

Mature Workers Matter

MasterClass 3: Flexible work practices



Employers Mutual
Since 1910



Aged & Community Services
SA & NT Inc

MasterClass 3: Flexible work practices

Overview

- This module is for senior managers, HR managers and line managers.
- In this module we discuss what flexibility is, why it is important and how to have conversations about flexible work options for individuals

Outcomes

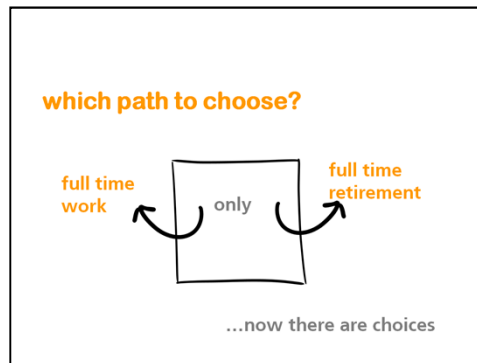
- A clear understanding of different types of flexible work arrangements
- Guidelines for having a constructive conversation about flexible work arrangements

Duration

- Quick guide: 20 minutes
- Completion of all activities: 2-3 weeks

Pre-requisite

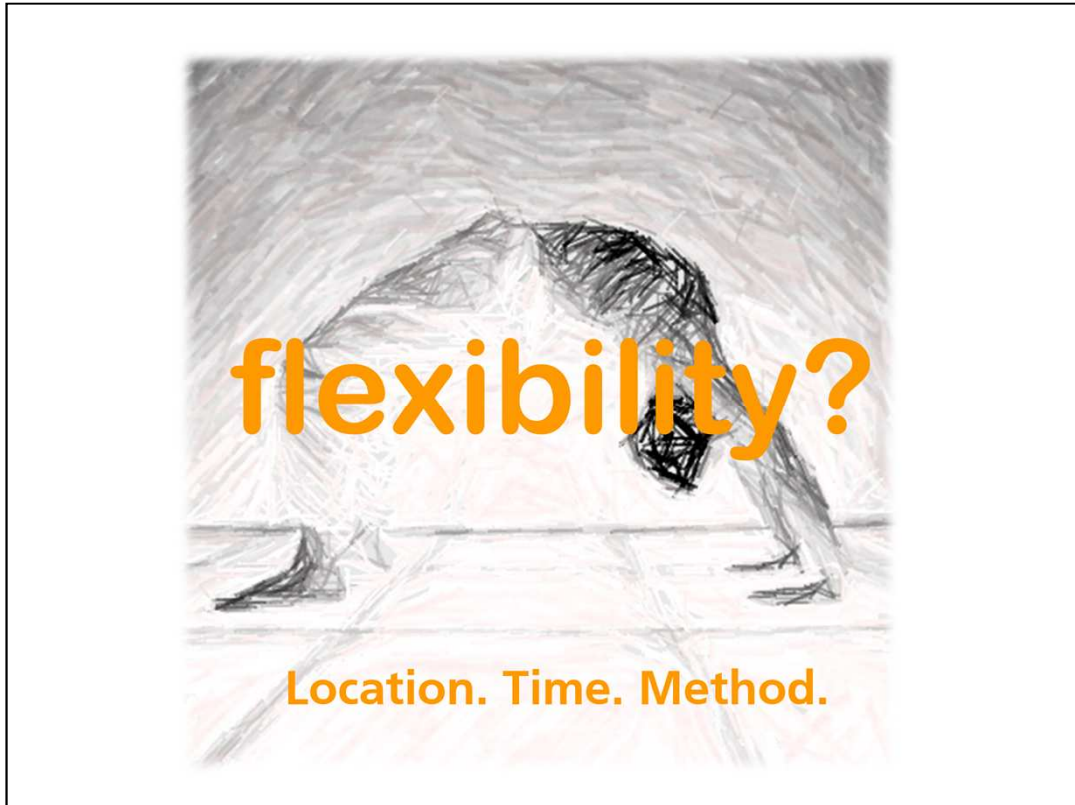
- Modules one and two provide a good background to why successful conversations are important



If the only choice you were given in a year's time was to select full time work or full time retirement for the rest of your life, which would you choose?

If we look across the whole workforce what other options are there that could exist between these two options?

- Part time work
- Contracting
- Consulting back to organisation
- volunteering
- Political appointments (e.g. local council etc)
- Working with company only in busy periods
- Retraining for new skills
- Board or Director appointments
- entering different industry



Flexibility is broadly defined as the ability to vary the location, time or method of working.

www.safework.sa.gov.au/worklifebalance

Government of South Australia
SafeWork SA

Work Life Balance

Home What? Why? How? Grants & Awards Legislation Events Resources

What?
What is Work Life Balance?

Why?
Why aim for Work Life Balance?

How?
How do I deal with requests for flexibility?

