

MAKING THE CASE FOR A SHORTER WORKWEEK

4-DAY
WORK
WEEK



FAMILY
VALUES
@ WORK



Contents

- Introduction
- Background
- Who Is Family Values @ Work?
- The History Behind the 40-Hour Workweek
- FV@W Shorter Workweek Structure
- Staff Expressions: What we thought the shorter workweek would be like and what it actually turned out to be
- Current Research
- Recommendations for Organizations

Background

We leaned into the care of our staff and our network.

In mid-2020, we reduced the work schedule of parents and other caregivers on staff to 75% with full pay, to accommodate the stresses of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In 2021, we piloted the 32-hour workweek to help address staff exhaustion amidst the pandemic and political crises.

Initially we took time off on Fridays to enjoy the summer.

The shorter workweek became an org-wide practice directly following the summer pilot.



WHO IS FAMILY VALUES @ WORK?

FV@W is a **movement network** of **grassroots coalitions** in more than two dozen states working toward **economic, racial and gender justice**, particularly around policies such as **paid family and medical leave, paid sick and safe days**, and **affordable, high-quality child care**.



Family Values @ Work

We **seek economic, racial, and gender justice** by confronting this nation's long history of coerced and underpaid caregiving labor and countering it with demands for an economy based on care and equity.

Our grassroots movement is powered by the leadership of those most impacted, peer learning, and collaboration.





Our Network

FV@W and our state coalitions bring together a diverse, nonpartisan network of more than 2,000 grassroots organizations, including labor unions, faith communities, public health professionals, reproductive justice organizations, immigrant rights groups, and advocates for children, seniors, and those with disabilities.

We work with these groups to mobilize their members and their expertise, plan strategy, and conduct advocacy.



Our Network

Across the last 20 years our network has been instrumental in winning more than 60 new paid sick days laws and more than a dozen new paid family and medical leave programs, impacting nearly 60 million workers and their families and creating demand for inclusive and sustainable federal and state policy solutions.

THE HISTORY BEHIND THE 40-HOUR WEEK

The National Labor Union had dissolved, other organizations including the Knights of Labor and the Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions continued to demand an eight-hour workday. Every year on May Day, strikes and demonstrations were organized to bring awareness to the issue.

1870s and 1880s



1869

President Ulysses S. Grant issued a proclamation to guarantee eight-hour workdays for government employees. Grant's decision encouraged private-sector workers to push for the same rights.

1866

National Labor Union asks Congress to pass a law mandating the eight-hour workday. Their efforts ultimately fail, but help put labor reform on the political map.

1817

Welsh manufacturer and labor rights activist Robert Owen argued "Eight hours labor, eight hours recreation, eight hours rest," dividing the day into three equal eight-hour parts.



Sources:
World Economic Forum
CNBC.com
Cutureamp.com

THE HISTORY BEHIND THE 40-HOUR WEEK

People made sacrifices in a movement that they never had the opportunity to benefit from. We want to honor those people who protested, fought, and lost their lives for this movement.



Congress passed the Adamson Act, a federal law that established an eight-hour workday for interstate railroad workers.

1916

1886

The Illinois legislature passed a law mandating eight-hour workdays. Many employers refused, leading to a general strike in Chicago, where demonstrators fought police for many days. The violence, in which at least 12 people were killed, is known as the Haymarket Riot. Workers, children, and bystanders across the country were killed by police and company and state militias at similar demonstrations.

1926

Ford motor Company adopted a five-day, 40-hour workweek.



1938

Congress passed the Fair Labor Standards Act, which limits the workweek to 44 hours, or 8.8 hours per day.

1940

Congress amended the Fair Labor Standards Act, limiting the workweek to 40 hours.

