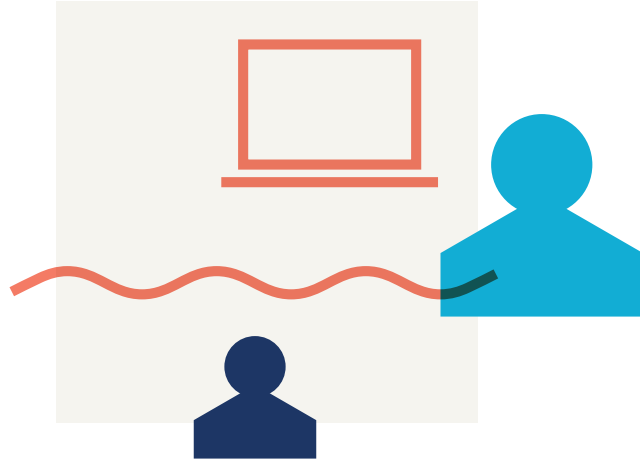


A high-angle photograph of a person's hands typing on a silver laptop. The person is wearing an orange and white checkered button-down shirt with the sleeves rolled up. They have red nail polish and a large, ornate ring on their left ring finger. The laptop is open, and the keyboard is visible. The background is a dark, textured surface, possibly a chair or desk.

# The state of flexible work arrangements

BENCHMARKS FOR SMALL BUSINESS, WITH UPDATES FOR COVID-19 TIPS

# Contents



Introduction

How we define flexible work arrangements

Flexible policies & concerns

Flexible work arrangements boost job satisfaction and productivity

What flexible work arrangements are employers offering?

The United States of leave

Small businesses face a large problem

HR experts: 6 FAQs from real companies

Young and part-time workers

Case study: StringCan Interactive finds success with flex policy

Conclusion

Methodology

## A changing workforce means changing policies

Do you allow employees to work from home? Would you allow workers to adjust their hours or shifts? How about telecommuting?

If you answered “no” to all those questions, it turns out, you’re probably in the minority, and with recent news about the coronavirus it’s time to consider the options.

Flexible work arrangements were in high demand even before the coronavirus. A new generation of workers who were constantly on the move, surrounded by screens, and always checking in, urged employers to let them "be remote."

But now there are more pressing matters.

With a recent bear market and increasing concerns about the impact of a global pandemic, a growing number of businesses are grappling with how to pull off a remote work environment.

This guide won't tell you how to run your business, or how to adapt to a quarantine, but it does provide data on which flexible work arrangements are most valued, utilized, and tend to increase employees' job satisfaction and productivity.

We hope you can use this information to produce policies and internal guidance around flexible work, as we all look to support each other.

# How we define flexible work arrangements

There isn't just one definition of a flexible work arrangement. That's part of what makes these policies, well, flexible. Here are a few examples of the most common types of flexible work arrangements:

## Scheduling & hours worked

There are many different variations of flexible work schedules. This could mean 6am-2pm work days, or it could mean a compressed 5-4-9 schedule, in which employees work longer days to take every other Friday off,

### COVID-19 Tip:

Allowing employees to travel to work on off hours could help with social distancing.

## Remote work

Allowing employees to work at an offsite location, either full-time, or as needed. An example of this is allowing employees to work from home one or more days a week, or leaving early to avoid rush hour traffic and then finish up their work in the evenings.

### COVID-19 Tip:

Try setting up free conference lines, and encouraging phone conversations.

## PTO & vacation policies

Offering unlimited, flexible, or floating PTO and vacation policies can actually increase productivity if implemented effectively. These policies allow employees the authority to take paid vacation days, personal days, or sick leave days whenever they want (and in some cases, as much of them as they want.)

## Casual attire

Just as the nine to five work schedules are starting to open up to flexible arrangements, suits and formal dress codes are also giving way to casual attire. One version of a flexible work policy is allowing employees to dress casually, yet appropriately, for work.

## A word on leave policies

There are many different kinds of leaves to offer, from paid to unpaid, maternity, paternity, sick, bereavement, and more. These must be in accordance with local, state, and federal law.

### COVID-19 Tip:

**Paid leave is not just a workplace policy. It's a public health policy.**

# Flexible policies & concerns

## Many workers enjoy flexible work, but actual policies are vague

A surprising result of the survey was just how prevalent flexible work arrangements are in the workplace. The vast majority of respondents indicated that their employer offers some form of flexible work arrangement.

The breakdown of workers who said their employers offered some form of flexible arrangement, compared to those who said their employers didn't, was nearly a 2-to-1 margin, with 67% replying affirmatively, 30% responding their employers didn't offer flexible work arrangements, and 3% saying they were unsure.



But while flexible work arrangements were more prevalent than expected, processes for taking advantage of flexible work were far less clear. The majority (58%) of respondents said either there wasn't an "official" policy or they were unsure of the policy.

**COVID-19 Tip: Make sure your employees know what is and isn't allowed in terms of flexible work so they can make informed decisions, quickly.**

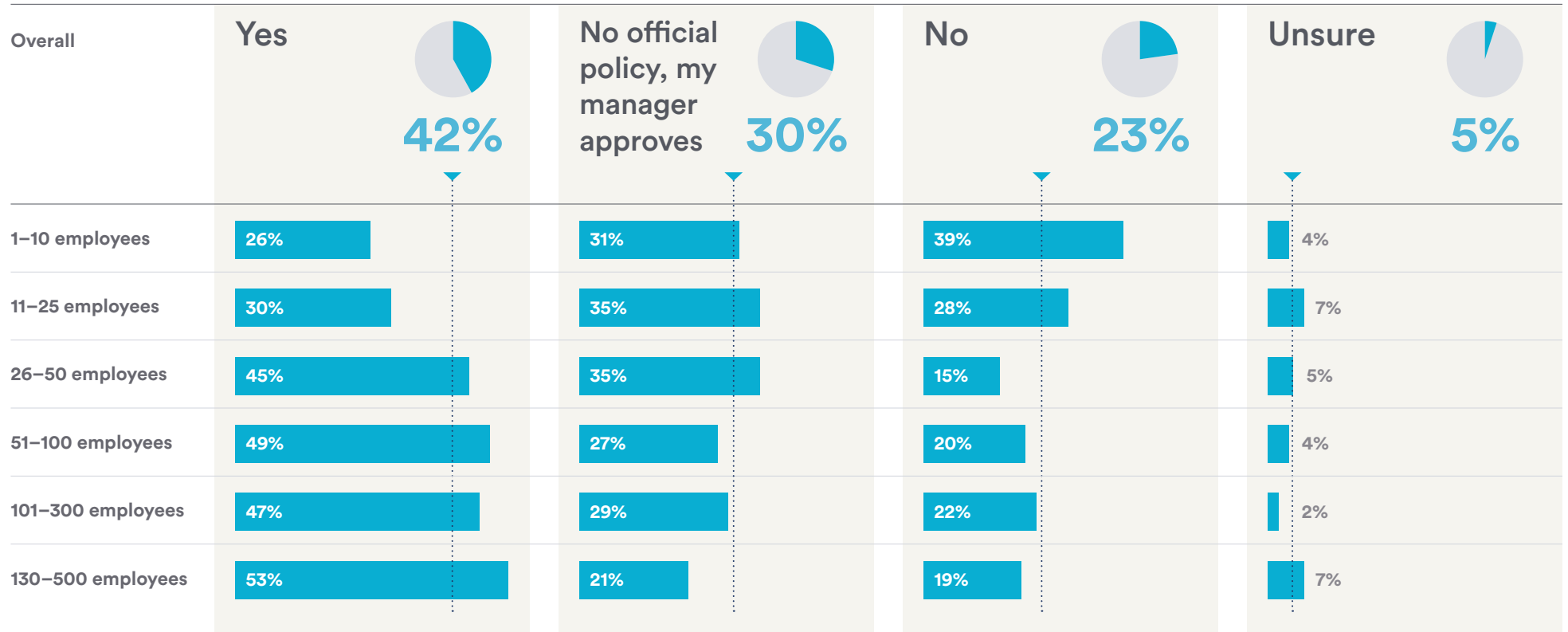
30% reported that there wasn't an official policy in place but that their requests were approved individually by their manager, suggesting a case-by-case basis for managing flexible work arrangements without official company guidance.

