

Why flexible work doesn't just mean part-time

 By Phillipa Geard

18 Nov 2016

There is a misconception that flexible working is only applicable to less skilled positions, and that jobs which require an average full working day or more cannot comfortably fit into this category.



© Marina Pissarova – [123RF.com](https://www.123RF.com)

This is preceded by the thought that flexible work is exclusively part time. This fallacy is becoming increasingly challenging as the concept of working differently becomes boxed around certain types of jobs.

Unfortunately the perception is that some positions, such as office support roles lend themselves better to part-time work, but there is a growing need for more highly skilled jobs to accommodate a more flexible schedule.

Let us be frank, our world is changing rapidly and current working generations find themselves faced with a unique set of challenges. The problem is, the way we work is not adapting as quickly to these challenges as it should be.

Parents stretched to the max

Moms in particular face a conundrum in that it is almost impossible to choose not to work in the current economic climate, and there is a large part of the population which has to go back to work for financial reasons.

Parents find themselves stretched to maximum capacity and unable to give of their best at home or at work, putting further strain and stress on all aspects of their already chaotic lives.

Flexible working conditions, even in a basic form, could drastically change this by helping parents cope with family and other responsibilities.

This does not only mean part-time working conditions, but flexibility in a number of avenues, including the ability to work from home when needed, or even to manage hours around school or family needs for example.

Present or productive?

Research continues to indicate that being present in an office does not increase productivity or even output. In fact, it has shown that flexible workers are more productive and even happier when they are able to accommodate different aspects of their life and not just expected to sit at a desk for 8 hours a day.

RecruitMyMom has found that highly skilled moms would love to work but are often restricted by a lack of openness to the concept of part-time or flexible working with employers.

It is interesting to note that SME's in particular are quickly realizing the incredible, highly trained talent they can garner from corporates by offering flexibility in skilled positions.

We have made many advances in our modern world, but attitudes towards flexible working remain frustratingly backward.

Returning to work out of financial need after you have had children should not automatically compromise the life of individuals or their families. The very health of South African families and the economy depends on a different approach to working.

Never mind brain drain to foreign soils, there is a pool of highly skilled moms who are unable to get back into the market place simply due to the fact that their new lives are not accommodated for.

This is a group of people who can offer skills from accounting and law, to zoology and marketing, generally at a lower cost to company than full time office based employees and with higher productivity levels.

Each day we take a step closer to a world which embraces the benefits of a new approach to the way we work, but we have a long way to go. We are so proud of all the women and employers who continue to champion this by choosing to look at flexible ways of working.

ABOUT PHILLIPA GEARD

I am passionate about retaining talented skilled women in an organisation. It makes good financial sense to assist women through their careers and into key decision making roles. Women in general are never going to not want to be mothers and carers of their children. RecruitMyMom assists companies to find skilled Moms to do part-time and flexible meaningful work. Phillipa does presentations to Executives on how to practically implement cultural changes to keep skilled women within organisations.

■ #BizTrends2018: Move over 2017, flexible work is about to get bigger and better in 2018 - 12 Jan 2018

■ Skilled workforce on tap – the rise of the on-demand economy - 22 Mar 2017

■ Why flexible work doesn't just mean part-time - 18 Nov 2016

■ #WomensMonth: Celebrating the rise of the digital mom - 23 Aug 2016

■ [BizTrends 2016] The future of work in 2016 - 18 Jan 2016

[View my profile and articles...](#)

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>