

Flexible

A preview to the complete guide to Flexible Working
from Toshiba, in partnership with

www.flexibility.co.uk

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of the complete guide to
Flexible Working from Toshiba



Flexible Working in the Information Age

Transforming the way your organisation works

Choose freedom.

TOSHIBA

Changing

Changing the way we work

The Issues – and facing up to them

In the modern world, organisations face continuous pressure to do more for less.

All kinds of measures are proposed to raise productivity and reduce costs. But at the heart of the way we work, there are some fundamental inflexibilities, and these usually remain unchallenged.

Some of the symptoms include:

- Large offices, with many desks unoccupied for most of the day.
- Miles of cabinets and shelving for paper storage.
- Staff spending too much time travelling.
- A workforce struggling to balance the demands of home and work.

Underpinning these symptoms are some deep-rooted assumptions about the way we have to work. These assumptions are responsible for creating time-wasting and expensive processes, usually revolving around physical activities – either people going somewhere or things being moved. Maintaining the facilities and procedures for these physical activities puts significant constraints on organisations and prevents their employees from working effectively.

But, all this is set to change as we embrace "Information Age" flexible working.



Increased traffic congestion and problems finding parking spaces lengthen the working day and increase stress levels

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Time pressure through nine-to-five working increases stress in the office and impairs effective working.



Outside responsibilities and interests should form an equal part of a balanced home/work life. Flexible working helps people achieve this balance

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The Opportunities

Flexible working is about using the new information and communications technologies to break free from the traditional shackles.

It is about harnessing the power of the new technologies to "dematerialise" processes, reduce the need for expensive property and decrease the need for work-related travel.

It is about making organisations and staff more flexible, introducing "anywhere anytime" working, and transferring more resources to the front line.

And it is about creating better working environments for staff – environments that are more appropriate for the tasks they perform.

The Benefits

Properly implemented, flexible working can bring far-reaching benefits across the board:

- Employers can reduce fixed costs, attract and retain staff, boost productivity and match resources to needs. They can also improve customer service and respond better to market forces.
- Employees can reduce work-related stress, decrease the time spent commuting and lower their living costs. Furthermore, they can achieve more autonomy and a better balance between the demands of work and home.
- Society can gain from more environmentally-friendly working practices, more work opportunities for socially disadvantaged groups and the generation of new work opportunities in disadvantaged areas.



The Challenge

Simply investing in new technology or introducing a new practice like "hot-desking" will not deliver the benefits. These only come when managers responsible for facilities, information services and human resources work together to build a comprehensive strategy that:

- Creates modern, flexible working environments, both within and away from the main office.
- Prepares and equips managers and staff for flexible working.
- Streamlines processes and reduces paper-dependence.
- Gets the most from technology investments.



Advances in wireless technology allow us to connect and communicate almost anywhere

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Flexible offices

Why do we have offices?

The arrival of new communications technology has challenged the traditional role of the corporate office

We have been bringing people into offices for so long now, we sometimes forget why we do it. So, why do we do it?

The primary reason has been to maximise efficiency, combined with the need for a central paper store, face-to-face communication, team-building and line-of-sight management.

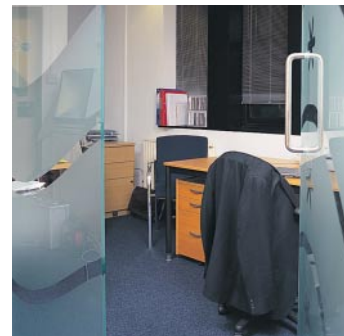
In addition, the traditional economies of scale that could be derived by concentrating activities and resources on one site have also been instrumental.

And there have been issues of status, both in terms of corporate status (large swanky headquarters) and individual status (managers getting the biggest offices). Today, however, with the new information and communications technologies, many of the old efficiencies no longer apply, and a great deal of work can be performed better away from the office.

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UK investment in offices

Number of office workers	10 million
Capital investment	£120 billion
Occupancy costs	£30 billion per annum
Average occupancy per desk	Less than 30% per working day
Cost per worker per year	£1,500 to £15,000
Cost per hour of occupied desk	£2.50 to £25 per hour



Individual status is often linked to office size, which can have a negative effect in corporate environments. Additionally, they are often an ineffective use of space.



Today's younger generation is already adapting to new wireless technology. By the time these two boys enter the workplace, "going out to work" may have become a thing of the past.

Shaking off the shackles

Yesterday's buildings and yesterday's office environments are increasingly difficult to use effectively. Not only are they expensive to run, they also lock-in inefficient working practices. Staff work where the office happens to be, not where the work is best done. Time and productivity are squandered through unnecessary travelling. And few office environments are designed as well as they could be to encourage proactive social interaction during face-to-face meetings and team-building activities.

Migrating from the traditional office

Although many management "gurus" would have us believe otherwise, the office is not dead. Instead, Information Age technology is altering our concept of what "the office" actually is. It is changing the physical nature of offices and giving them flexible boundaries.

With the right information and communications technology solution, the office can be anywhere. In particular, with the advent of desktop video-conferencing, the notion of the "virtual" or "follow-me" office will become even more powerful.