Interestingly, while there does appear to be some correlation between the size the company and policy awareness, there is clearly a need for greater clarity at companies of every size. Respondents at companies with 301 to 500 employees were more likely to report an official policy for using flexible work arrangements (53%) while respondents at companies that have between 1 to 10 employees were the least likely to report an official policy in place (26%).

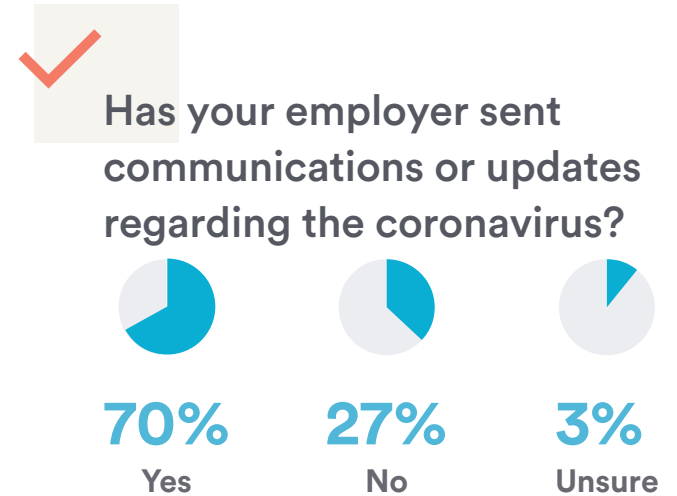




## Are there specific policies or processes your company has for requesting and/or using these benefits?



Even as employers attempt to provide more flexibility, there's a clarity gap due to a lack of official policies. Small business owners need to institute, review, and communicate the policies for requesting or using flexible work arrangements, regardless of which arrangements are offered.




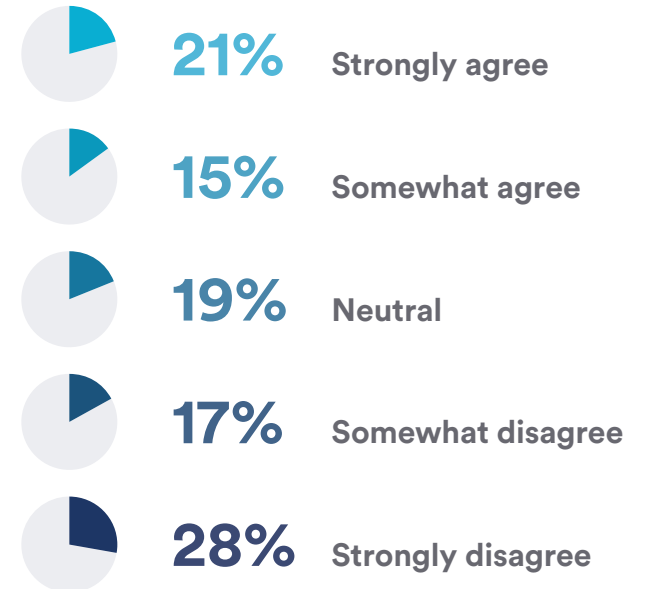
Based on a poll of more than 1000 working adults, March 2020.

## Lack of clarity is a threat for small businesses

Even as more employers offer flexible work arrangements, and workers are reporting improved job satisfaction as a result, a lack of communication about these benefits could pose a risk to small businesses. This was highlighted when workers were asked about their likelihood to leave an employer due to a lack of flexible work arrangements.

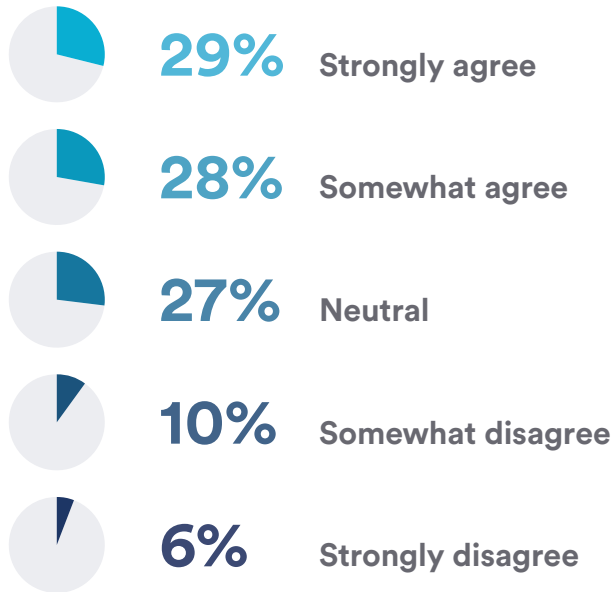
When workers were asked if they were likely to leave their current employer in the next calendar year because of a lack of flexible work arrangements, 36% either strongly agreed or somewhat agreed. Another 19% were neutral.

 Are you likely to leave your current employer in the next 12 months because they don't offer certain flexible arrangements?





My company has clearly articulated the flexible work arrangements available and how to use them.



This should be a concern for employers who would have to face the costs of hiring, onboarding and replacing departing talent.

But given that the majority of workers are reporting high availability, usage, and satisfaction with the flexibility options employers are offering, the more pressing issue might be a lack of communication rather than a lack of flexibility. As we noted, a large share of respondents said there was no official policy or they were unsure of an official policy for requesting or using flexible work arrangements (58%).

While the majority of respondents said their company clearly articulated which flexible work arrangements were offered and how to use them (57% either strongly agreed or somewhat agreed), 16% disagreed and another 27% were neutral.

The results suggest there is still plenty of opportunity to communicate the policies, making them fresh in the mind of employees who might be evaluating other opportunities.

This communication gap was likely exacerbated by the novelty of some of the policies. While 68% of respondents said the company hadn't introduced any new flexible work arrangements either formally or informally in past six months, 25% said they had implemented some in the past six months, and 7% were unsure. This may change dramatically in the next few months.

For small businesses, regular updates and reminders about these policies could be worthwhile not only for internal compliance but as a retention tool.

 Has your company introduced any new flexible work arrangement policies formally or informally in the past six months?



**25%**  
Yes



**68%**  
No



**7%**  
Unsure

## James Publishing flexible tips



James Publishing was founded in 1981 to provide more practical law books than the treatises that then dominated the market. Since then, this company of 21 employees has focused on offering cost-effective practice tools and delivering exceptional customer service, all while contributing to charitable causes around the world. This company has also successfully implemented a flexible work arrangement at their office. Here are some pro tips from CFO, Mike Margol.

### WHAT'S A POLICY YOU OFFER?

We offer variable schedules based on employees' needs. Some of us work a set schedule every day, whereas others arrive after they drop their kids off at school or after they hit the gym. We tell team members that as long as their schedules overlap core business hours, they are basically free to do what is best for their personal work-life balance.

### WHAT ARE YOUR TIPS FOR MAKING FLEXIBLE HOURS WORK?

Be sure workers understand that flexible scheduling does not mean they get to skip entire days or cause the rest of the team undue burden with their absences, and to report hours accurately at all times regardless of scheduling.

### HAVE YOU FACED OBSTACLES WITH THIS POLICY?

We've been pretty fortunate with our flexible work schedule offering. Every so often, there will be someone who wants to take advantage of the system (show up late and leave early every day, never making the full pay period quota for hours), but as long as those issues are addressed quickly and clearly, they usually iron themselves out.