Sources:
World Economic Forum
CNBC.com
Cutureamp.com

60-hour week was the norm in the mid 1800s

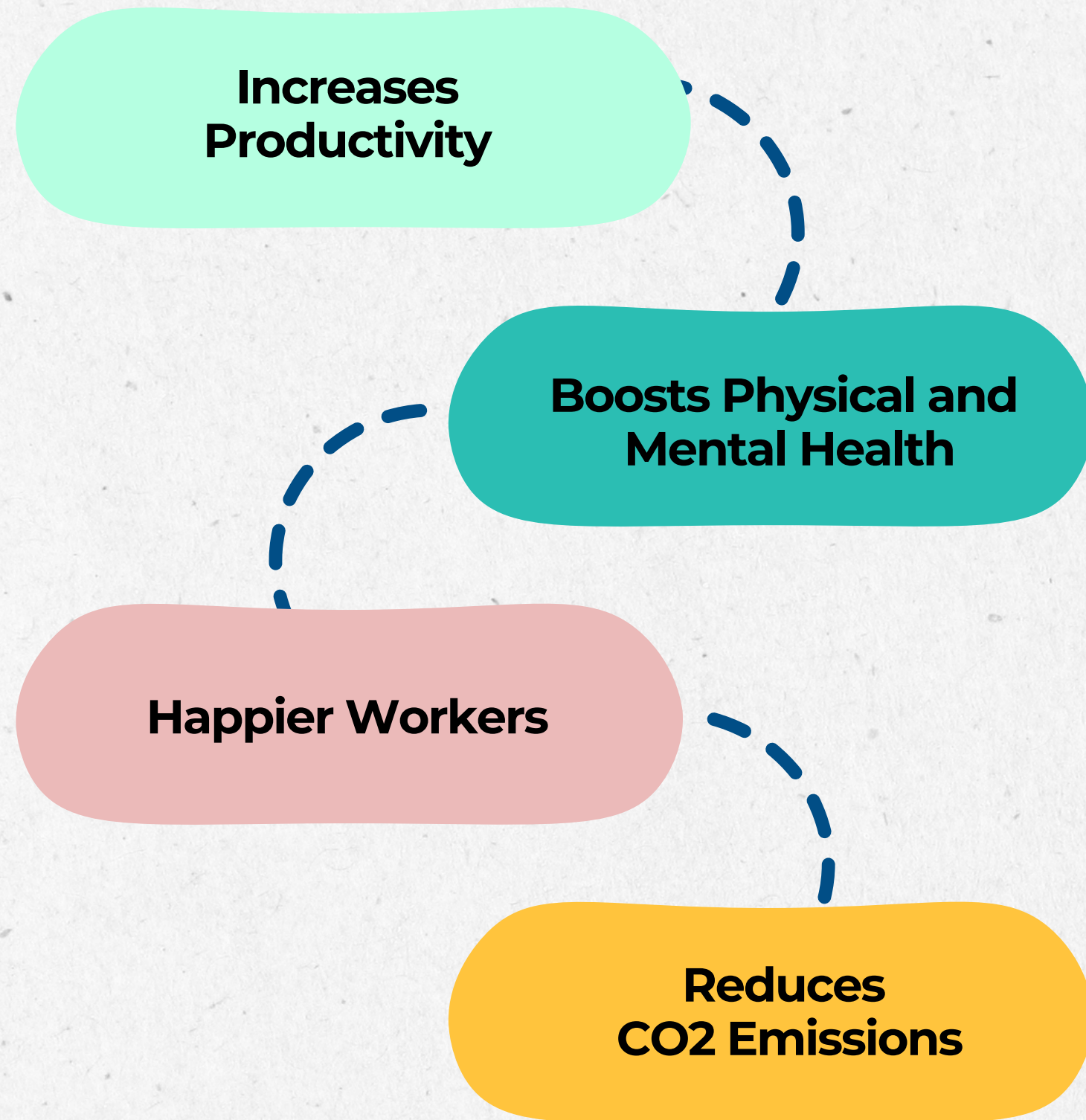
50-hour week was the norm around 1900

40-hour week has been the norm since about 1950

32-hour week or #4dayweek is becoming the new norm

“The ‘Standard’ workweek is a socioeconomic artifact. It is not a natural law. As technology, labor markets, and cultural values change, it will change too.”

WorkFour - The National Campaign for the 4-Day Workweek



Making the Case for a Shorter Workweek

The World Economic Forum

Our Journey

The demands of caregiving during remote work have brought our caregiving responsibilities into clearer view, inspiring our move to a more flexible workweek.



The shorter workweek became an org-wide practice directly following the 2021 summer pilot.

In 2022, we conducted a mid-year and end-of-year survey.