In the quest to support more productive working methods and to lower premises costs, a number of options are commonly used, often in combination with each other:

- Replacing large central facilities with networks of much smaller facilities, closer to customers and employees' homes.
- Setting up home offices, which are fully integrated with the company's computer and telephone systems.
- Enabling mobile workers, such as sales people, travelling professionals and field support staff, to work effectively from any location, using their homes or local offices as bases.

A move to more flexible, location-independent working means that any central office space needs to be used differently. A dedicated desk for each person becomes hard to justify. Instead, staff are more likely to need "touch-down" space, meeting rooms or library facilities, tailored to suit individual tasks.



Enabling mobile workers to work effectively from any location is one way to support more productive working methods and lower premises costs

With the right information and communications technology solution, the office can be anywhere



Expect

Flexible People

When we join an organisation, we buy into a whole set of familiar expectations – the where, when, how and on what terms the job should be done. In fact, over the past 150 years or so, certain norms have emerged regarding the nature and location of most kinds of jobs. Although it may vary from sector to sector, work is generally performed on the employer’s premises, between 9.00am and 5.30pm, on a full-time, permanent, employed basis – and so forth.

Security, stability and predictability may be the advantages of such employment practices. But in a fast changing world, with new technologies, a competitive global economy and higher expectations from employees, the disadvantages clearly outweigh the advantages. Traditional methods of work may be well organised for administrative convenience but they are not usually best suited to meet the needs of customers, production or employees’ lives.

Four main kinds of flexible working

Flexible contract:	• Workers are employed and/or rewarded in non-standard ways.
Flexible time:	• Work is performed at times that better suit the employer and/or employee.
Flexible place:	• Work is carried out wherever is most appropriate and effective for the employer and/or employee.
Flexible tasks:	• Multi-skilled workers are able to undertake a variety of tasks according to need.

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Typical office hours are today extending beyond the 9 to 5 working day

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Outdated Expectations



07

How we organise work and where it takes place are central to alleviating stresses caused by an unbalanced work/home life

So, what are the modern day alternatives?

Flexible working options can be grouped into four categories (see table on left). Often, flexible working will involve more than one of these categories. The key is to devise a strategy that maximises the benefits for both organisations and employees.

Work/life balance

One of the UK government's current campaigns is to promote "work/life balance". The conflicting demands of work and home lead to tensions and stress affecting both work performance and family life. How we organise work and where and when it takes place, are central to these conflicts – and to the remedy!

Commuting to work simply to use a computer and telephone is pointless and expensive if the same tasks can be performed at or nearer to home. And travelling in the rush-hour or just at the

time when the children have to go to school adds to the strain. Clearly, digital technologies can enable work to take place at more family-friendly times and locations.

People and policies

To take full advantage of flexible working, staff must be trained to use the new technologies and to deal with managing or being managed at a distance. Flexible working schemes fail when technology is thrown at staff and they are just left to get on with it.

In addition, the right policies must be in place to ensure good communication and to avoid the potential dangers of poor working environments and feelings of isolation. In most cases, flexible working does not mean never seeing your colleagues! It means being in the best place for carrying out particular tasks. And it should also mean being more effective and systematic about communication and team building.



The right policies must be in place to ensure good communication is maintained and that employees do not feel isolated when working flexibly

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Flexing the technology

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Organisations rarely make the maximum use of the technologies in which they have invested. In fact, it is said that most people only use about 10% of the functionality of common word-processing programmes. The same applies when it comes to making the most of corporate information networks and telecommunications.

The reality is that, whilst new technologies should liberate staff and organisations from paper-based processes and geographical constraints, people often feel constrained by IT procedures and hemmed-in by systems that waste time and generate more, rather than less paper. The time has come to "choose freedom" and make the most of the possibilities presented by information and communications technology.

Networks, equipment and connection

Work can, in principle, take place any time, anywhere. To make this happen, however, the right technologies and systems have to be in place. There are three main elements to this:

- Developing the corporate information and communications networks.
- Enabling ubiquitous access to these corporate networks.
- Creating the right technology environments to enable effective remote working.

Quality equipment is a key consideration. In particular, desktops and notebook PCs with high-speed access – using fixed or mobile telephony – are essential.

Equally important is the ability for people to have access to the same corporate networks whether they are in or away from the office. They need to be able to access their e-mail, workgroups, corporate intranet and other systems from any point.



Work

Home

The UK Government is currently promoting "work/home balance". New wireless technology enables people to work flexibly, so contributing to a more balanced lifestyle

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New technologies should liberate staff. The time has come to 'choose freedom' and reap the benefits of information and communications technology

Coming soon...

Although location-independent working is already capable of realising many benefits, "the best is yet to come", as they say. Technological and regulatory developments are opening up a whole new set of opportunities:

- Fully wireless working in the office or at home, using the Bluetooth™ wireless communications standard, eliminating the usual clutter of cables and paving the way for truly flexible working environments.
- Fully wireless working away from the office or home using third generation mobile networks.
- New computing and communications models based entirely on the Internet, together with high bandwidth unmetered access.
- Anywhere/anytime multimedia communications over the Internet.

