

Supplemental Resources for Blog:

The need for the 4-day work week, sabbaticals, and systemic solutions to burnout

Sampling of 4-day work week resources:

[Labor unions are pushing for a four-day workweek: The future of work means fewer hours spent working. \(Vox\)](#)

“Americans once worked 100 hours a week, six days in a row. Then, in 1940, came the five-day workweek. Now labor unions are making the case for even less work: dropping days worked down to four.

That’s one of the changes unions are proposing as part of their vision for the future of work, which is outlined in a report to be released Friday by the AFL-CIO, the largest federation of labor unions in the US.”

[The five-day workweek is dead: It’s time for something better \(Vox\)](#)

[Kill the 5-Day Workweek: Reducing hours without reducing pay would reignite an essential but long-forgotten moral project: making American life less about work \(The Atlantic\)](#)

Lots of statistics, examples, historical context.

[Four-day working week trial at New Zealand company so successful its boss wants to make it permanent. 'We've seen is a massive increase in engagement and staff satisfaction' \(The Independent\)](#)

“The firm, which deals with wills and trust funds, conducted the eight-week experiment earlier this year. It saw its 240-strong workforce, in 16 offices across the country, retain full pay alongside a three-day weekend.”

[Work less, get more: New Zealand firm's four-day week an 'unmitigated success' Reduced hours for same pay increased successful work-life balance management, cutting stress levels and boosting commitment \(The Guardian\)](#)

“[Before the trial] just over half (54%) of staff felt they could effectively balance their work and home commitments, while after the trial this number jumped to 78%.

Staff stress levels decreased by 7 percentage points across the board as a result of the trial, while stimulation, commitment and a sense of empowerment at work all improved significantly, with overall life satisfaction increasing by 5 percentage points.”



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[We're Trying a 4-Day Workweek for the Month of May \(Buffer\)](#)

"We asked each area to choose which typical workday will become an "off day" for May, all members of an area will take the same day off, and some areas (like Engineering and Product) coordinated this together. The chosen day remains consistent for the full 4-week period of the new working schedule. We hope that doing this by area helps with the feeling of needing to 'catch up' from a day off.

For our Customer Advocacy team, we did things slightly differently to ensure coverage for our customers. Our Advocates have alternating Wednesdays and Fridays off. If they have Wednesday off in Week One, then they'll have Friday off in Week Two, and vice versa. This was done because having Wednesdays off ensures we are available for early week volume spikes and feels restorative as a midweek option as team members will only have two days back-to-back work on those weeks. We also normally have lower volume on Friday and team members can enjoy a longer weekend on those weeks."

[What if You Had a Four-Day Week? Why Don't You? People have been predicting a four-day workweek for decades, so what's taking so long? \(New York Times\)](#)

"The reasons that a four-day workweek hasn't yet taken hold are varied, Mr. Grant and others argue. Some barriers are institutional and some are cultural. And then there's the most human reason of all: inertia."

[Here's where you can have a 4-day work week. Is this the next big thing? \(USA Today\)](#)

"Fifteen percent of organizations offer four-day work weeks of 32 hours or less to at least some employees, up from 13% in 2017, according to an April survey by the Society for Human Resource Management. And a poll last year by staffing firm Robert Half found that 17% of companies had compressed work weeks that squish the same number of hours into fewer days."

"The number of ZipRecruiter job postings that mention four-day weeks is up 67% so far this year, following jumps of 65% last year and 51% in 2017."

"Research shows employees do about four hours of actual work a day, Schawbel says. Twenty-three percent of workers polled said they wasted the most time fixing a problem they didn't cause, 15.7% cited administrative tasks; 10.7%, meetings; 10.5%, email; and 8.1%, chatting with coworkers."

"Employers that advertise the four-day schedule receive 13% more applications on average."

"With annual raises climbing the past year but still limited to 3% or so, "Work-life balance is where (employers) are going," Siegel says. A growing number already offer more liberal telecommuting options and flexible hours. The four-day week may be the next frontier."

Forget the 5-day work week—just 4 days results in ‘a healthier, more loyal, more engaged staff’ (CNBC)

“According to a [U.K. study done in 2017 by deals site Vouchercloud](#), the average employee spends two hours and 53 minutes each day working productively... However, he said many companies are “scared” to take the chance because they’ve been so conditioned about a five-day work week.”

These are the pros and cons of a four-day workweek. While there are data that shows it can increase productivity, it can be too costly to uphold in certain fields and industries. (Fast Company)

“...we also have evidence from another study that overall productivity peaks at 25-30 hours per week for people over the age of 40.”

