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THE FLEXIBLE WORKPLACE

A Sourcebook of Information and Research

Christine Avery, Diane Zabel

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A Sourcebook of
Information and Research

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Preface

Although there is a large body of literature on the changing nature of work and workplace flexibility, there is no handbook that synthesizes the research on all aspects of this topic. *The Flexible Workplace* is international in scope and pulls together the vast literature on this subject. Chapters explain the concept of flexible work, trace the origin and growth of this workplace trend, and review the research on a range of flexible work arrangements. It identifies aspects of the subject that warrant additional research. This book identifies some useful resources, including books, reports, theses, periodicals, newsletters, videos, and national surveys. It also discusses strategies for locating additional information, including relevant databases, Internet resources, organizations, and search terms.

This book is intended to serve as a handbook for managers, researchers, and students in a wide range of undergraduate and graduate-level courses (industrial/organizational psychology, human resource management, business, sociology, etc.). This important workplace trend is covered in many core and optional human resource management courses and in many courses treating contemporary issues in management.

Workplace flexibility is a topic that is international in scope. Companies in the United States and abroad have become increasingly interested in implementing flexible work arrangements. One of the chapters in *The Flexible Workplace* focuses on companies that have been leaders in implementing flexible work arrangements. It includes examples from both manufacturing and nonmanufacturing settings. It

profiles innovative companies in North America, Western Europe, and the United Kingdom.

In addition, we envision this book as a resource for organizations implementing flexible work arrangements, practicing human resource management and personnel managers, and academicians.

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CHAPTER 1

An Introduction to Flexible Work

The twenty-first century workforce will be more female and more diverse. In addition, there will be increased competition for talented workers. Since the publication of *Workforce 2000* in 1987, the landmark report issued by the Hudson Institute, managers have been preparing for this new workforce by becoming more sensitive to work/family issues. Industry, both in the United States and abroad, has become increasingly concerned with the development of family-friendly policies that help employees balance the demands of work and family. One important type of family-friendly benefit is workplace flexibility and alternatives to the traditional workweek. Many corporations, however, are developing flexible work arrangements for compelling economic reasons. Permitting employees to telecommute is less expensive than providing office space. In the United States the 1990 Federal Clean Air Act and state air-quality standards have induced companies to offer some type of telecommuting option to their employees. Many companies are already offering workplace flexibility. Flexible work arrangements include a range of options: flexible work schedules, compressed workweeks, job sharing, job exchanges, voluntary part-time work, phased retirement, telecommuting, and home-based work.

Technology has transformed the way we work. Personal computers, fax machines, and other technological innovations have already created the "electronic cottage" as a workplace. Workplace flexibility has not only been adapted to manufacturing settings, but it has also been implemented in the service industries as well as the service professions. Higher education is also beginning to recognize the importance of new ways of working. The Wharton School of Business (University of Pennsylvania) has incorporated work-life issues into its required curriculum (Estess 1996).

How do you define flexibility? Barney Olmsted and Suzanne Smith (1997), coauthors of several leading books on workplace flexibility, offer two definitions of flexibility. From the employer's perspective, they offer this definition: "Flexibility means being able to adjust quickly to changing economic conditions: expanding, contracting, or reallocating labor supply as needed; and improving service in order to become more competitive by increasing productivity and decreasing costs" (p. ix). From the employee's perspective, "Flexibility means being able to adjust work time or workplace when personal needs are in conflict with their current schedule: being able to alter starting and quitting times occasionally; reducing paid work time for a while so they can return to school, start a family, or recover from burnout; attending nonwork functions without being penalized" (p. ix). Catalyst (1998a), an organization that has studied new working patterns for more than three decades, defines alternative or flexible work arrangements as "individually negotiated conditions of employment involving adjustments in the timing, scope, and/or place of work" (p. 3). This introductory chapter traces the origin and growth of this workplace trend. It provides some background on the demographic, economic, and governmental changes that have been an impetus for workplace shifts. The factors behind the movement to make work flexible are also discussed.

