



Make your people more productive with flexible working

We've spoken to the people making the most of flexible working to find out how a change to their workday has helped them work faster, safer and smarter. We looked at the technology that's supported them and their less traditional workday. And we found out how it has had a positive effect on their productivity, quality of work, and work-life balance. Could flexible working be right for your teams?

Maureen, Head of Talent and Resource, Baxi UK

Baxi has been manufacturing boilers in the UK since 1866. It strives to be the best in the industry, with a host of awards for its products and services. We spoke to Maureen about the role of flexible working in the company's success.

Tell us a little about your role in your organisation — what is it and what do you do?

I'm Head of Talent and Resource, covering the whole of the UK and Ireland. I'm responsible for employee development, succession planning and recruitment, as well as looking after Corporate Social Responsibility. It's a multi-faceted role.

What does a typical working week look like for you? And in what ways could it be considered flexible?

There's no such thing as a typical working week for me. Although I'm based at our head office, I can be working at any of our sites, depending on what's happening that week. I also work from home. But wherever I am, I have to be available. When you're dealing with people, you need to make sure they can reach you whenever they need you.

What factors led to you working flexibly? And how does that benefit you?

When it comes to flexible working, the first thing you need is trust from your organisation and the people you work with. That's the main ingredient to making it work. We have people who start work early in the morning; others who work into the evening. Plus, plenty of people out on the road. And they all need to know they can get in touch with me. And I like how flexible hours fit in with my lifestyle. There are times when I need to finish early, and I'm happy to come in early on those days — it fits better around family life.

How do you think working flexibly benefits your organisation?

In recruitment, a lot of candidates aren't available inside the normal 9 to 5 as they're at work – they don't want to have to book leave to go for interviews. So I make myself available to interview them outside normal hours, including evenings and weekends. That way, we find the best people for our business and we don't miss out on any candidates.

What tech do you use on a day-to-day basis and how does it support the way you work?

We use WebEx meetings and video conferencing a lot. It's a good replacement when everyone can't make it to the same location, whether that's because of traffic, cancelled trains or those times when it just makes more sense logistically. This is especially the case for training sessions. If all the attendees are based in different areas of the country, it's faster and easier to organise a video conference rather than meeting face-to-face. It reduces travel costs – as well as reducing our carbon footprint, a key part of my role in CSR.

Video-calling apps, like Skype, are also really useful for candidates who can't make a face-to-face interview. We still get to speak to them and find out if they're right for the business, without having to wait for a suitable date to meet. So we find the best people, and we find them faster.

I also use my company VPN, which allows me to access our internal network securely. This means I can connect to our intranet and everything I need, whilst keeping the network protected.

I absolutely rely on my connectivity. I need to be able to get online to access all the apps and files I'd usually use in the office. And when I'm on the move, for example on a train between sites, I find a tablet computer is ideal for getting things done. A mobile screen can sometimes feel too small for using certain apps, such as working on documents. But a laptop can be bulky to carry around, especially if I'm hopping between trains, as can be the case with some more remote locations.

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Brendan, Commercial Director, The Original Tour

The Original Tour operates sightseeing bus tours of London, with open-top buses operating 365 days a year. We talked to Brendan about the importance of flexible working within such a dynamic industry.

Tell us a little about your role in your organisation — what is it and what do you do?

I'm the Commercial Director, and I manage multiple teams in different locations all around London. Our sales advisors get their training in Victoria, before moving on to work at various bus stops along the routes. The local hotel and kiosk sales team is based at our Visitor Centre in Trafalgar Square. And there's another team busy working with third parties. I manage these various teams, making sure they're proactively selling our bus tours. It all helps get customers onto our tours, instead of going with the competition.

What does a typical working week look like for you? And in what ways could it be considered flexible?

Not surprisingly, I spend a lot of time on the move. A typical week includes meetings at our head office on a Monday, but the rest of the week can really vary. There may be training with our sales advisors. Travel industry networking events. Meetings with partners or team leaders to discuss performance and ways to improve sales. Although it's usually a Monday-Friday role, there are regular evening events too, which are important for developing relationships with contacts. I always have my laptop and mobile with me to make sure I can catch-up with emails on the train or between meetings. You need to be available to your teams whenever they need you.



What factors led to you working flexibly? And how does that benefit you?

I joined The Original Tour as a consultant, with a focus on increasing bus stop sales. My role quickly grew to incorporate all the sales teams. It soon became apparent that working flexibly was the only way to successfully manage multiple teams in various locations. Plus, working in the travel industry has always meant late nights and networking events. So being able to work on the move is incredibly useful, and the technology available now means this is possible. Getting access to my emails and our company server wherever I am helps me work quickly and efficiently. I'm always able to get the information I need when I need it. Being able to respond immediately to any challenges that arise.

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How do you think working flexibly benefits your organisation?

I'm contactable for pretty much all of the working day – even when I'm using the London Underground to travel from office to office. That wasn't possible even a few years ago. The ability to log on and work from anywhere, including home, has definitely made us more efficient as a company.

What tech do you use on a day-to-day basis? And how does the technology support the way you work?

I use my laptop and mobile phone every day, and I can log on to a desktop in one of our offices if I need to. As a team, we communicate through a messaging app, and therefore rely on a stable connection to work on the go. Otherwise, it's phone calls and emails. And if people can't attend meetings for any reason, we use a conference call service. That way, we don't miss out on updates even when we can't get in a room together.