100% of staff gave a positive or very positive rating in support of the 4-day workweek.

Family Values @ Work's Shorter Workweek Structure

- We moved to a four-day model
- Built around a three-day weekend
- Fridays off
- Quarterly week-long office closures

Staff Survey Results

**Key
Takeaways**

The Benefits

The Drawbacks

Key Takeaways from Our Surveys

- 100% of staff responded with a positive or very positive rating in favor of the shorter workweek
- Several staff responded that they are proud, humbled, and happy to work for an organization that is constantly thinking of ways in which to model care, fair and just work

Key Takeaways from Our Surveys

- The majority of the staff that do not supervise others take Fridays off more often than not
- Staff who supervise others take Fridays off less than half of the time or about half of the time
- Staff feel some pressure to finish five days' worth of work in four days

Key Takeaways from Our Surveys

- The **top benefits** were: more time to rest and get care, more flexibility for travel and other recreation, and more time to spend with family and friends
- The **top drawbacks** were: pressure to finish five days' worth of work in four days, fewer opportunities to schedule meetings or connect with co-workers, and complications with coordinating work with state or national partners

Guilt that stems from actually adhering to the policy knowing many others do not

Space and time to reflect on more creative ways to work

Pressure mounts to meet goals and outcomes necessary to move the organization forward

Fridays are magical now!

I feel more productive day-to-day

A breather day keeps me from falling behind

Staff Expressions from Our 2022 Mid-Year and Year-End Surveys





Current Research and Resources

- [WorkFour](#)
- [4 Day Week Global](#)
- [The State of Workplace Burnout](#)
- [The World Economic Forum](#)

Data from a 2022 UK pilot program, one of the most extensive of its kind, which included 73 companies and 3,300 employees, found that leaders from 41 of the participating organizations reported...

The World Economic Forum

49% reported a smooth transition
29% reported an extremely smooth transition

46% reported the same level of productivity
34% reported an improvement in productivity

15% reported the shorter workweek significantly improved business productivity

86% likely or extremely like to implement a shorter workweek permanently

Options

4-Day Workweek Models

100-80-100 model

- 100% pay for 80% of the time to maintain 100% productivity
 - Four 8-hour workdays for a total of 32 hours per week

Variable work schedule

- The company remains open 5 days per week, but different employees take off a different day per week

Recommendations for Organizations

01

Set Explicit Expectations

- Leadership should communicate their true expectations for behaviors and workloads
- All staff should understand communications norms (e.g., if you do need to work on Friday, schedule emails to colleagues to arrive on Monday)
- Establish plans of action for events requiring rapid response when staff is off

02

Plan Carefully for Implementation:

- Establish clear feedback mechanisms for the implementation phase
- Allow enough time to learn and make needed adjustments
- Commit to flexibility around work goals and schedules and adapt as needed
- Prepare external partners for the shift and negotiate new collaboration patterns

Recommendations for Organizations

03

Plan Work with Intention:

- Start planning the upcoming year's work well in advance
- Set realistic expectations for work that can be achieved
- Allow for iterative thinking and discussion around workloads and plans
- Document what you are learning for next year's planning process

04

Implement Best Time-Use Practices:

- Provide education for staff on effective use and design of meetings and on time management
- Adopt universal project-management and communication tools across all staff
- Use a time-use tracking study to understand ways to improve
- Use annual staff reviews and job description reviews to right-size work

For Further Thought ...

Lingering Questions and Things We Are Pondering

What might the journey of unlearning old assumptions about work look like - and how could that open up new possibilities?

What if we challenged our assumptions about what we deserve as workers?

How could redefining productivity around our intrinsic value transform our work culture?

For Further Thought ...

Lingering Questions and Things We Are Pondering

Not everyone in our sphere is doing this yet. We still have important partners who expect things from us on Fridays or within a 40+ hour work capacity. It makes collaborative work harder because of having these different practices.

We are still grappling with how to fully reset work expectations and realities to align with a 32-hour workweek.

A 4-day workweek feels elusive for those in upper management and executive roles - both in terms of the capacity demands and the entrenched cultural expectations around their work. We are pondering whether it's due to operational hurdles or internalized mindsets.

Thank you very much!

Reach out if you'd like to learn more!

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