Quick Links

- ➔ Ideas for achieving work life balance
- ➔ How do I approach my employer?
- ➔ How do I deal with requests for flexibility?
- ➔ Events

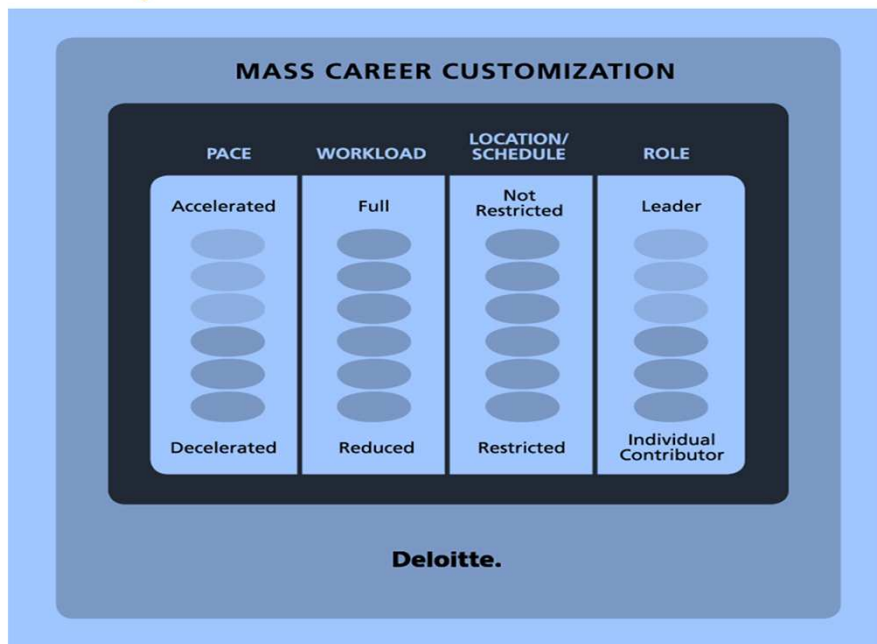
Events & News 1 | 2 | 3

➔ **Go Home On Time Day**
Wednesday 24 November 2010
SafeWork SA and The Australia Institute is encouraging South Australians to Go Home on Time on Wednesday 24 November.
[More info...](#)

LOOKING FOR IDEAS...

South Australia's work life balance group have an excellent resource for flexibility.

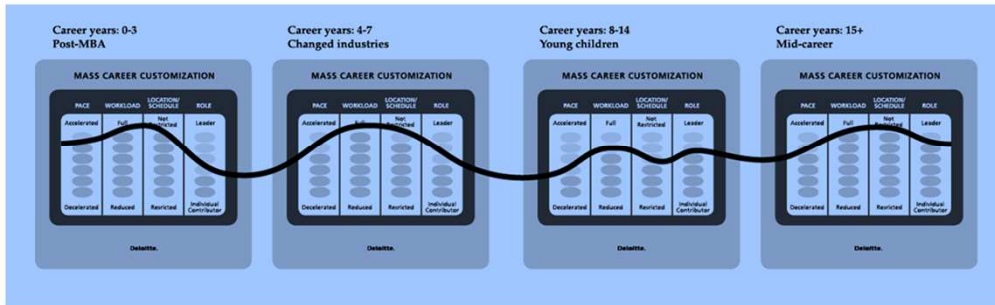
options and tradeoffs



The consulting group Deloitte have a helpful framework for thinking about flexibility.

It is a combination of the variances of pace, workload, location and role.

career and life cycles



<http://www.masscareercustomization.com/>

The model recognises that throughout the work life cycle these can be dialled up or down depending on an individual's work life requirements.

Job Flexibility

These definitions were put forward by participants in the Work Life Balance Innovations project conducted in 2010 conducted by SafeWork SA WorkLife Balance.

Participants were asked to define their definition of flexibility ie what it means to them personally to work flexibly.

- The ability **to choose** and **to be empowered** to make that choice
- **Work that fits in** with family commitments eg school hours, school holidays
- Flexible **start and finish times**, less hours in the day, less days in the week, longer lunch hours to exercise
- Autonomy to cater for **own schedule**
- Enabling large periods of **leave** eg 6 weeks
- Ability to work from **home** or other place of choice
- Incorporating a **wellness day** into the working day schedule
- Allowing for **birthdays** off or mental health days without feeling guilty
- Enabling '**guilt free**' flexibility that doesn't impact on your team or resources
- Shift workers being able to **choose their own rosters**
- **What's your definition?**

What is your definition of flexibility? It will vary for everyone.

Job Flexibility

Drivers:

- Recruitment and retention
- OHSW

1. What are the industry specific barriers?
2. What requests can be accommodated?
3. What requests can't and why?

Have this discussion with some of your colleagues or run a focus group around these three questions.

The discussion will give you insights into how you can apply flexibility successfully in your workplace.

Remember:

- Many flexibility requests are more about tweaking than a large scale revolution
- Flexibility means something different for everyone
- Enabling the discussion is a big step forward

What flexibility looks like

case study

Mercy Health Case Study



Almost 51 per cent of Mercy Health's 4,500 staff access flexible work arrangements

Preparing for a flexibility conversation

 *online
resource*

Employers and employees alike need to prepare for a flexibility conversation.

Consider:

- What arrangement can work for both sides?
- Can you implement a trial period?
- How will you assess it?

In the Mature Workers Matter toolkit there are guidelines for employers and employees to prepare for a flexible work conversation.

Good preparation and a conversation where both parties feel listened to will work towards a solution. And the solution may not be the one that either party envisaged!

What are my next steps...

masterclass
resource

- Assess what flexible work policies already exist in your workplace.
- Conduct an audit of how many mature workers are accessing flexible work conditions.
- Conduct a focus group on flexible work options to determine what sort of flexible work options employees want.
- Find examples of existing flexible work arrangements in your organisation and interview the manager and employee as to its success. Communicate this to managers to build a culture of flexibility.

What are the risks of doing nothing?

Most organisations have good policies around flexible work. However, most organisations haven't implemented them. Managers are not necessarily skilled in managing flexible work requests.

Employees often feel that by requesting flexible work conditions, it signals that they are not as committed to their work.

By providing these guidelines for having a conversation, you encourage an open culture and a good basis from which to find a solution.

If you don't have the conversation, you run the risk of losing your mature employees.