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**HUMAN RESOURCES & PAYROLL**

# The Case for a 4-Day Work Week

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Isaac M. O'Bannon • Oct. 15, 2018



Nearly half (45 percent) of full-time workers say it should take less than five hours each day to do their job if they worked uninterrupted, while three out of four employees (72 percent) would work four days or less per week if pay remained

constant. Yet, 71 percent of employees also say work interferes with their personal life. That's according to a global survey of nearly 3,000 employees across eight countries conducted by [The Workforce Institute](#) at [Kronos Incorporated](#),

### **The case for a four-day workweek?**

If pay remained constant, one-third of global workers say their ideal workweek would last four days (34 percent), while 20 percent said they would work three days a week. One in four global employees (28 percent) are content with the standard five-day workweek. Full-time workers in Canada (59 percent), Australia (47 percent), and the U.S. (40 percent) feel strongest about having a four-day workweek, while U.K. employees desire a three-day workweek the most (26 percent).

India leads the way as the hardest-working country, with a whopping 69 percent of full-time employees saying they would still work five days a week even if they had the option to work fewer days for the same pay. Mexico was the second-highest at 43 percent of workers, followed by the U.S. at 27 percent. The U.K. (16 percent), France (17 percent), and Australia (19 percent) are the least content with the standard five-day workweek.

One-third of employees (35 percent) would take a 20 percent pay-cut to work one day less per week. However, those numbers vary greatly by country, as 50 percent of workers in Mexico, 43 percent in India, and 42 percent in France would take that arrangement compared with only 29 percent in Canada and 24 percent in the U.S.

Nearly nine in 10 employees (86 percent) say they lose time each day on work-specific tasks unrelated to their core job, with 41 percent of full-time employees wasting more than an hour a day on these extraneous activities. Additionally, 40 percent of employees say they lose an hour-plus each day on administrative tasks that do not drive value for their organization.

When asked what they spend the majority of their workday doing, individual contributors (56 percent) and people managers (28 percent) both listed servicing customers/patients/students as their top task.

The next highest-rated daily tasks for individual contributors include collaborating with co-workers (42 percent), administrative work (35 percent), manual labor (33 percent), and responding to emails (31 percent), while people managers list attending meetings (27 percent), administrative work (27 percent), collaborating

with co-workers (26 percent), and responding to emails (26 percent) as the top ways they spend their workday.

“The biggest takeaway of this research isn’t that we should move to a shorter workweek or that we need a time machine to get all our work done, said Joyce Maroney, executive director of the Workforce Institute at Kronos. “It’s clear that employees want to work and do well by their employers, and many roles require people to be present or on call during specific hours to get the job done – such as teachers, nurses, retail associates, plant workers, delivery drivers, and nearly all customer-facing roles. Organizations must help their people eliminate distractions, inefficiencies, and administrative work to enable them to work at full capacity. This will create more time to innovate, collaborate, develop skills and relationships, and serve customers while opening the door to creative scheduling options, including the coveted four-day workweek.”

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