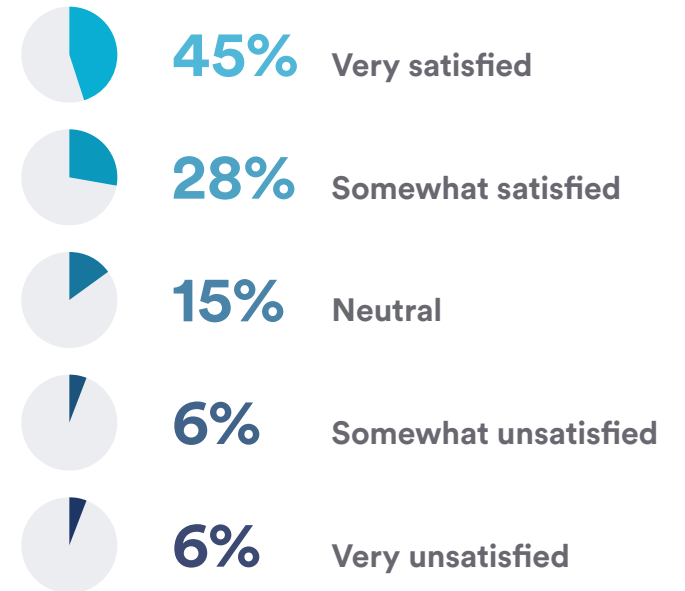
# Flexible work arrangements boost job satisfaction and productivity

Perhaps the strongest argument for flexibility is that it increases productivity and reduces overhead cost in a down market.

73% of survey respondents were either very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with the flexible work arrangements available to them.




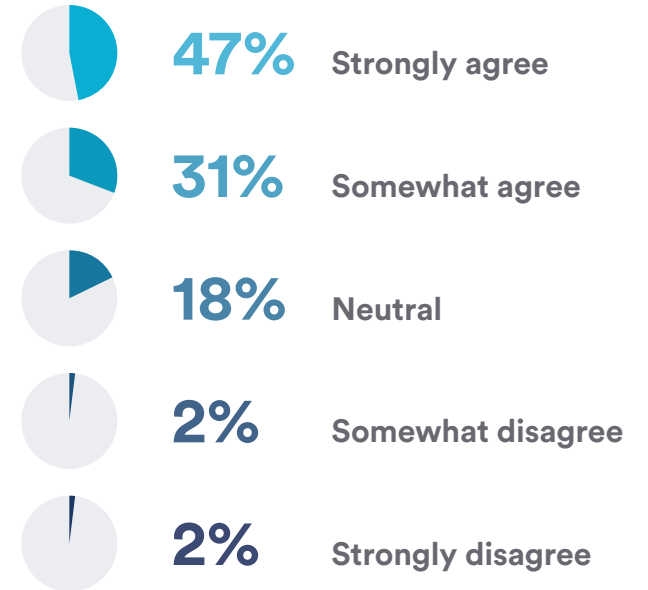
How satisfied are you with the flexible work arrangements that your company offers?



Offering flexible work policies doesn't mean a decrease in productivity.

A vast majority of respondents (78%) also strongly agreed or somewhat agreed that flexible arrangements would boost or already have boosted their productivity.

 Flexible work arrangements would or do allow me to be more productive.



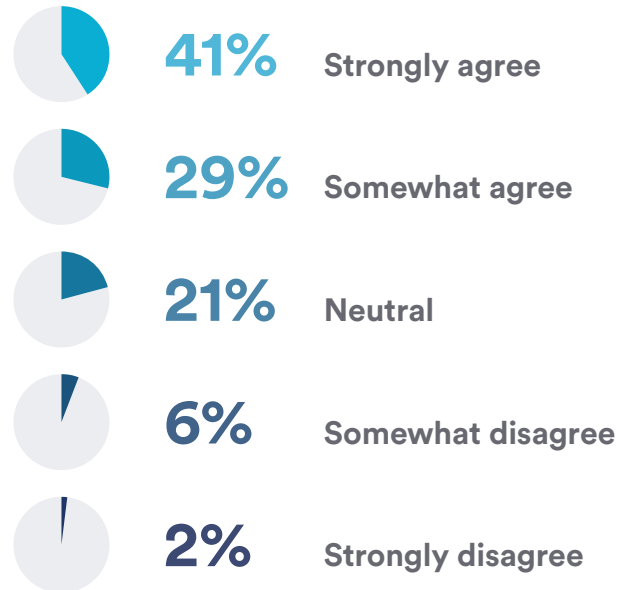


In fact, the survey results show just how important these policies are to job seekers. 70% of respondents rate flexible work arrangements as important as salary or health benefits. A whopping 77% claimed it would be a major consideration in future job selection.

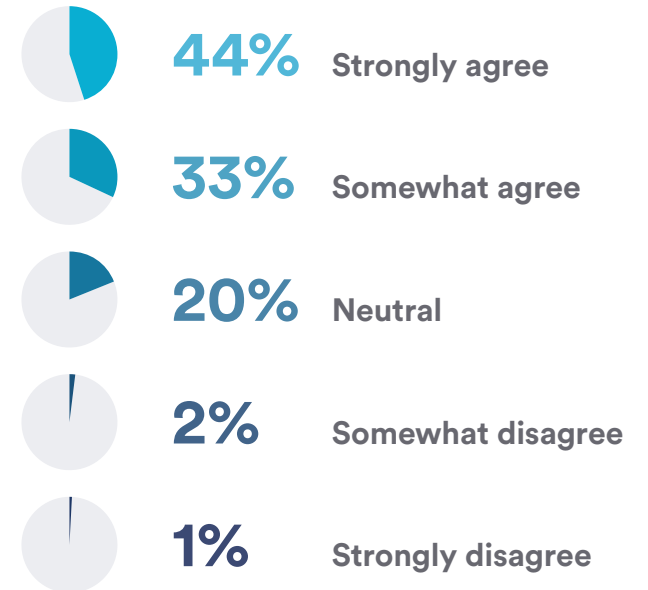
Given the high levels of reported satisfaction and productivity, compounded by the value that employees clearly place on them, flexible work policies are likely to become a competitive advantage for small businesses.



**Flexible work arrangements are as important to me as my pay rate or health benefits.**



**Flexible work arrangements will be a major consideration when evaluating future job opportunities.**



## What flexible work arrangements are employers offering?

When it comes to any kind of employer perk, benefit, or policy, there tends to be discrepancies between what's offered and what's utilized. The goal of our survey was to understand both what type of flexible work arrangements companies with up to 500 employees offered, and which of these arrangements workers were actually using.

This is why workers were asked to select the flexible work arrangements their employers offered, and then asked which of these arrangements they had taken advantage of. Getting both answers enables a better look at the value of an arrangement by comparing the availability to usage.

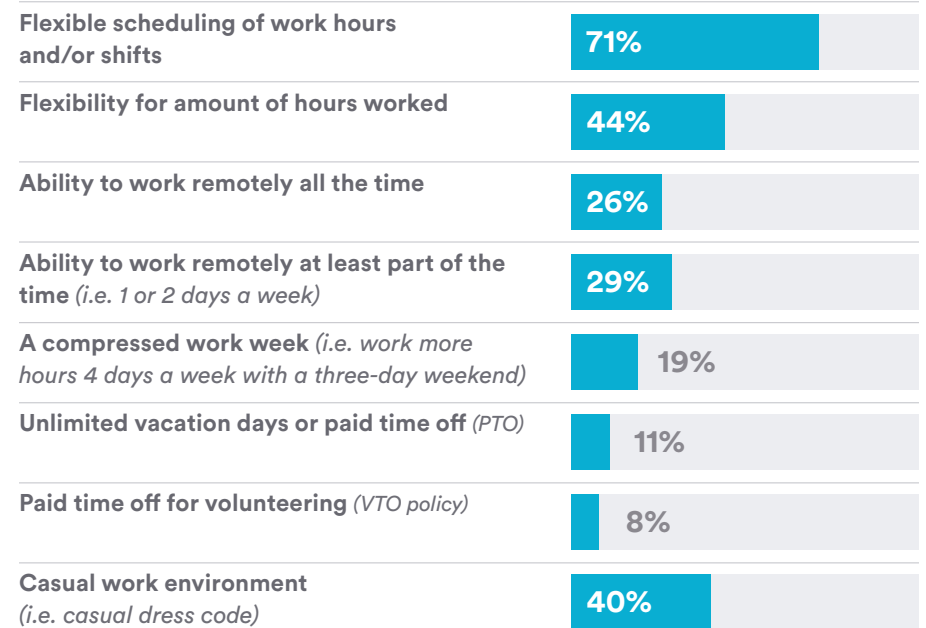
# Flexible schedules and remote work

One of the most prominent findings is that flexible scheduling (including amount of hours worked) is being offered at a much higher rate than the option to work remotely. Flexible scheduling of work hours and/or shifts was the most reported of all arrangements at 71%. Flexibility for amount of hours worked was the third most reported arrangement at 44%.