THE HISTORY OF WORKPLACE FLEXIBILITY

Simcha Ronen (1981) reminds us that rigid work schedules only developed in the mid-1800s, since most Americans were self-employed or on family farms before this period. Most workers determined their own schedules before industrialization. However, the eight-hour uniform day, the five-day workweek, and fixed starting and finishing times are no longer standard. This deviation from standardized working time began in the 1930s. The W. K. Kellogg Company (the cereal plant located in Battle Creek, Michigan) replaced the traditional three daily eight-hour shifts with four six-hour shifts in order to create work for laid off employees on December 1, 1930. The addition of one entire

shift allowed the company to do so. This fascinating experiment has been chronicled by Benjamin Kline Hunnicutt (1996) in a book entitled *Kellogg's Six-Hour Day*. This six-hour day generated much media attention and was supported by workers, government, labor, and the business community. Union demands in the late 1930s and early 1940s and President Roosevelt's executive order mandating a longer workweek (as part of the wartime effort) brought an end to six-hour shifts. The labor union struggled to reestablish the six-hour day after World War II. Some units were able to hold on to six-hour shifts until February 1985, when they were abolished. Hunnicutt pored through archival material and used his own interviews and letters from living Kellogg workers and managers. He found that women were the strongest supporters of a six-hour shift.

In 1930 Kellogg was the world's largest manufacturer of ready-to-eat cereals and employed almost 1,500 workers. Kellogg had been a leader in industrial reform. It was one of the first companies to introduce the eight-hour day and the five-day week. The Kellogg experiment became a national model. Hunnicutt (1996) reported that a 1932 survey of approximately 1,700 business executives indicated that half of all American businesses reduced hours in order to save jobs. Work sharing became a national movement in the United States during the period from 1932 to 1937. Kellogg maintained that employee efficiency and morale increased, accidents and insurance rates improved, and the unit cost of production increased as a result of six-hour days—allowing Kellogg to pay as much for six hours as formerly paid for eight. Kellogg boasted that six-hour days allowed the company to employ 25-percent more workers than in pre-Depression days.

Traditionally, historians argued that labor supported shorter days for economic reasons: to gain higher total wages and to reduce unemployment. However, Hunnicutt (1996, 49) pointed out that some revisionist historians, such as Gary Cross, argue that "leisure" or "freedom from work" was also a factor. Hunnicutt's research indicated that Kellogg workers supported the six-hour day for the same reasons.

Kellogg returned to the eight-hour shifts in February 1943 as a result of Roosevelt's executive order. The six-hour day was restored in 1947 for a majority of Kellogg workers. However, about half of the men employed at Kellogg's were on eight-hour days. The six-hour shifts were typically allocated to women, older men, and disabled workers—a practice Hunnicutt (1996) refers to as "the feminizing of shorter hours" (p. 103). Labor gave up supporting shorter hours in order to concentrate on higher wages. In 1983 Kellogg abolished six-hour days in order to eliminate jobs and benefits attached to positions. The company threatened to move the plant out of state if workers did not vote on eight-hour days companywide.

This idea of sharing work was also supported by Albert Morton Persoff. Persoff's revolutionary book, *Sabbatical Years with Pay: A Plan to Create and Maintain Full Employment*, was published in 1945. In his book, Persoff advocated that every American worker receive a year off with pay every seven years as a strategy to solve the problem of mass unemployment. He described the plan as follows: "Under the plan, each year, one-seventh of all eligible workers will receive a sabbatical year with pay, a leave of absence with pay" (p. 81), and "as each group terminated its sabbatical, it returns to work and the next group of one-seventh of all eligible workers will immediately start its sabbatical year with pay" (p. 82). Persoff believed that as a result of this sabbatical year workers "will acquire a new lease on life, a deep, invigorating and stimulating second breath that will enable them to return to their jobs with more strength and energy, and will" (p. 83). He argued that workers would have the motivation to be productive since the prospect of a year off with pay would be a powerful incentive. In fact, he believed that productivity would rise as a result of this morale-boosting policy. He calculated that "the six-sevenths of the qualifying workers who remain at their jobs will produce the equivalent of total normal production, and at the same time, the one-seventh of the men and women enjoying their sabbatical year will . . . purchase their respective share of the goods and services produced" (p. 90). Persoff projected that workers would not have to put in any more than four additional hours of labor per week in order to achieve this level of productivity. Persoff's radical plan was of course never implemented. Sanctioned time off (paid or unpaid) was almost unheard of outside of academia until the 1950s, when IBM implemented its Personal Leave of Absence program, a program allowing employees to take an unpaid leave of up to three years. In the 1960s labor and industry organized a thirteen-week sabbatical for workers in the steel and aluminum industries in order to avoid layoffs (Rogak 1994).

