

HSBC

Work Life Balance

A large worldwide bank is implementing a number of flexible work initiatives in its New Zealand offices to build an inclusive culture and help its employees in and out of the workplace.

HSBC is a global bank headquartered in London and employs 230 staff in New Zealand and 230,000 globally. Business calls and meetings can often be arranged across the world from Vancouver to London to Hong Kong, resulting in long days and late calls for employees.

To help assist their staff with their unique hours, HSBC's New Zealand organisation implemented flexible working in 2015, and has been accelerating these policies and initiatives in the past 18 months.



The key to HSBC's flexible working policy is that it is available to all employees, whether or not they have caring responsibilities, and it is employee-led. This individual approach has allowed employees and managers to adapt work arrangements in a way that suits the needs of the business and the employee themselves.

It was developed after employee focus groups showed a strong desire to balance work and life, and to ensure flexibility was implemented more consistently, rather than relying on individual line managers' views.

The key initiatives that HSBC has instituted over the past 18 months are:

- A relaunch of its flexibility policy
- A relaunch of an employee flexibility survey and related interviews with the Executive Committee
- The roll out of Open Work, which moves the organisation from assigned to flexible seating.

HSBC's flexibility policy includes standard flexible work practices, as well as the opportunity for long-serving staff to take a sabbatical, and Wellness Days, which are available to all staff.

Open Work was designed in advance of HSBC's change of premises, which will occur in 2019, and was deployed in April this year. As well as having unassigned desks in the offices, all staff that can work via a laptop are given one, so they can work remotely, from home or from other HSBC sites internationally.

Feedback from staff indicates that employees are more able to balance their work and personal commitments, and that the demands of working for a global bank are more manageable with flexibility to work from home, to manage start and finish times and to do global calls from home rather than in the office, says Head of Retail Banking and Wealth Management Glen Tonks.

A staff survey showed 92 per cent of HSBC New Zealand's staff have accessed flexible work options in the past 12 months, and 89 per cent believe their productivity has increased as a result.

The number of staff with flexible access has almost doubled, with 93 per cent of staff saying they currently have remote access compared with 50 per cent in 2015.

Staff turnover has decreased by 33% year-on-year, and participation and positive comments have increased in organisation-wide surveys.

Staff comments on the benefits of the policy include: "Feel like I have a life outside of work", "More appreciative of HSBC and therefore more committed", and "Improved trust between myself and my manager." The policies provide "Better health and life balance", and "Greater engagement in both home and work life."

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