By comparison, the ability to work remotely was not offered by many employers. 26% of respondents said their employer allowed them to work remotely all the time, while 29% said they could work remotely part time, such as two days per week.



If your company offers flexible work arrangements, which of the following do they offer?

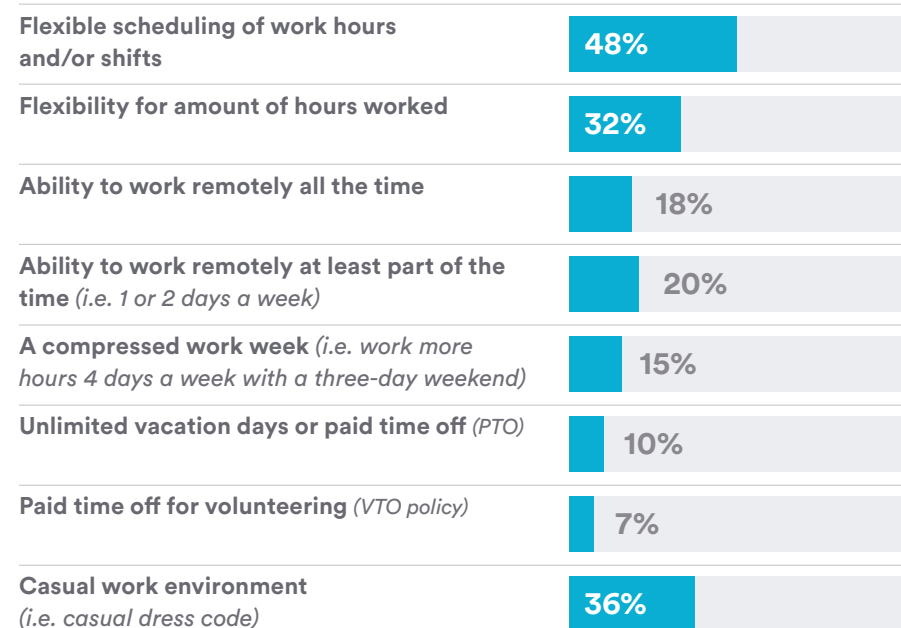


However, employees reported a higher rate of working remotely compared to availability of remote work arrangements than flexible hours and/or shifts. 48% reported taking advantage of flexible scheduling of hours and/or shifts, and 32% of flexibility for amount of hours worked. Though the usage of ability to work remotely all the time or part of the time was only 18% and 20%, respectively, that is a much tighter ratio of availability to usage.

What may be happening here is that employees are putting greater premium on the ability to work remotely, but that employers are more reluctant to make these arrangements available. Instead, they are offering more flexibility around hours and shifts.



### Which, if any, flexible work arrangements have you taken advantage of at your current company?



# Not everybody is working for the weekend

As businesses become more flexible regarding hours, and workers put greater value on remote work, the concept of a compressed workweek has begun to gain traction.

A compressed workweek is commonly defined as compressing the number of hours worked over a normal workweek into a shorter period of time. This often plays out as working more hours for four days a week in exchange for a three-day weekend every other week, but is not exclusively limited to this arrangement.

Based on survey responses, a compressed workweek remains less common with employers. Only 19% of workers said a compressed workweek was offered by their employer and 15% of respondents said they had taken advantage of that arrangement. Given the high ratio of usage to availability, this arrangement might become more common among small businesses.

# Unlimited PTO and VTO lag behind other flexible work arrangements

Paid time off (PTO) is fairly standard for many employers, especially among full-time workers. In some cases, there are laws (local and otherwise) which set standards for policies such as sick or parental leave. Many employers offer some form of PTO in one form or another.

Unlimited PTO and paid time off for volunteering (VTO) policies are new trends, and while they are becoming more popular, they are not yet common. Popularized by Silicon Valley, these policies expand the availability of paid time off. Unlimited PTO essentially sets no limit on the amount of time an employer can use during their tenure and since there is no set allotment of PTO days, in most cases an employee cannot accrue or be paid out for the PTO time they don't use upon termination of employment. VTO policies are offered to encourage community involvement. The employer will grant a certain amount of paid time off for the purposes of volunteering with an approved organization.

While these policies have captured more attention in recent years, they aren't pervasive in workplaces yet. Only 12% of respondents reported being granted an unlimited PTO policy and 8% reported a VTO policy. Usage was also low with 10% saying they used the unlimited PTO policy and 7% saying they took advantage of a VTO policy.

## Keeping it casual

While a casual work environment, such as not requiring business attire or uniform in the workplace, may seem different than scheduling or remote work, it still provides a level of flexibility between employer and employee.

And workers confirmed it remains a popular perk. 40% of respondents said their employer offered a casual work environment and 36% said they took advantage of this offering. Casual is not just for Fridays anymore.

## The United States of leave

While paid leave policies, such as maternity or paternity leave, are not categorized the same way as other flexible arrangements (i.e. telecommuting, flexible scheduling, etc.), these policies are nevertheless indicators of flexibility in the workplace.

Working parents and employees who need to take a leave of absence might require time away from the workplace and their responsibilities. Paid leave policies can make it easier for them to re-enter the workforce while meeting family and other outside obligations.

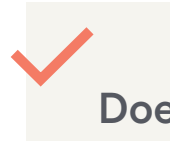
The United States has lagged behind several other countries in offering policies like parental leave. Unlike countries such as France, Italy, New Zealand, and many other advanced nations, the US is one of the few countries that does not have a federal requirement for paid time off.



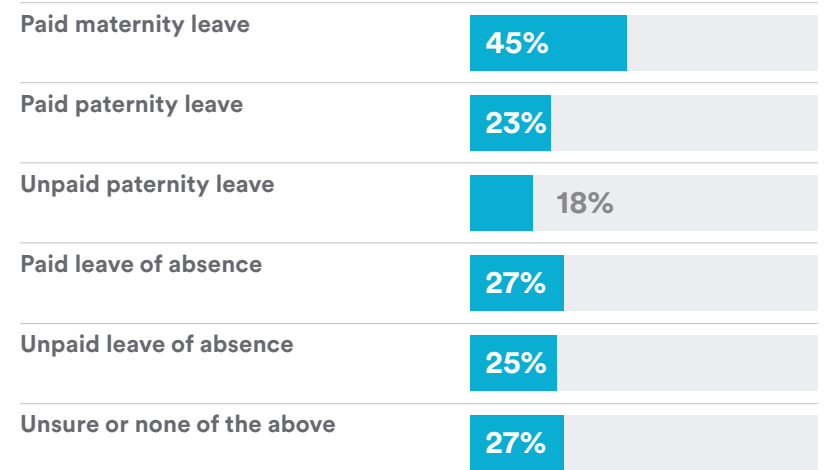
Survey respondents cited paid maternity leave as a benefit their small business employer provided above all other leave policies at 45%.

However, as a sign that working parents at small businesses are still not getting the level of flexibility they need, only 23% of respondents said paid paternity leave was offered. That's much lower than both paid and unpaid leave of absence policies.

As evidence of miscommunication on these policies, 27% of respondents said they were unsure of what leave policies were offered or that none of the leave policies cited were available to them. Continuously evaluating and communicating leave policies is an area for improvement among small business operators that could pay dividends in a more satisfied—and loyal—workforce.