The dissolution of standard working time is the theme of *Working Time in Transition: The Political Economy of Working Hours in Industrial Nations* (Hinrichs, Roche, and Sirianni 1991). The editors of this volume believe, "Among the pervasive changes that have occurred in recent decades . . . in Western industrial nations, changes in working-time regimes must surely count as one of the most significant" (p. 3). Since the 1950s the length of the working week and length of working life were reduced in Western industrialized countries. The distribution of working hours was altered on a daily and weekly basis. More employees were allowed flexibility in starting and finishing times and part-time employment opportunities became more abundant. Hinrichs, Roche, and Sirianni prophesied that "we may be witnessing the demise of standardized working-time regulations and arrangements that

were developed by unions and employees—and often underwritten by governments—over a period of more than a century” (p. 4).

Flextime, the generic term for work schedules that permit flexible starting and quitting times, originated in West Germany. J. Carroll Swart (1978) outlined the history of flextime in *A Flexible Approach to Working Hours*. The publication of this book was significant, since until this time very little had been published in book form, in the United States, about flexible working hours. According to Swart, some credit Christel Kammerer, a West German woman who was a management consultant and political economist, with the origin of the concept of flextime. In the mid-1960s her publications explained the concept of flexible work periods: alternative work arrangements that generally allow employees to decide when to start and finish work and core time, a time period when all of a company’s employees are required to be on the job.

Swart (1978) established that the first firm to implement flextime was Messerschmitt-Bolkow-Blohm, a German aerospace company. The company hired Christel Kammerer in the mid-1960s to study the problem of employee tardiness and absenteeism at the company’s research and development center at Ottobrunn (near Munich). Employees were having a difficult time arriving by the 7:00 A.M. starting time because of traffic congestion. Kammerer suggested that the company introduce flextime to its employees in 1967. The initial results were positive: Absenteeism dropped by 40 percent, overtime decreased by 50 percent, turnover decreased, tardiness was no longer a problem, and employee morale increased sharply.

Flextime was rapidly adopted in Switzerland. Swart (1978) estimated that in 1977, 40 percent of the Swiss labor force was on flextime, about 30 percent of the West German labor force was on flextime, and about 20 percent of the French workforce was on flextime. Although data were not available, Swart estimated that flextime was rapidly adopted in Scandinavia. In comparison, Great Britain was slow to adopt flextime. According to Swart, the first British experiment with flextime did not occur until 1971. Swart estimated that less than 10 percent of the British workforce was on flextime in 1977. Hewlett Packard first introduced flextime in the United States in 1972 at its Waltham, Massachusetts, plant after using it in its German division.

Flextime grew rapidly throughout Western Europe in the early 1970s. Ronen (1981) has identified the factors contributing to this phenomenon. First, the unemployment rate was very low in much of Western Europe at this time. As a result of a labor shortage, employers adopted alternative work schedules in order to recruit workers. In general, legislation in Europe was less restrictive toward flextime than in the United States. European industry accepted flextime more than U.S. industry.

Interest in telecommuting, a flexible option that allows employees to work at home all or part of their scheduled hours, began in the early 1970s, prompted by the oil crisis in the United States. Jack Nilles, the father of the telecommuting movement, proposed it as a way to reduce energy consumption. In Europe the majority of teleworking (the term generally used in place of telecommuting outside of North America) projects began in the mid-1980s to early 1990s. One exception was the teleworking program ICL Enterprise Systems (a firm in the United Kingdom whose products include software, hardware, and consulting) implemented in 1969 (Korte and Wynne 1996).

Marcia Brumit Kropf (1997) has recently provided a chronological account of research on work/family issues in her history of the national nonprofit organization Catalyst. Catalyst was established in 1962. Originally, work/family research focused on the problems of child care for women with young children. Research has broadened to include studies on both women and men and needs beyond child care. Recent research by Catalyst has focused on the need for organizational change, and family-friendly policies are now studied as business initiatives. Catalyst has studied workplace flexibility since 1968. For the past three decades, Catalyst has helped organizations implement flexible work arrangements.