Adapting to flexible working

For IT managers, these are exciting times but they are also challenging times! It requires a commitment to work closely with human resources and facilities managers to create the necessary flexible working environments and infrastructure.

It also requires a commitment to work alongside service managers to ensure the corporate information and telecommunications networks are aligned with service delivery priorities and the new ways of working.

One of the main challenges will be how to develop "any time, anywhere" support for "any time, anywhere" working. To this end, remote support and diagnostics will play an increasing role, and we will also see a trend towards outsourcing technology services.



With Bluetooth™ and wireless technology, colleagues can exchange information and communicate without physical connection to networks or other computers

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Responsible Working spreading the benefits

Flexible working can yield important environmental and social benefits alongside the business benefits. This is relevant for all organisations but particularly for those in the public sector. In many cases, as well as being the largest employers in an area, public sector organisations have public policy responsibilities – and a duty to practise what they preach!



New ways of working also contribute to a better environment, through consuming less energy, reducing travel and paper production



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Modern digital technology offers a flexibility of location that overcomes mobility restrictions

Environmental responsibility

Flexible working can achieve wider environmental benefits in three main areas:

- Reducing travel – both in terms of the number of commute trips and the amount of business travel. Electronic communication replaces physical movement – not all the time but enough to make a difference. An average 1.5 days per week working from home reduces commute trips by 30%. Business travel reductions in reported schemes are in the order of 8% to 15%.
- Driving out paper – eliminating paper processes must be a key driver behind introducing new ways of working. We all know that computers can generate paper as much as reduce it but paper elimination has to remain an aspiration.

- Consuming less energy – through reduced travel, paper production and office costs. Studies have shown that the "always on" heating, lighting, air-conditioning and equipment in the office are far more energy-intensive per person compared to the energy required for individuals working at home.

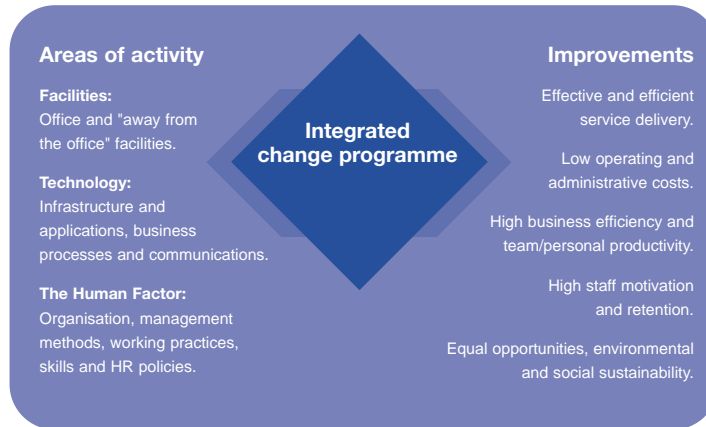
Social advantages and access to work

Generally, we accept the disadvantages that routine travel to work brings, in return for the economic benefits. But there are many groups in society whose mobility is restricted, typically through:

- Temporary illness or disablement.
- Permanent disability or long-term illness.
- Childcare responsibility.
- Caring for sick or disabled relatives.
- Not owning a vehicle, not being able to drive or living in an area where there is a "public transport vacuum".

The culture of commuting is a major contributor to social exclusion in these instances. Modern digital technology offers a flexibility of location that can help overcome mobility restrictions. It allows access to work even where physical access to the workplace is a problem.

benefits



Turning ideas into action

Changing only one aspect of how people work is unlikely to lead to significant benefits. For example, expecting people to work from home without any change to systems and business processes will inevitably lead to problems. Similarly, providing remote access technologies without adequate training and changes to policies will lead to inefficiency and dissatisfaction.

A "holistic" approach is the only way to maximise the benefits. A high level cross-departmental team must be set up to drive the change project forward. Facilities, information services and human resources managers all need to work together.

High levels of awareness raising and consultation amongst staff need to take place to ensure buy-in from all quarters. Change that is forced upon people usually creates mistrust and non-co-operation.

Focus on the business benefits

A coherent strategy must cover all the key areas and outline the targets and timescales.

It is important to deal with real numbers and set realistic financial goals for the deliverables, building on best practice schemes, where possible. Even "soft" goals such as improving staff motivation can usually be translated into bottom-line improvements, for example by examining the recruitment, training and lost productivity costs of high staff turnover.

Rolling out the flexible organisation

With lessons learned from quick wins and pilots, the roll-out of the flexible organisation can begin. Clearly, the pace of technological progress means that change is likely to be a continuous process but by developing a culture of flexibility and adaptability, organisations will be able to stay ahead in the market, adapt to regulatory changes and be the employer of choice for people seeking a progressive working environment.

For your **free guide** to Flexible Working simply complete and return the Business Reply Card stapled in the middle of this preview brochure

Toshiba Information Systems (UK) Ltd
Toshiba Court
Weybridge Business Park
Addlestone Road
Weybridge
Surrey
KT15 2UL

Telephone 01932 828828
<http://computers.toshiba.co.uk>

www.flexibility.co.uk

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