### Does your company provide any of the following benefits?




## Small businesses face a large problem

One of the major challenges for small businesses is access to technology that simplifies processes for both employer and worker, streamlining and improving structures for managing scheduling, time off requests, video conferencing, work communication tools, and more.

The results from survey respondents were clear: limited availability to these technologies disproportionately affected smaller businesses.

For instance, 33% of respondents from businesses with 1–10 employees somewhat disagreed or strongly disagreed that their employer provided tools to make flexible work arrangements easy and productive. Another 28% responded neutrally, claiming they neither agreed nor disagreed that their companies provided those tools.

Organizations with 11–25 employees also struggled in this category, with 19% either somewhat or strongly disagreeing, and 30% remaining neutral.

 My company has provided tools to make using our flexible work arrangements easy and productive.

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neutral	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
1–10 employees	22%	18%	28%	13%	20%
11–25 employees	21%	31%	30%	9%	10%
26–50 employees	32%	29%	22%	10%	7%
51–100 employees	36%	25%	21%	9%	10%
101–300 employees	27%	29%	26%	10%	8%
130–500 employees	31%	26%	27%	10%	7%

HR EXPERTS

## 6 FAQs from Real Companies

Lots of employers would like to offer flexible work arrangements. However, the complications lie in the details.

There are many considerations to weigh when offering or updating flexible work policies. The Zenefits HR Advisor team works with thousands of small and mid-size businesses providing expertise on all sorts of flexible work arrangements. Here are some examples of frequently asked questions from actual employers along with detailed answers.



1

I have an employee who will be traveling home to care for their ill parent. They don't have enough PTO saved up so they are asking to work from home during this time. I'm inclined to approve this request, but what do I need to consider first?

Before anything else, you need to look at the reason for their request and the employee's eligibility for a protected leave. For example, since this employee would be caring for a family member with a serious health condition, the employee could be covered by the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) if they:



**If it is determined that they are eligible for FMLA leave, then you would need to allow them up to 12 weeks of time off (unpaid) to care for their parent. When an employee is on FMLA leave, this time should not be spent working. Unless the employee is simply passing along institutional knowledge or providing closure on completed assignments, having the employee work from home while on FMLA leave could be considered a violation by the employer. As a general rule, you should ensure any employee is relieved of all duties and not asked to perform any work while on an FMLA-protected leave.**

However, if the employee will not be caring for the family member the entire time they are home or if they have free time throughout their leave, you can implement a reduced work schedule with intermittent FMLA leave. For example, if the parent has planned medical treatments that the employee will be attending, the employee can work around these appointments to get necessary work done, and the time spent in treatment can be counted as FMLA leave.

On the other hand, if this employee is not eligible for FMLA or any other protected leave, then you can start looking at a “work-from-home” agreement. Here are some questions to keep in mind when building this out:

- Will this employee be working the same hours?
- Will the employee hold the same responsibilities while working from home?
- What times do they need to be available?
- How do they need to be available (phone, email, DMs, etc.)?
- If they are hourly or non-exempt, how will they be tracking their time?
- Will they be required to e-join team or company meetings?

Whatever agreement you come to with this employee, you should make sure you are keeping not only the employee’s needs in mind, but the company’s needs as well. Sometimes the position does not allow for it, and that’s perfectly OK.



## 2

**We're looking to offer more schedule flexibility in our office, but we don't want to spend a lot of money on new benefits. Do you have any recommendations on what types of benefits or policies we can implement? What are the costs and benefits associated?**

When looking at offering more flexible schedules for your employees, there are a few options that have different pros and cons. Let's review some of those options below.

## Flex Time

Offering flex time, or the ability for employees to work flexible hours based on the company's (or their) preferences, is one option you can provide to employees. The ability to work flexible hours can be very attractive in the recruitment process. Not only can you initially expand your applicant pool (you'll get the workers who would rather work a 6am–3pm or 10am–7pm shift vs. the typical 8am–5pm) but you can also remain flexible to applicant needs. If you have a great candidate who needs some flexibility in their schedule you're able

to accommodate it. Additionally, employees are able to work the hours that are best for them. We all know there are morning people vs. evening people—tailoring employee work hours to when they will be most productive can improve company productivity overall.

On the flip side, not all positions are able to offer flexible schedules. You may have a customer-facing department that has specific hours of operation which limits employee schedules. Additionally, depending on how

the position is setup, the employee may not work well with limited management available during the odd hours. If an employee is alone in the office from 6am–8am before the rest of the team gets in, they can lose that sense of camaraderie and family they may desire. Finally, a range in schedules will create less overlap for meetings and face-to-face interactions. If the position is one that relies heavily on other teams or individuals, this flexibility may not be as doable.



## Working remotely

Studies have estimated that ¼ of the US workforce telecommutes either occasionally or permanently. Similar to flexible working hours, offering the ability for employees to work remotely either partially or fully expands your talent pool when hiring. You may find some great candidates who would have a long commute or in a different city or state. With costs varying between areas, you may find that it's cheaper to hire someone in a different area or state. If the position is one that can be accomplished remotely, why wouldn't you look at saving money on the compensation

side? On the employee side, employees working remotely may notice they are able to concentrate more effectively without the distractions of being in an office. Without the watercooler talk and daily meetings, you may see increased productivity from your team.

Some of the costs for remote workers are similar to that of those working flexible hours. With part of your team being out of the office, there will be fewer face-to-face interactions between them. Technology is reducing this impact with the availability of instant

messaging and video calls, but this might not make up for someone not being at the desk next to you. The ability to have in the moment conversations is lost when employees aren't in the office. Additionally, the company may see small technology costs to ensure employees are able to effectively work from home. For those permanently working from home, you may want to think about having a policy that contributes to the employee's internet or phone bill and provide a laptop for them to work on.



3

**We have an employee who is constantly working from home, which we allow, but their performance has started dropping pretty drastically. How should we handle this? We don't want to get rid of flexible work arrangements altogether because many employees use this responsibly. What are our options here?**

When it comes to flexible work arrangements, such as working remotely, schedules can easily be abused and work can be disregarded. It is up to the employee's manager to ensure performance standards are still being met and required work is getting done.

In this case, it would be wise to meet with the employee and figure out why performance has dropped. Is it simply because they are not doing the work, or is there an underlying cause? If they just haven't been working as usual, then it may be time to bring them back into the office where they can be coached and monitored. It's important to explain to the employee that while you want to be open and flexible, you also need to ensure the company's needs are being met. Working from home is a privilege, and your employees should understand that.

Additionally, just because a flexible arrangement didn't work out for this employee doesn't mean it won't work out with someone else. When creating these kinds of policies, you need to look at each position and employee separately to determine if you can support them working remotely. Some employees work better by themselves, while some need someone there to ensure they remain on track. Each worker can be different, so it's OK to be different in these flexible work arrangements as well.



4

**We have many employees who are asking to work from home during the week. What are some things for us to consider when creating a policy like this? Is this something you recommend?**

In this age of technology, many employees are able to work from home either partially or fully. This is a benefit many companies can overlook although it provides high value for a low cost. Overall, you'll want to look at your team and the positions in question to determine if a work from home option is doable for the company.

When drafting your policy, here are some things to consider:

**What positions are eligible for a work from home option?**

**How much advance notice is required?**

**How long must an employee have worked for the company to be eligible?**

**How does the employee “apply” to work from home?**

**What performance targets must the employee meet to be eligible?**

**How will work from home time be tracked?**

**Will work from home be scheduled for certain days of the week?**

- Will it be a stable schedule or variable?
- Do employees have X days per week/month they can use?

**How will work from home interact with other leave policies?**

- Will you allow employees to work from home while they're traveling?
- Can employees work from home before/during/after Maternity/Paternity leave?

Know that a work from home option won't be the best fit for each employee. Working from home may require the employee to have good time management skills. They will be required to work with little oversight from their team and manager. Think about how managers will ensure work is being completed and what steps will be taken if it's not.

