

Why WiseWork?

An A to Z Guide

26 good reasons to follow the
WiseWork approach

A

Absence

Absence from work is seen as a negative in conventional work practices, mainly because presence is being measured. Absenteeism is seen as a bad thing because it's assumed that people who are not at the workplace cannot be working. WiseWork assumes that people can perform their tasks at an appropriate location which doesn't have to be the employers premises all the time. It starts with the assumption that work can be done at a time and place that works for both the employee/worker and the employer/customer. Then there will be some constraints that dictate a fixed time and/or place for the work to be performed.

B

Business Results

To achieve the best results all businesses need to have their people working in the most efficient way. They need to be able to attract and retain qualified staff and ensure they are as productive as possible. WiseWork is a way of ensuring that the workforce is being engaged in the activities of the enterprise to provide the maximum return on the investment in human resources. By giving people freedom to work the way they choose, it produces a high level of commitment and significantly increased productivity.

C

Customer Service

Everyone in the organisation has a customer for their services. Some are external to the business but many are internal. By rewarding people for their output, not just for turning up for work, WiseWork ensures that all staff, regardless of their role, are meeting their customers' expectations. Giving individuals flexibility in the way they deliver their services allows them to tailor them to the needs of customers and to get the satisfaction of getting praise and thanks in return.

D

Devotion

Organisations thrive when their workforce is not just 'going through the motions' of getting a job done, but they are devoted to their jobs. Conventional employment has resulted in high levels of disengagement and high employee turnover. WiseWork creates a feeling of dedication from people. They recognise that they have been trusted to manage aspects of their work and have freedom to make choices denied to people in other organisations. In return they are prepared to put in the extra effort when needed.

E

Engagement

Employee engagement is now measured by many organisations and it is seen as an indication of the health of the workforce. But surveys show that only a small minority of staff are fully engaged. It is very easy for those that are disengaged to sour the atmosphere in a company resulting in poor morale and low productivity. Conventional employment practices have failed to increase engagement significantly. WiseWork increases engagement by giving people a sense of pride in the results of their work and recognition of their achievements.

F

Flexibility

Many so-called 'flexible working' schemes are not flexible at all. Working a shift pattern or having a part-time job may be different from the traditional full time job but it's not flexible. It's just another form of rigid working. WiseWork is truly flexible as it gives the employee choice on how, when and where to get the work done. This allows them to adapt their working patterns around the rest of their lives whilst still meeting their objectives.

G

Green

Travelling to work and for work is a significant source of pollution and a major contributor to carbon dioxide emissions. Yet in the digital era we have technologies that allow people to work at a distance and not travel to be face to face all the time. WiseWork encourages people to question the need for travel and ensures that people are only gathering together in one place when it is clearly the best way of achieving results. This results in fewer meetings, less stress, lower costs and more effective use of technology. And it also helps to save the planet.

H

Hierarchy

Traditionally, organisations have been built on hierarchical grounds. The person at the top has the power and they choose to delegate some if they wish. Ultimately they make all the major decisions and have a vested interest in not losing too much of that power. People further down the ladder get instructions from above on how to do their job from a management structure that knows best. WiseWork turns this on its head by assuming that the employee probably knows how to get the work done in the best way and that the intelligence in the organisation is not all at the top. This challenges leaders to empower their workforce and allow them real freedom in achieving their outcomes and contributing to business success.

I

Image

The image projected by an employer is communicated by employees and customers not just by any public relations programme it may run. With the power of social media and websites such as Glassdoor.com individuals get to share their experiences, good or bad. If an employer wishes to attract and retain the best people it needs to have a positive image. WiseWork gives people freedom to choose how they work and as a result creates a supportive response from staff. They feel trusted and valued and this reflects in the comments they make about their employer.

J

Joy

For many people work is a necessary evil. They do a job to make money to allow them to do things in the rest of their lives they would prefer to be doing all the time. If they won the lottery they would give up their job immediately. But work doesn't have to be like that. It can be enjoyable, satisfying and give a sense of achievement. WiseWork brings back the joy to work by giving people the satisfaction of achieving results and being recognised and rewarded for them. It aims to enrich jobs and trust people to take on responsibility combined with freedom to choose how they manage their working lives.

K

Knowledge

In today's knowledge economy the success of many organisations relies on the effective management of this asset. Whilst explicit knowledge is recorded in the systems and records of the enterprise, some of the most critical knowledge is held in the heads of individual members of staff. This tacit knowledge is often only missed when a key individual leaves and a crisis occurs. WiseWork encourages people to share knowledge and not hold on to it as a form of power. It does this by rewarding collaboration and the empowerment of individuals, getting rid of the power hierarchy prevalent in many organisations.

L

Loyalty

If people feel respected and valued by their employer they will develop a sense of loyalty. They will be prepared to 'go the extra mile' in their work when it is required and will be good ambassadors for the company. They will also be less likely to want to leave and work elsewhere. WiseWork generates a sense of loyalty by treating the individual with respect, recognising that they have a life outside work and giving them the best opportunity to manage their own work-life balance.

M

Mobility

With mobile technology many work activities can be performed on the move. The smartphone allows people to answer emails and share ideas wherever they are. This can bring freedom to the individual or produce stressful work overloads depending on how it is used. WiseWork welcomes mobility as a feature that can be used by employees to manage their work patterns. But the choice of how it is used must be with the individual and managers have to resist the temptation to micro-manage using the technology.

N

Novelty

Current evidence shows that change in work practices has come to a halt. The use of flexible working has levelled out despite the introduction of legislation extending the right to request to all employees. There has been some expansion of self employment as people look for ways of making a living without the constraints of a traditional job. WiseWork is a new approach to the design of work combining the freedoms of self-management with the benefits of belonging to an organisation. It represents the novelty missing from other so-called flexible working practices.

