this organizational problem is flex place

Flex place or Flexi place is a working style which allows employees to work from alternative places instead of office itself. Rather than employees coming to traditional workplace, the work can be taken to the place where employees (flex place/flexitime policy & procedures 2008). Business environment along with hitec computing technology makes flexplace implementation for an organisation more practical and feasible.



Flexi-place (alternative work locations) suggests different scales of how this practice can be implemented and practised:

- Small-scale flexi-place – In this scale the flexi-place is for short periods which can be for few days or for few weeks, In which working can be done from residence or it can be any alternative location.
- Medium-scale flexi-place – This scale is for medium periods. In which scheduled work outside the traditional office can be for one or two days each week;
- Large-scale flexi-place – This is most lengthy periods scale of flexi-place which can be for few months or a year or for few years, for example working from a different country as an expatriate or collaboration with other company which can include employee exchange or to accommodate exceptional personal situations.

1. OBJECTIVE OF FLEXI PLACE

Flexi-place improves the Quality of work life of an employee with increase in job performance, increase in productivity (which provide a distraction-free work due to reduction in overcrowd of employees who just turn in for small work or task). Company loyalty also improves and reduces work stress by providing employees with more options to maintain a balance between work and family demands. The people with disabilities in family, including employees who have partially recovered from work related injuries or any other injuries have work opportunity can do the job from an off-site location while taking care of self or the disabled family member. Furthermore it accommodates employees who have temporary or continuing health issues or problems for whom voluntary retirement on disability basis is only option left.

It enhances recruitment and promotes diversity by expanding the geographic recruitment pool. And for environment it contributes by decreasing traffic problem and parking congestion, time wastage, energy consumption, and air pollution. It reduces employee problems and turnover from job due to unsuitable working conditions (timing and place) and help in retraining employees by increasing their loyalty by providing them with this tool of Flexi-place.

As the flexi-place is tool for employee therefore working from home/alternative location may be considered in circumstances such as when:

- The nature of the employee current task requires concentration in an environment that will allow uninterrupted work;
- An employee needs to accommodate a personal/family need;
- An employee is physically unable to move away from home to the work place;
- An employee is undertaking medical treatment;
- An employee's absence from workplace (except in the case of accident/injury or return-to-work program) will not affect productivity.
- An employee need to match the job standards pre-decided in his/her job agreement .

2. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Organisation should determine which types of jobs are suited to be done from alternative places. There are some jobs that need regular presence of the employee for face to face dealing or jobs which need special equipment that can only be accessed on the office should not be granted with flexi-place (Washington 2001, p5).

The performance standards for those jobs should be pre-decided; which level of performance is acceptable and which level of performance is out of standards. The next step is to develop work guidelines and limitation for both employers and employees which will definitely give frame to this working system

Rule can be made in which employers can also examine the site that will be used by employees to work. Alternative work site has to meet all requirements, such as the necessary equipments, safety and security issues and suitable environment (Washington 2001, p6).

The tools that are to be used to maintain communication like teleconferencing cameras, emails, or software such as Microsoft Net meeting, which allows users to see the same documents and live alteration to that documents can be made by other users (Washington 2001, p6)

Flexible workplace policies that on one hand enhance individual productivity on other hand improve a Center's ability to retain that person for longer term which are classic "win-win" policies. The policy should be same for all employees with can access to flexi-place respect to jobs which are appropriate for flexi-place and are included in the guidelines of the company. Requests for approval for working from home or other alternative locations should be according to the basis of feasibility of job.

3. IMPLEMENTING FLEXI-PLACE

Employer: Options for working from home/alternative location

- There are several options for working from home/alternative location which typically will be defined with the following dimensions:
- The time each day to be spent out of the office
- The period (peak season or silent season) for which these arrangements are approved.
- The frequency for which the employee is required to visit her/his office or official duty station.
- Responsibilities related to communicating with office or the employer or manager while at the alternate workplace, such as being reachable via phone or e-mail.

4. EMPLOYEES

From an employees' perspective they need to:

- Create a proper workspace which includes proper lighting, ventilation, comfortable furniture for long working hours.
- Put a good communication system in place.
 - How a manager/colleague(s) can contact employee? – e-mail, land-line, mobile phone, etc.
 - When the manager/colleagues can contact employee – throughout the day or in specially designated time or hours?
- Security of information is a big issue. If employee is working with sensitive or confidential documents, how he/shewillensure that the information is secure whichneed proper password protection, which can further be covered by keeping back-up for electronic files, which can be protected in case of a home burglary and loss or crash of computer.
- Taking regular breaks is very important for health of employee. At home employee don't have scheduled office meetings with colleagues or other office activities which can result into longer working hours on keyboard or on screen in one stretch than working in office which might result unhealthy for the employee
- Employees should have special technologies, e.g. special e-mail access or online access to databases? And all this is possible if employee have internet connection and broadband as he/she might need to make local phone calls, long-distance calls, online meetings, tele-conferencing and lot of online work.

- If employee is working from alternative place for long periods. He/she can lose friendly relation with manager/s and colleagues to maintain informal interaction with them? Which can result his/her loss of knowledge of recent trends in organization through informal communication

5. CONCLUSION

Teman (2010) quotes various authors such as Plante (2002) and Igbaria and Guimares (1999) highlighting that “good flexplace program has desirable effects such as lowering absenteeism rate, increasing productivity, and reducing employee relations problems. Furthermore, it has been noticed that employees involved in flexplace have an overall higher job satisfaction and commitment to the organization compared to those who are not involved”. Hi-tech systems allow for more advanced flexplace implementation. Various technologies including email, internet, voicemail and video conferencing etc. have made it easier and smoother to interact from different locations. Due to the enhanced and faster data/information sharing the businesses can perform efficiently. (Kunkle 2000, cited by Teman, 2010). However, implementing flexplace does not guarantee that the company will gain profit.

The option for working from alternative place is always mistaken, as it cannot just be home but also any other place (if the employee is not in the local area). It has been observed that working from home is more likely to be more successful and

widespread compared to working from other alternative locations. More efforts, both from employer and employee, are needed in making it a viable alternative. Clearly working from home enhances the balance between work and family life. So it won't be wrong to say that flexi place is boon for employees.

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