In 1968 Catalyst published *Part-Time Teachers and How They Work: A Study of Five School Systems*. This was followed by their 1971 study *Part-Time Social Workers in Public Welfare*. The goal of both publications was to provide models for the employment of educated women who did not want to work full time. In the 1970s and early 1980s Catalyst did research on specific flexible work arrangements. In the mid-1980s Catalyst conducted a major study of organizations involved in flexible work arrangements. This was published in 1989 as *Flexible Work Arrangements: Establishing Options for Managers and Professionals*. This was followed by a 1993 study of part-time options, *Flexible Work Arrangements II: Succeeding with Part-Time Options*. In 1995 Catalyst began a comprehensive two-year study of voluntary part-time employment among managers and professionals in four leading U.S. firms. The findings were published in a report entitled *A New Approach to Flexibility: Managing the Work/Time Equation* (Catalyst 1998a).

New Ways to Work is another nonprofit organization concerned with the promotion of workplace flexibility, and emerged around the same time as Catalyst. This organization was established in 1972. New Ways to Work designed the first project in the United States to encourage private-sector experimentation with job sharing, a type of regular part-time work that permits two people to voluntarily share the same full-time position (Olmsted and Smith 1996).

According to Dana Friedman, one of the country's foremost authorities on workplace flexibility, 1987 and 1988 represented a turning point in the development of work/family programs (Miranda and Murphy 1993). Workplace flexibility gained attention as a result of the publication of *Workforce 2000* in 1987. This report documented future labor shortages and an increasingly diverse workforce. The Families and Work Institute is another national nonprofit organization that had led the way in work/family research. Each year, the institute sponsors a national conference on a work/family issue in conjunction with the Conference Board, one of the world's premier business organizations. In the spring of 1993 that conference focused on the business case for workplace flexibility. Representatives from a range of private- and public-sector organizations spoke about their success with a range of flexible work options. A profile of these companies and their work/family programs was published by the Conference Board in 1993 (Miranda and Murphy 1993).

The push for workplace flexibility has moved from being employee driven to employer driven as more employers realize the economic benefits of flexibility. Barney Olmsted (1997), the cofounder of New Ways to Work, describes this evolution. She recently wrote, "In the mid-1970s when New Ways to Work began promoting greater workplace flexibility, it was employees who put on the heat and pioneered the changes." However, she noted, "More recently, concern about the interface between work and family responsibilities has lead to increased employer interest in providing more flexibility in the workplace" (p. 111). In an earlier publication, Olmsted (1995) wrote about the progression of workplace flexibility from accommodation to strategy. Specifically, "During the first decade-and-a-half of their use, flexible work arrangements were considered by most managers to be . . . ways to accommodate a few valued employees" and were "initiated as a result of an ad hoc arrangement between an employee and his or her supervisor" (p. 11). However, this changed by the late 1980s, when "a business case for flexibility started to emerge" (p. 11). There is concrete evidence that flexible work arrangements are being viewed as a business strategy. Olmsted notes, "In more and more firms, managers are being told to exclude the personal reasons that may motivate an employee to ask for a change in schedule and to discuss the request only in terms of business impact" (p. 11). Olmsted argues that this shift from accommodation reinforces the benefits of flexibility to the organization and helps managers decide which employees' requests for flexibility should be supported. In addition, Olmsted points out that "recent research . . . has begun to show that accommodation does not lead to greater flexibility but actually reinforces existing norms" (p. 11).

There are other indications that workplace flexibility has become a major corporate issue. *Working Mother* magazine published its first list of best companies for working mothers in 1986. Companies are eager to make this list, since "landing a spot on one of the high-visibility lists is believed to give a leg up on today's tough recruiting competition" (Stumps 1997, 42). In 1996 *Business Week* published its first rating of family-friendly companies. *Fortune* published its inaugural list of best companies to work for in 1998. Work/life balance is now viewed as an issue for all workers, not just for those with children. Dana Friedman has observed that "the nomenclature of "work/family" programs has evolved to "work/life" or "life/stages" initiatives, as companies increasingly gear these programs to encompass all employees" (Work/Life Programs Target All Employees 1997, 31).