O

Occupancy

Employers are spending millions on providing workplaces for people who don't need to be there in the first place. Many jobs can now be done remotely but many managers still insist on having their people 'at work' so they can see what they are doing. WiseWork results in lower occupancy costs by giving people more choice about when and where they work, trusting them to do the job. They only come in to the office if that's a necessary part of achieving their results. They are not measured on the hours they spend at the desk, they are rewarded by outcomes. So less space is needed to house people and the organisation saves money.

P

Productivity

Every organisation is dependent on its workforce for its success. The more productive the employees, the more likely the business is to flourish. Yet measuring productivity is seen as difficult or impossible in many jobs. Worse still; most jobs are paid by the hour regardless of productivity. This means there is no incentive for speeding up the work and often stretching out the job brings its own rewards. Even if people are not paid for working additional hours they are often rewarded in other ways. The long hours culture is alive and well in many companies where it is seen to represent hard work. In fact it represents low productivity. By rewarding long hours managers are often encouraging people to take longer to get their work done, hence have a lower output per hour. WiseWork fixes this problem by rewarding output not input. It encourages people to get the job done in the shortest possible time and then reward themselves with more personal time.

Q

Quiet

Today's hectic work environment is noisy and full of interruptions. Whether it's people dropping by in the open plan office or technology constantly vying for attention, modern working practices do not encourage quiet contemplation. Many people are employed to use their brains, to take time to think and use their imagination. They are then provided with an always-on culture supported by technology. WiseWork is based on the principle that people need an environment which is appropriate to the tasks they are performing. At times this might be a team session bouncing ideas off each other. At other times it will be solo, quiet time for thinking. It's critical that the individual gets to choose these in order to work in the most effective way.

R

Recruitment

Many organisations allow existing employees some flexibility in their working patterns once they have 'earned' it. So they may need to work for six months or longer in a conventional way before being allowed a non-standard pattern. But this does not suit people who need to work flexibly from day one. If one of the key objectives for flexible working is to widen the pool of candidates then it has to be offered at the start. WiseWork gives all employees the opportunity to choose their working pattern regardless of length of service. It's based on trusting people as soon as they join the company and allowing them freedom of choice over the way they work.

S

Stress

Levels of stress have increased at work along with the speed of life. Mobile technology has become addictive and intrusive just adding to the stress. The always-on, 24/7 work environment means that people are never switching off (literally and metaphorically). Commuting to work and getting to the desk on time is also stressful. WiseWork helps to reduce stress by taking away the need to be in constant contact. It rewards results and the quality of output, not just how quickly someone can reply to emails. It also encourages a healthy lifestyle by reducing the stresses of conflicting home and work priorities.

T

Trust

Many managers profess to trust their employees but then act in ways that demonstrate distrust. If people are given freedom to choose the way they get their work done then they can be trusted to manage their own time. Very few will abuse this trust. It does not make sense to have strict rules which constrain the vast majority just in case one or two people might take advantage of the situation. WiseWork relies on trusting people to deliver results and rewarding them for output. It creates a culture where people want to contribute and respect the freedom they have in their work. They feel trusted and respond positively.

U

Universal

There are some universal principles that can be applied to any work design. Some things like making work as interesting as possible are obvious. Fairness and equal opportunities is another. WiseWork is based on some principles that can be applied universally regardless of the person and the work involved. They include rewarding output not hours, accommodating individual preference where possible and starting from an assumption that work can be done anywhere at any time. To implement any new working practices it's important to start from the underlying beliefs and check they fit in with the culture of the organisation.

V

Virtual Teams

Many people are overloaded with meetings and have trouble finding time to get the rest of their job done. Now we have technology that can substitute for face-to-face meetings we have an opportunity to free up some valuable time. Where people are located far apart they are successfully running virtual teams, but others are still required to travel to attend physical meetings. WiseWork starts from the assumption that work can be performed at a distance and technology can be used to avoid unnecessary travel. Teamwork is an important part of many jobs but that doesn't have to mean hundreds of meetings.



Wellness

Having a fit and healthy workforce is an important component of a successful business. But just introducing a 'Wellness' programme without reviewing working practices will simply be 'papering over the cracks'. There is no point in offering staff a free gym membership if they never have time to take it up! WiseWork deals with the cause not the symptom. It encourages people to have a healthy lifestyle by giving them control over their lives, allowing them to manage the balance between work and home and discouraging the long hours culture.



Xenophilia

If Xenophobia is a hatred or fear of someone who is different then Xenophilia is the opposite. It is what happens in organisations that welcome diversity in the workforce and are tolerant of people who may be different from the majority. WiseWork is a way of ensuring diversity by measuring people on the value of their outputs and their contribution to the business. It encourages an open minded approach to getting work done and so accommodates individual needs without being prejudiced against people who don't fit the 'corporate' norm.

Y

Youth

Young people joining the workforce are asking questions about why we work the way we do. They have been using collaborative technologies and social media for almost as long as they could read and write and find some working practices positively archaic. If organisations are going to appeal to the youth of today and engage them in productive work, they have to understand their views. WiseWork does not make assumptions about the best way to work but involves people in the decision. It gives young people the opportunity to achieve results in ways that were not available to previous generations.

Z

Zeal

The dictionary definition of 'zeal' is 'great energy or enthusiasm in pursuit of a cause or objective'. This is exactly what successful organisations get from their people. They have a productive workforce that applies its energy for the good of the enterprise. WiseWork has been designed to maximise the zeal of the workers, regardless of the industry they are in. By treating them as adults who are capable of making decisions, it differs from traditional 'command and control' management systems. It expects leaders to provide strategic direction but allows individual contributors to achieve their outcomes without undue interference from management.

For more information about implementing WiseWork

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