

New Research Reveals Major Myths in the Telework Debate and a Growing Struggle in Open Offices

Madison, New Jersey, February 20, 2014—Men outpace women by a wide margin when it comes to telework—doing work from home, business center or another location—while women are more likely putting their hours in at their employer’s office according to new research that dispels long-standing telework myths and explores the increasing struggles of the open office trend.

The [Flex+Strategy Group/Work+Life Fit Inc.](#) (FSG/WLF) found that among a national probability survey of 556 full-time employed adults nearly one-third (31%) do most of their work away from their employer’s location, and nearly three out of four of those remote workers are men.

“Failure to understand how and where work gets done and by whom, and failure to support these operational strategies with the attention and resources warranted—including training and guidance—can compromise the optimal performance and wellbeing of both organizations and employees,” explains flexible workplace strategist and [author Cali Williams Yost](#), CEO, Flex+Strategy Group.

Telework Stereotypes Don’t Match Reality

FSG/WLF’s research dispelled several telework stereotypes. The typical full-time remote worker is:

- NOT a woman: Among those that telework, 71 percent were men.
- NOT a parent: There is no significant difference between remote workers with or without kids.
- NOT a millennial: There is no significant difference in the age groups of remote workers.

“Almost one-third of the work that gets done today gets done from home, coffee shops and other locations, yet too many corporate leaders treat telework as a disposable option, as in the case of Yahoo,” Yost explains. “Telework is not a perk and it’s certainly not just for moms and Gen Y. Rather, it’s an operational strategy. Think of it as anything less and organizations ignore what has become a vital part of their business and the way their people actually work.”

Open Office Spaces Take Toll on Work Life Flexibility

Back at the employer site, respondents reported doing most of their work either in a private office (30%) or a cube or open office space (33%) with women (43%) significantly more likely than men (27%) to work in cubes/open spaces. Overall, cube/open office workers struggle the most.

- They were the largest group reporting less work life flexibility now than at this time last year (42%) when compared to their remote and private office colleagues, and of those who feel they have the least control over their work life flexibility, cube/open office workers were the largest percentage.

Major Myths in the Telework Debate/2

- They were significantly more likely to say they didn't use or improve their work life flexibility because "it might hurt your career/others think you don't work as hard" when compared to remote workers. Yost believes worries about a "mommy track" stigma may be one reason why fewer women work remotely.
- They received the least amount of training to help them manage their work life flexibility. Remote workers (47%) were significantly more likely to receive such guidance compared to those in cubes/open spaces (35%).

"As organizations continue to squeeze more people into less square footage, they will be increasingly confronted with the limitations of open office plans and forced to accept that work life flexibility is a solution to where, when and how employees can get their work done with greater focus and performance," Yost says. "Whether they work remotely or together on site, we need to help employees develop the critical skill set needed to manage their work life fit so they can successfully capture the best of collaborative and remote work environments."

FSG/WLF's latest biennial research was made possible with support from [Quest Diagnostics](#), the world's leading provider of diagnostic information services, a premier provider of lab-based employer wellness services, and an award-winning healthy employer of more than 40,000 people.

Findings and analysis are solely FSG/WLF's and are based upon a survey conducted by ORC International with a margin of error of +/- 4 percent. A summary report and infographic are available at <http://www.worklifefit.com/research>. Yost and experts from Quest Diagnostics and [Citrix](#) will discuss these findings in a 30-minute webinar Thursday, February 27th at 2 p.m. EST. [Register here](#).

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Media Contact: Pam Kassner, pam@superpear.com, 414-510-1838