WORK/FAMILY CONFLICT

How significant an issue is work/family conflict? *Work and Family: Policies for a Changing Work Force* (Ferber, O'Farrell, and Allen 1991) is the title of a report representing the work of twelve experts in the area of work and family. These experts served on the National Research Council's (U.S.) Panel on Employer Policies and Working Families. The purpose of this report was to assess the research on employer policies and working families. The panel also looked at work and family issues in Europe. The panel concluded, "On the basis of experiences in this country and western Europe, employers and unions should consider increasing a variety of options, including part-time work, flexible schedules, and alternative work locations" (p. 4). One of the chapters reviewed the linkages between work and family. Some of the significant findings were that employed women were more vulnerable to stress than employed men since they bear more of the responsibility for child care and housework; employees reported that work interfered with their family and to a lesser extent that family responsibilities interfered with their work; almost 20 percent of workers in the 1977 Quality of Employment Survey (a survey conducted by the U.S. Department of Labor) complained about long work hours; various studies have concluded that excessive work hours are associated with high levels of work/family conflict for both employed men and women; and there is evidence that allowing employees some choices and control over their schedules tended to reduce the negative effects of combining work and home responsibilities.

A 1993 report issued by the Conference Board reported that studies "find that about one-third of employees work less effectively because of child or elder care problems" (Friedman and Brothers 1993, 54). A 1997 survey on absenteeism found that personal illness accounts for

more than 25 percent of unscheduled absences—and that “family issues” and “personal needs” were the primary reasons for unscheduled absences (What’s Ailing Your Workforce? 1997, 7). Some of the most extensive research on the relationship between work and families has been conducted by the Families and Work Institute. The institute is conducting the National Study of the Changing Workforce, a longitudinal study on workforce attitudes and preferences, including responses to questions about work/family balance. The study is based on an in-depth, nationally representative survey of approximately 3,400 American workers. One of the issues that the study addresses is how workers manage both work and family obligations.

The first phase of the research was conducted in 1992 and summarized in a 1993 report entitled *The Changing Workforce: Highlights of the National Study* (Galinsky, Bond, and Friedman 1993). The 1992 survey was based on telephone interviews conducted with a randomly selected national sample of 3,381 employed men and women aged eighteen through sixty-four and 337 women with dependent children who were not in the labor force by choice. The following statistical profile emerged: The average worker spent more than forty hours per week working (overtime and commuting bring the hours per week on the job to more than forty-five), 42 percent of workers had experienced downsizing, 42 percent felt burned out, and 47 percent of workers had child- and/or elder-care responsibilities. One of the findings of the 1992 study is that job-to-home spillover is three times as great as home-to-job spillover. That is, “By and large, work problems are more likely to spill over into the home than family problems are to encroach upon work life” (p. 3).

In 1998 the Families and Work Institute released the findings of its 1997 National Study of the Changing Workforce. Like previous institute surveys, it used a nationally representative sample of the U.S. workforce. The 1997 study is based on interviews with approximately 3,000 workers across the United States. The resulting report, titled *The 1997 National Study of the Changing Workforce*, compares responses to data derived from two previous surveys: the 1992 National Study of the Changing Workforce and the Bureau of Labor Department’s 1977 Quality of Employment Survey (Bond, Galinsky, and Swanberg 1998). One of the findings is that Americans are working longer hours (an average of forty-seven hours a week for full-time workers), three hours a week longer than twenty years ago (Adler 1998; Lewin 1998; Peterson 1998). More workers (one out of three) bring work home once a week or more since they can’t get everything done at work (Jackson 1998a; Peterson 1998). As a result, workers feel that they don’t have enough time for their families. Demanding and hectic jobs make it difficult for workers to balance between work and home. Almost one-fourth of

women frequently feel stressed out and substantial numbers feel burned out by their jobs (Bond, Galinsky, and Swanberg 1998). Seventy percent of employed mothers and fathers responded that they do not have enough time to spend with their children (Bond, Galinsky, and Swanberg 1998; Lewin 1998; Mann 1998).