Also, keeping lines of communication open is key. Ensure your employee knows the expectations of keeping in touch with their team while at home. Many companies use online

chat features such as Slack or Google Hangouts to keep in touch so keep these options open and in use if you use them. Provide dial-in information for any meetings they should be attending while out and have the expectation be that they attend meetings as normal.

Overall, having a work from home policy can be extremely helpful for some teams, but it's not the right fit for every company. Again, review the job requirements and eligible employees to determine if this would be the right fit for your team.



5

**We'd like to allow our team to work from home, but I'm concerned about hourly workers and unnecessary overtime while they're unsupervised. What are some things we need to consider when writing a work from home policy to account for these concerns?**

Allowing employees to work from home doesn't change the responsibilities and performance expectations of the job. If you don't allow overtime normally, you shouldn't change your policy for those working from home. Managers should still be keeping tabs on their employees and help keep them on track when needed. As a manager, ensure the employee's work is being completed and keep

an eye on their hours. If the employee is continually clocking overtime, a performance conversation is needed. Ask the employee why they aren't able to get the work done within her normal scheduled hours. Has there been a change since working from home? Is working from home a distraction for them? Addressing these sooner rather than later will head off any future issues.

Also know that not all employees will be a good fit for working from home. Your policy should address employee expectations, including performance, hours, and more. Also, outline at what point an employee will no longer be able to work from home if you notice consistent overtime that wasn't noticed while they were working in the office. Since working from home is a right, not a requirement, you can determine when the benefit isn't working as intended.

Note that you are required to pay employees for all hours worked. You can't withhold pay from an employee as "punishment" because they worked unapproved overtime. If the employee seems to be using work from home privileges as a way to work overtime, this will need to be addressed by either removing the benefit, having performance conversations with the employee, or both.





6

**I have an employee who is constantly working—they take 3 AM calls, answer emails past midnight, and come in early every morning. I don't want to discourage working, but they are working too much! How can I address their crazy schedule?**

If an employee seems to be working day and night, there are a few options to help them slow down and ensure they are not overworking themselves. We've listed a few examples below, but remember, you should do what's best for your company!

- Encourage them to leave early.
- Push them to take a vacation—even if it's only a day.
- Give them a separate work phone, so they are not taking calls on their personal phone.
- Hire a part-time employee to help lighten their load.

## Young and part-time workers

### Young workers are satisfied but also have one foot out the door

One of the more intriguing findings within the survey results was the way satisfaction, productivity, and potential to leave for a new opportunity broke down among age groups. Generally, the likelihood respondents were satisfied with the offered flexible work arrangements decreased as the age of the respondent increased. What's interesting is the likelihood to seek out a new job also increased based on age.

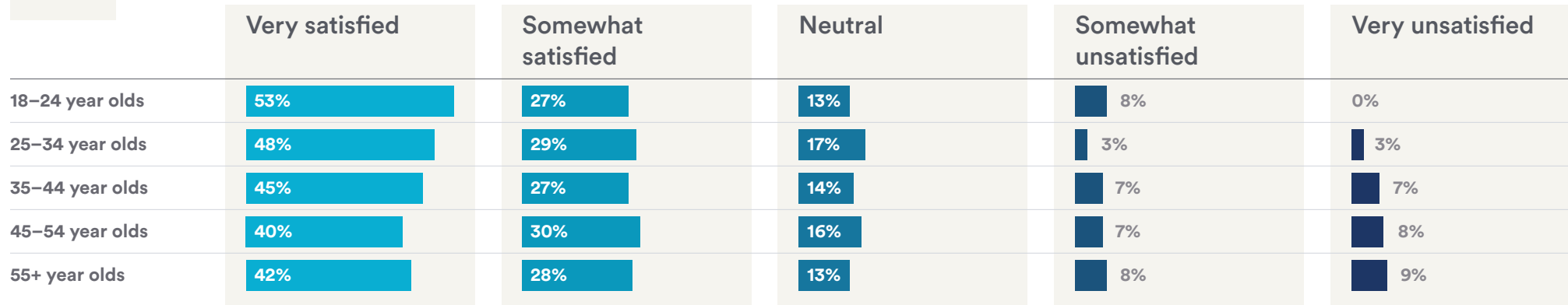
When asked to rank their satisfaction with the flexible arrangements currently offered, the largest percentage of very satisfied workers was among 18- to 24-year olds (53%), followed by 25- to 34-year olds (48%), and 35- to 44-year olds (45%). That dropped to 40% among 45- to 54-year olds and 42% among those 55-years old or over.

Taking a closer look at the youngest workers, this cohort provided the most enthusiastic replies to statements about flexible work satisfaction and productivity. This group was the largest to strongly agree that flexible work arrangements improved their satisfaction at work (63%); that they do or would make them more productive (66%); these arrangements do or would improve their work-life balance (61%); and that flexible work was as important to them as pay rate or health benefits (55%).

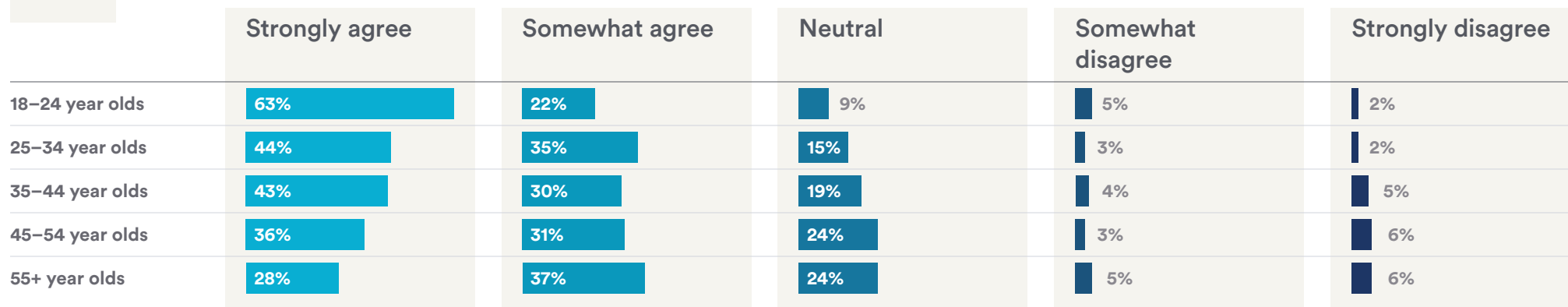
Yet, even with this high reported amount of satisfaction among this age cohort, they also reported that they—along with the 25- to 34-year old cohort—are most likely to leave their current employer in the next 12 months because they lack certain flexible arrangements. By contrast, the amount of those who strongly disagreed with this statement increased as the age increased.

Similar to other insights within this report, the key lessons appear to be in communicating early and often about the flexible work policies in place and how to take advantage of these arrangements. This could have a larger impact on retention and satisfaction than many might expect.

✓ How satisfied are you with the flexible work arrangements that your company offers?



✓ Flexible work arrangements have increased my satisfaction at work.



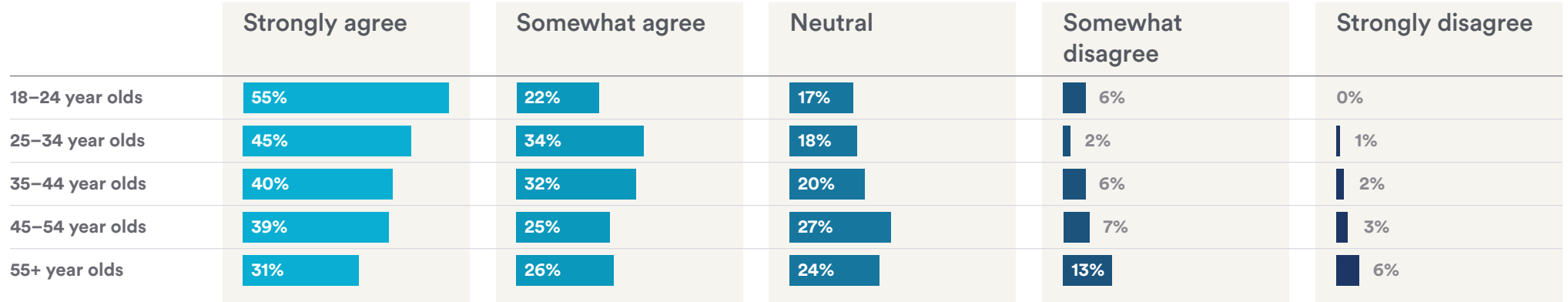
✓ Flexible work arrangements would or do allow me to be more productive.

