**Rupert & COMPANY**
Guides to a changing workplace

There are practical challenges to implementing FWAs. None may prove as daunting as the incorrect assumptions decision-makers often hold about the feasibility of flexibility.

Below are the Top 5 FWA Myths and the realities drawn from our experience:

### Myth #1 - Offer FWAs and the floodgates will open.
*Reality - Common fear, uncommon phenomenon.*

Hundreds of companies rolling out FWAs have reported no surge in initial requests. Why? Most employees greet sudden policy changes by observing the fate of early adopters. Some can't adjust to new schedules quickly and easily. Most like their traditional way of working. But those who need flexibility value it enormously. And the fact that it's available pleases non-users.

### Myth #2 - Personal reasons are the best basis for deciding on FWAs.
*Reality - Reason motivates, but business impact should determine.*

Informal flexibility thrives on personal reasons. But offering FWAs this way invites discriminatory practices, risks harmful arrangements and asks managers to weigh competing personal needs. Basing decisions on business impact enhances contributions and minimizes disruption.

### Myth #3 - Flexible schedules can't work in a long-hours culture.
*Reality - Flexibility shifts the focus to a high-performance culture.*

Some FWAs may not work in some settings. But redesigning schedules should lead to rethinking how work gets done and help reduce unnecessary and redundant work. A strong focus on contribution rather than on myths about long hours should enable productive flexibility.

### Myth #4 - It is impossible to make consistent decisions on FWA requests.
*Reality - Informal flexibility breeds inconsistency; clear structure contains it.*

Without a coherent FWA system in place, actual and perceived inconsistency will exist by definition. Clear standards for eligibility and decisions and a method for equal access to a fair process are steps toward eliminating inconsistency, not its source.

### Myth #5 - Our entitlement mentality makes saying "no" very difficult.
*Reality - Well-supported managers find it easier to say both "yes" and "no."*

Unclear rules of the road make it hard for managers to say "no" to a request. A universal framework can cause employees to think through the impact of their FWAs and support managers to say "no" appropriately. Regular review of FWAs also checks entitlement.

Every organization seems to believe these myths to one degree or another. And perhaps your organization has some pervasive ones of its own.

Our next bulletins will describe how to root out these assumptions and build a flexible workplace. To discuss your most challenging myths, please contact us.

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