One of the major findings was that family-friendly policies impact the bottom line. The study concluded that "employees whose workplaces are supportive and responsive to their needs are the most loyal and are more willing than other workers to work harder than they have to in order to help their employers succeed" (Ginsberg 1998, H7). Ellen Galinsky, one of the authors of the study, stated this simply: "People who have more flexibility will go the extra mile" (p. H7). The study concluded that employers who provide a supportive workplace will have a competitive edge (Bond, Galinsky, and Swanberg 1998). Workplace support was defined to include flexible work arrangements. One encouraging finding was that more workers viewed their workplace as supportive and family friendly (Bond, Galinsky, and Swanberg 1998; Newman 1998; Adler 1998; Gardner 1998). Almost half of all workers are able to choose (within limits) their own starting and quitting times, and 25 percent are able to alter their starting and quitting times on a daily basis (Bond, Galinsky, and Swanberg 1998). Another finding was that fathers are spending more time with their children. During the work week, fathers spend an average of 2.3 hours per workday caring for their children, an increase of half an hour over the last twenty years (Gardner 1998; Kelley 1998; Lewin 1998). They are also spending more time with their children on nonworkdays, 6.4 hours in 1997 compared to 5.2 hours in 1977 (Lewin 1998).

Sylvia Ann Hewlett and Cornell West (1998), with the support of the National Parenting Association, conducted a national survey of parental needs and concerns. The survey, administered by independent pollsters, was carried out the summer of 1996 and targeted American parents whose household income ranged between \$20,000 and \$100,000. Hewlett and West also conducted a series of focus groups with parents. Their findings are reported in their book *The War Against Parents: What We Can Do for America's Beleaguered Moms and Dads*. The authors found that the overwhelming need was for "time-enhancing workplace policies" (p. 217). Specifically, they found that parents wanted "government and employers to be much more imaginative in creating flexible work arrangements" (p. 217); 90 percent of parents wanted access to flextime, job sharing, compressed workweeks, and benefits for part-time employment; 87 percent of parents wanted legislation guaranteeing three days of paid leave per year so parents could attend parent-teacher conferences, take children to medical or dental appointments, and perform other parenting tasks; 79 percent of par-

ents wanted a law allowing workers to substitute time off for extra pay for overtime; 76 percent of parents wanted a law requiring companies to offer twelve weeks of paid leave following the birth or adoption of a child; and 71 percent of parents wanted legislation allowing employees to trade two weeks pay for an extra two weeks of vacation time annually. Hewlett and West believe that the government should encourage the private sector to develop family-friendly workplaces. They recommend that the government develop a system of tax incentives for companies that offer options such as flextime, compressed workweeks, part-time work with benefits, job sharing, telecommuting, home-based work, career sequencing, and extended parenting leave. They argue that there is already a precedent for this. In some states companies that provide on-site child care are eligible for tax concessions.

THE BENEFITS OF FLEXIBILITY

What other studies have identified the benefits of flexibility? In the landmark study of flexible work arrangements published by Catalyst in 1989, human resource professionals reported these positive outcomes of workplace flexibility: recruitment, retention, increased productivity, and improved morale. However, this study did conclude that “the overwhelming majority of companies have not put any mechanisms into place to evaluate the “success” of such arrangements in terms of their duration, cost and impact on the productivity or morale of the employee or the business unit” (p. xv).

In 1991 the Conference Board published a report synthesizing a 1988 symposium organized by the board on work/family issues and findings from more than eighty other studies. This report concluded that “there is evidence to suggest that work–family programs can improve a company’s bottom line” (Friedman 1991, 9). One Wellesley College Center for Research on Women study found that flexibility is associated with greater job satisfaction and reduced work/family stress for all workers, including those without children (Marshall and Barnett 1993). This study, *Family-Friendly Workplaces, Work–Family Interface and Worker Health*, used data from the Adult Lives Project. This project is a longitudinal study of a random sample of 300 Boston-area couples in which both the men and women were employed full time. The sample was limited to couples in which the man was between the ages of twenty-five and forty. Sixty percent of the sample consisted of parents. The sample was predominantly middle class. The purpose of the *Family-Friendly Workplaces* study was to examine the role of workplace benefits and flexibility in the reduction of work/family strain. This study looked at job characteristics that contribute to a family-friendly workplace and explored whether individuals in family-friendly work-

places reported greater job satisfaction, reduced work interference with home life, and less psychological distress. The researchers found that "flexibility is associated with greater job satisfaction and reduced work interference for all workers" (p. 7). Marshall and Barnett concluded that although "job flexibility does not have a significant direct effect on worker's psychological distress," it does have "an indirect effect on psychological distress, through its associations with work interference and job satisfaction" (p. 8). Consequently, "for two-earner couples, job flexibility is associated with job satisfaction and the work-family interface," and indirectly, "job flexibility also impacts worker mental health" (p. 8). The authors stressed that it will become increasingly important to have family-friendly workplaces as the number of dual-earner couples increases.