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neutral	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
18–24 year olds	66%	23%	9%	2%	0%
25–34 year olds	49%	33%	15%	1%	2%
35–44 year olds	44%	33%	17%	4%	2%
45–54 year olds	46%	26%	23%	3%	3%
55+ year olds	36%	36%	22%	1%	5%

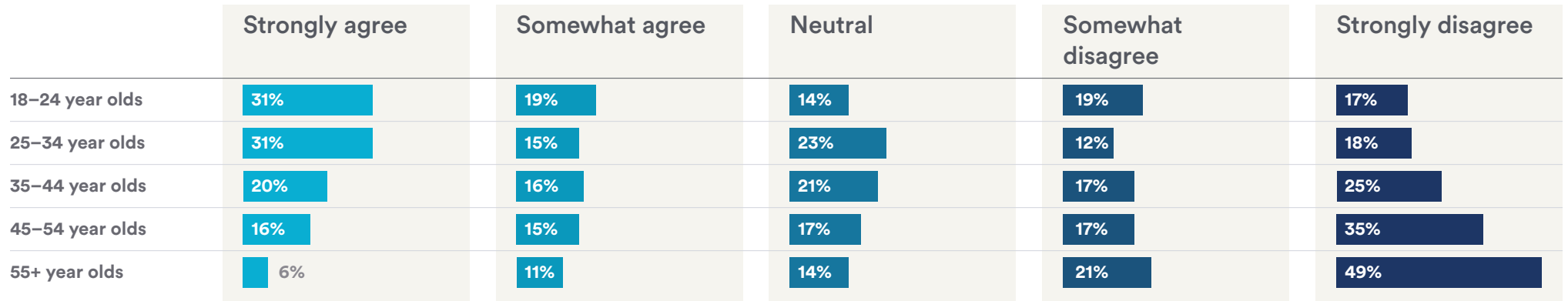
✓ My work-life is or would be improved because of flexible work arrangements.

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neutral	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
18–24 year olds	61%	23%	13%	3%	0%
25–34 year olds	52%	35%	11%	2%	0%
35–44 year olds	49%	32%	16%	2%	1%
45–54 year olds	50%	32%	14%	1%	3%
55+ year olds	40%	29%	26%	4%	2%

✓ Flexible work arrangements are as important to me as my pay rate or health benefits provided by the employer.



✓ I am likely to leave my current employer in the next 12 months because they lack certain flexible arrangements.



# Part-time workers tend to be more satisfied with tools and policies

39% of part-time workers strongly agree that their company provides tools to simplify and encourage remote work. Only 28% of full-time employees felt the same. Over 10% of full-time employees strongly disagree that they have access to these types of tools.

The findings suggest that, given the nature of part-time work, employees within this category feel their employers have implemented tools to support flexibility at a greater pace than their full-time counterparts.

✓ My company has provided tools to make using our flexible work arrangements easy and productive (i.e. mobile apps, communication tools, video conferencing, etc.)

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neutral	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
Full-time employees	28%	26%	25%	10%	10%
Part-time employees	39%	26%	16%	16%	3%

## CASE STUDY

# StringCan Interactive finds success with flex policy



When it comes to crafting innovative design, StringCan Interactive is ahead of the curve in both digital marketing and also progressive people programs. As an agency, this lean team of 10 artfully juggles their clients' many deliverables, but there's a hidden (and essential) ingredient that supports their thriving workplace culture. What's in the secret sauce? It's lies in their use of flexible work policies.

## Treating adults like adults

The definition of flexible work varies from company to company, but for StringCan Interactive, it means trusting employees to take time when they need to maneuver appointments, family commitments, and outside hobbies while still getting their work done on time.

Sarah Hiller, the company's Director of Operations, describes their flexible work policy as something that's "embedded in their culture—and doesn't come with specific rules." During a new hire's streamlined onboarding with Zenefits, Sarah walks new folks through just how flex time can be utilized, and communication tools that go hand in hand with keeping the team in sync. By encouraging the team to make their own schedule calls, all members of their organization remain happy and humming, all the while being able to sustain passions outside of office doors.



The underlying element of a successful, productive flexible work policy lies in what Sarah calls “100% trust.”

## Flexible work in action

Having been at the company for over 2 years, Sarah breathes air into her favorite past time by teaching her yoga class every Tuesday at 3:30 PM. Doing so allows her to find her zen during the work week and in turn, contribute to greater productivity when she’s back at her standing desk the following morning. Is she still getting the work done in windows that work for her? “Always!” she exclaims “we all know what’s needed to get our tasks completed on time.” And to that we’ll say “namaste.”

## Implementing a flexible program that works

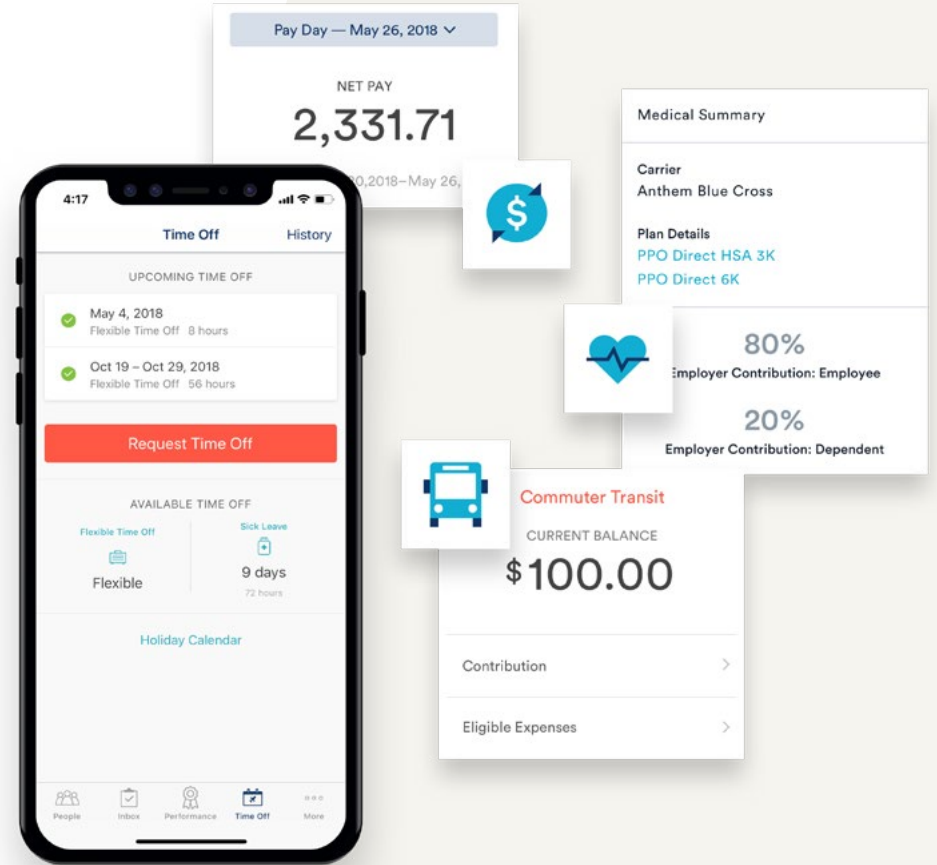
The underlying element of a successful, productive flexible work policy lies in what Sarah calls “100% trust.” By aligning on mediums used for urgent and non-urgent matters, the Stringcan Interactive family stays in lockstep whether they’re sitting next to each other or connecting from afar.

