

Forward thinking employers are already rethinking long-hours culture: in Sweden, a range of public and private sector organisations in Gothenburg have been experimenting with six-hour working days on full pay, while Toyota introduced two six-hour shifts in its service centres and reports a 25% increase in profits.

WALKING THE TALK

Why not be ahead of the curve and lead the way?

- Male directors/senior managers who model a healthy work-life balance will give the message that progression is more about performance than hours worked.
- If managers want to encourage efficiency rather than presenteeism, it's better to ask "Why are you still here?" than "Off already?"
- Flexible or agile working can save on business overheads *and* allow dads to work from home when necessary, creating loyalty and reducing employee turnover.

CHANGING CULTURE

Things won't change overnight. Fathers can feel stymied by their commitment to breadwinning; and even if on paper it's no longer the case, many men feel that flexible and less-than-full-time working options are less open to them than to their female colleagues.

Many dads still don't feel comfortable discussing work-life issues with their employer. In fact, 36% of dads surveyed for the Modern Families Index said they had faked being sick to meet family obligations, and 44% had lied or bent the truth about their family responsibilities that got in the way of work. For dads aged 16-35 these figures rose to 48% and 58% respectively.

Establishing an open and honest dialogue with men about their fatherhood will transform their motivation and efficiency. So it's not just about doing the right thing - it's about hard cash too.

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More resources for employers, service providers and families are available at www.yearofthedad.org