In 1995 the Conference Board sponsored "Workplace Flexibility in a Global Economy," a conference focusing on the business case for workplace flexibility. Speakers at this conference identified six tangible benefits of workplace flexibility: "productivity gains," "improved customer satisfaction," "reduced absenteeism and turnover," "heightened employee morale," "remuneration methods for survivors of downsizing," and flexibility as a "recruitment tool" (Edelman 1996, 9). Work/Family Directions calculated that every \$1 spent on family-friendly benefits yields a \$2 savings in direct costs (Swiss 1998). A 1997 review of the literature on flexible work hours identified these benefits as the major advantages of flexible work hours: "lowered stress, increased job enrichment and autonomy, reduced tardiness and absenteeism, and improved job satisfaction and productivity" (Scandura and Lankau 1997, 378).

SOME STATISTICS ON WORKPLACE FLEXIBILITY

How many workers are participating in some form of alternative work arrangement? In 1985 only 12 percent of American workers reported that a flexible work schedule was an option available to them (Marshall 1993). According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, this figure increased to 15 percent in 1991 (Olmsted and Smith 1994). The bureau's data indicated that 20 percent of managers, professionals, technicians, and sales workers had flexibility. In contrast, only 10 percent of blue-collar and service workers had flexibility. Workplace flexibility continues to rise as conventional schedules are replaced by flexible schedules. Recent data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics indicate that about 76 percent of full-time employees work conventional schedules, down from 84 percent in 1984 (Chachere 1998). The bureau's data indicate that the use of flextime has more than doubled since

1985. They show that 27.6 percent of American workers had flexible schedules in 1997 compared with 12.4 percent in 1985. Based on these data, *Newsweek* magazine projected that 31.7 percent of American employees will have flexible schedules in the year 2000 (Future of Flextime 1998). In July 1998 the Families and Work Institute released findings from its first "Business Work-Life Study." This national survey examines how 1,057 U.S. companies with 100 or more employees help employees balance work and home responsibilities. Of the companies polled, 68 percent allow employees to periodically adjust starting and quitting times and 24 percent allow workers to change starting and quitting times on a daily basis (Joyner 1998).

Of workers surveyed in the 1992 National Study of the Changing Workforce (a nationally representative study of approximately 3,400 American workers) 29 percent reported that flextime was an option and 24 percent said they were routinely allowed to work at home (Galinsky, Bond and Friedman 1993). A 1994 survey of 1,035 major U.S. employers conducted by Hewitt Associates, a consulting firm, revealed that 66 percent of employers offered flexibility compared to 60 percent in 1993 (Catalyst 1996). LINK Resources, a New York-based market research firm, has been tracking telecommuting and home-based work since 1986. In 1989 LINK estimated that 26.6 million Americans were working at home part of the time (Riley and McCloskey 1997). A recent report released by the Bureau of Labor Statistics confirms this increase in at-home workers. According to this study, 23.3 million Americans worked from home at least part of the time as part of a formal arrangement, brought work home occasionally, or were self-employed in 1997 (Silverstein 1998). The number of at-home workers who receive pay for their work (3.6 million out of these 23.3 million) nearly doubled between 1991 and 1997, an indication that telecommuting has increased as a work option (Coy 1998; Denton 1998; Who Works From Home? 1998).

The trend toward workplace flexibility is not limited to the United States. However, Piotet (1988) has cautioned that it is difficult to statistically compare twelve-hour shifts, part-time work, telecommuting, and other new forms of work across Europe because definitions of these arrangements vary from country to country, and in some cases data are nonexistent or imprecise. In 1985, 12,000 Europeans (from the ten member states of the European Community and Spain and Portugal) were surveyed regarding their attitude toward flexible work (Piotet 1988). Almost one-third of the workers surveyed expressed an interest in reducing their work hours, even if it meant a decrease in income. Employers were also surveyed in various European countries. Flexible work arrangements were viewed positively, primarily as a strat-