When colleagues make use of modified hours, all team members recognize that those are personal choices, and no questions are asked. Due to a smooth onboarding that addresses the meaning of the flexible work policy, everyone at StringCan Interactive remains on the same page from day one.

# How Zenefits can help

When supporting a modern workforce, give your team the best tools possible that are accessible, on-the-go and in the palm of their hands. Discover how Zenefits' mobile HR platform equips your progressive workforce with digital tools and employee friendly software that will take your employee experience to the next level.

Learn more at [www.zenefits.com](http://www.zenefits.com)



## Conclusion

### **Flexible work is on the rise. Policies and tools need to keep up.**

It's clear from this small business report, and a potentially new era of work spawned by the recent global pandemic of the coronavirus, that flexible work policies perks are in increasing demand as the workforce shifts. The most crucial findings from this data is that they highlight the opportunity to increase job satisfaction, productivity, and value while keeping costs low.

Workers, even at businesses below 500 employees, are likely to weigh the flexible work policies equally with compensation and health benefits.

But what is also clear is that small businesses need to improve communication of these policies, increase availability of flexible work arrangements, and offer tools to support the use of these perks. The companies that are able to articulate and encourage the use of these policies will be able to use these to ensure workers are happy, productive, and less likely to leave for other opportunities.

In an always-on age, flexibility can be an enticing, affordable means to attract and retain talent, especially for small businesses competing with bigger players in a tight labor market. But you can't just offer flexibility; you have to communicate the policy and empower workers to take advantage of it. Your team can't value what they don't know.

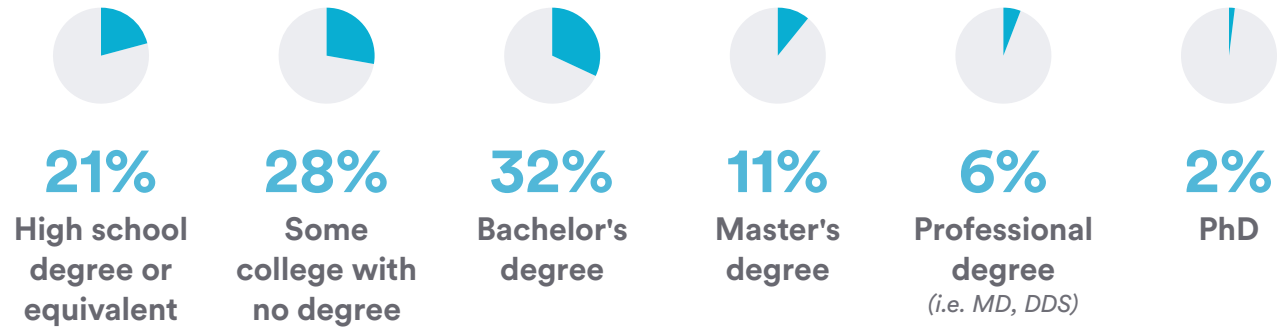
# Methodology

The survey data for this report was conducted in early June 2018 and completed by 601 respondents who are currently employed at businesses between 1–500 employees.

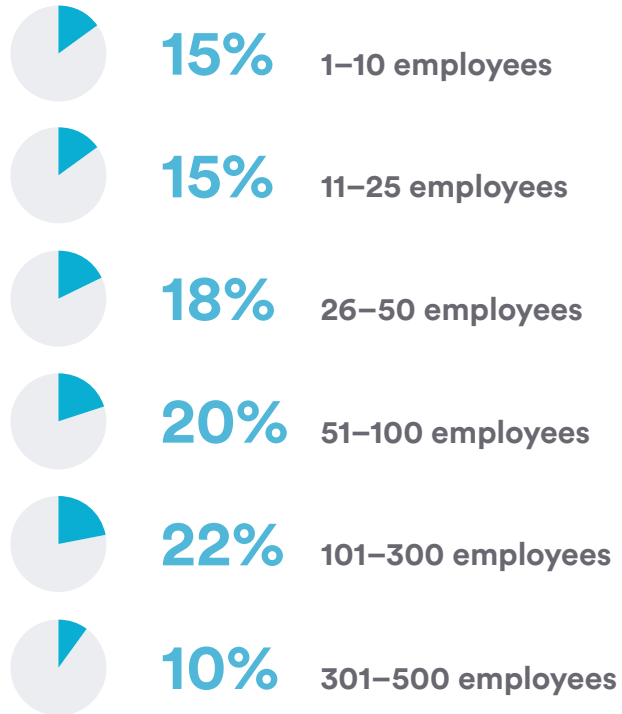
Of the respondents, 94% identified as employed full-time (35 hours or more per week), 5% identified as employed part-time (less than 35 hours per week), and 1% identified as a working student or intern.

---

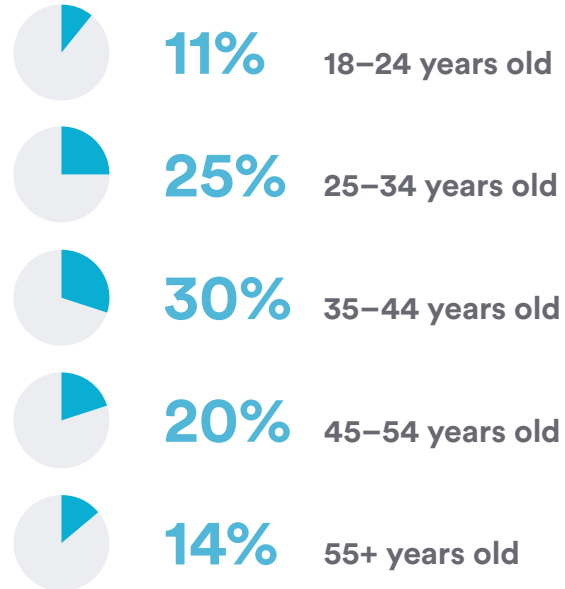
## Highest education level achieved among respondents



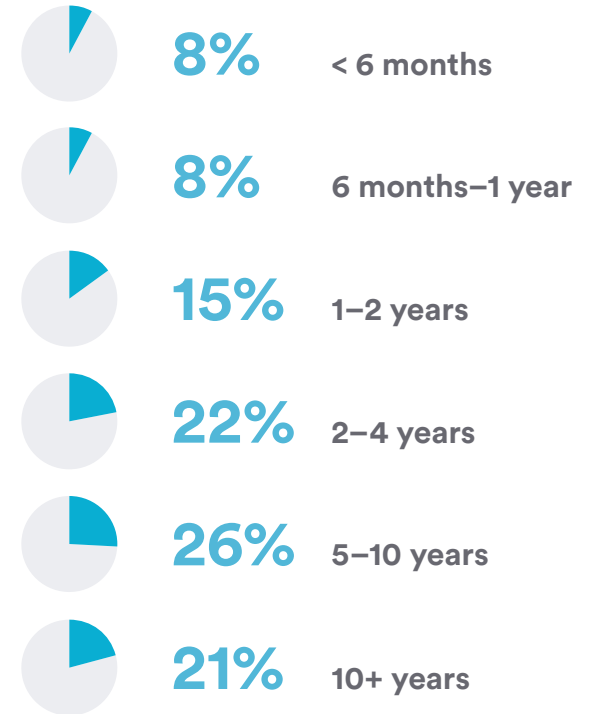
## Company size among respondents



## Ages of respondents



## Tenure of respondents at their current employer



zenefits<sup>™</sup>

The People Platform

[www.zenefits.com](http://www.zenefits.com)

© 2018, YourPeople, Inc., d/b/a Zenefits. All rights reserved.

The Zenefits platform and HR services provided by ManageYourPeople LLC, d/b/a Zenefits HR Services. Payroll services provided by PayYourPeople LLC, d/b/a Zenefits Payroll Services. Insurance services provided by InsureYourPeople LLC, d/b/a Zenefits Insurance Services. For insurance license and legal information, please visit [www.zenefits.com/licenses](http://www.zenefits.com/licenses).