

## How Employee Freedom Can Drive your Bottom Line



On Independence Day, freedom has always been cause for celebration, but in the workplace, business leaders now have good reason to embrace the concept all year round.

While employees have traditionally been the ones vying for greater autonomy in the workplace (freedom to work remotely, select their own projects, or flex hours, as examples), mounting evidence now suggests that these “employee benefits” are paying out quite nicely to the organizations offering them as well.

Studies show that less conventional work environments are driving measurable increases in employee creativity, productivity, and overall satisfaction, while lowering stress and reducing turnover rates. And how does it affect the bottom line? “It pays off spectacularly,” if you ask Milton Moskowitz, journalist and co-author of the Fortune ‘100 Best Companies to Work For’ list. As it turns out, companies on the Fortune list—which include some of the most liberal and innovative in terms of benefits—also happen to consistently outperform other companies in terms of stock market performance.

But while well cared for employees tend to be more productive and drive greater profitability, here are five tips to help ensure the freedom your company provides will pay out:

### **Don’t Consider it a One and Done.**

With increasing demands for transparency in the workplace, your employees will be the first to recognize if new benefits are being doled out for the wrong reasons. Offering options for greater flexibility and autonomy should never be a check-the-box exercise. Rather, it should be part of an ongoing commitment to prioritize the happiness and wellbeing of your employees, and to provide the freedom necessary to enable their best and most satisfying work.

### **Do Evaluate Employees on What, Not When.**

Every individual has a preferred working style, and while some embrace the traditional 9-5 work day, others thrive in the off hours or require a fully-flexible schedule. To inspire the best work from your team, let go of the antiquated belief that you need to

physically see employees working to assess their productivity. Instead, focus your evaluations on the *output* of their work, empowering your team members to decide when it is they can best complete it.

### **Don't Lose Sight of your Culture.**

Benefits like flex hours and telecommuting can be great ways to expand your talent pool and reduce overhead costs, but if you aren't careful, the decrease in office together time can also dismantle your company culture. For every benefit you provide that puts distance between employees, be prepared to integrate another that helps the organization remain unified and aligned in your overall mission.

### **Do Leverage Employee Passions.**

What do Google News, Gmail and Google Finance have in common? They all stemmed from the 20% of time Google provides their engineers to work on personal passion projects. Sound like an amazing employee perk? Absolutely. But it's also one that's triggered unparalleled innovation and increased market share for Google. For most organizations, allotting one-fifth of company time to such endeavors probably isn't realistic, but freeing employees to incorporate relevant passions into their work in any capacity can be a great way to invigorate team members and generate fresh ideas.

### **Do Establish Basic Parameters.**

While offering employees flexibility can send an empowering message that you trust your direct reports, too much freedom can make some employees feel lost and isolated. For an optimal balance of flexibility and support, provide employees with guidelines and expectations, and then offer choices that allow employees to achieve their objectives however they choose within the set boundaries.

*So what does this all mean?*

The right employees, when performing to their fullest potential, are your greatest asset as an organization, and providing them the freedom and flexibility to do their best work is not only in their best interest, but yours as well.

Although each organization is unique in what benefits are relevant and realistic to provide, the important thing is that you take thoughtful and deliberate steps toward creating an environment that allows your employees to do their best and most fulfilling work.

As Karl Staib, author of *Work Happy Now*, put it, "Creating freedom at work is about letting employees optimize their production. Only they know how to get the most out of themselves. It's the company's job to give them the resources to make it happen."

***Could your organization benefit from allowing for greater employee autonomy? If you need help getting started, give us a call today at #708-738-5040, or visit our websites at [RRGExec.com](http://RRGExec.com) and [SearchWorksllc.com](http://SearchWorksllc.com)***