Microsoft’s 4-day work week test in Japan boosts productivity by 40% — other studies show it can also make you happier (MarketWatch)

“Microsoft tested a four-day work week in August — and, the company said, productivity jumped 40%.”

“The OECD has found that productivity is highest when people work fewer hours, and worker output actually drops once people clock in more than 48 hours per week. The CDC also linked putting in overtime with increased rates of illness, injury and death, not to mention weight gain and more alcohol use and smoking.”

Thank God it’s Thursday: The four-day workweek some want to bring to the U.S. Some economists have speculated that American attitudes about work may make it particularly inhospitable for a four-day week (Washington Post)

“Four years ago, the [Belgian] feminist advocacy organization [Femma] polled its 60,000 female members on their biggest frustrations. The results were remarkably consistent, regardless of age: The women wanted more free time. Between work and their disproportionate share of the household and child-care responsibilities, the women reported having little time for themselves.

So as a one-year experiment starting in January, Femma implemented a 30-hour workweek for its approximately 60-person staff, which effectively means most take their Fridays off. The employees are being closely followed through December by Free University of Brussels researchers, who are studying the impact of more leisure time on both the women and their children.”

Will the 4-Day Workweek Take Hold in Europe? (Harvard Business Review)

“How have most firms implemented a shorter week? Respondents often said the practice is adopted by splitting employees into a rotating schedule, in which half do not work Mondays and the other half do not work Fridays. This allows firms to meet their customers’ demands by keeping premises open all week.”

“Workers too have reservations. Nearly half (45%) of those we surveyed worried that spending less time at work would make colleagues think they’re lazy. This suggests there is a paradox in how employees perceive the practice: They want it implemented but are afraid to engage with it as first movers.”

[Enjoy The Extra Day Off! More Bosses Give 4-Day Workweek A Try](#) (NPR)

“Last month, a Washington state senator introduced a bill to reduce the standard workweek [to 32 hours](#). Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev is backing [a parliamentary proposal](#) to shift to a four-day week. Politicians in [Britain](#) and [Finland](#) are considering something similar. In the U.S., Shake Shack started testing the idea a year and a half ago. “

[Bolt Becomes First Tech Unicorn to Shift to Four-Day Workweek](#) (Cheddar)

[A Guide to Implementing the 4-Day Workweek Working less can reduce employees’ stress — without sacrificing productivity](#) (Harvard Business Review)

[The 40-hour workweek isn’t working. Reducing it could help with productivity](#) (NPR Life Kit)

[The Future of Flexibility at Work You can tailor programs and policies to fit your employees’ needs](#) (Harvard Business Review)

[It’s a New Era for Mental Health at Work](#) (Harvard Business Review)

Sampling of sabbatical resources:

[Research Shows That Organizations Benefit When Employees Take Sabbaticals](#) (Harvard Business Review)

“According to a [survey](#) from the Society for Human Resource Management, the percentage of companies offering sabbaticals (both paid and unpaid) rose to nearly 17% in 2017.”

“Research suggests that the upward trend in sabbaticals is due to two primary factors. Sabbaticals and extended vacation time are not just good for employees to rest and recharge — they benefit the organization by stress-testing the organizational chart and providing interim roles to allow aspiring employees to take on more leadership.”

[Sabbaticals Pay Off: Paid sabbaticals allow employees to recharge—and boost retention, development and training at little cost](#) (Society of Human Resources Management)

“I’ve interviewed several employees who were ready to leave their companies when they went on sabbatical. Then they realized it wasn’t [a problem with] the company; they were just yearning for some time off.”

Sabbaticals for capacity building for leadership and development in the nonprofit sector (Creative Disruption pdf)

“The data demonstrate a number of positive outcomes that are unexpected, broad, and even profound. Here are some of the study’s other important findings about sabbaticals: they increase organizational capacity, they are important tools for succession planning, they strengthen governance, and funders benefit.”

It’s time funders take nonprofit leadership turnover seriously (NonprofitAF)

“Sabbaticals have been proven to increase people’s productivity and effectiveness, and yet there’s barely any funding for this. Sabbaticals should not just be for EDs/CEOs, though, but for all nonprofit professionals.”

Funders, fund sabbaticals. Nonprofits, have a sabbatical policy (NonprofitAF)

“The [Durfee Foundation](#) has been a pioneer in supporting sabbaticals for over 20 years. Gleaming from Durfee’s [very informative report with lots of great case studies](#), there are countless benefits of sabbaticals, including:

- *Increasing retention of nonprofit leaders*
- *Shifting perspectives and allowing for new thinking*
- *Changing organizational culture around work/life balance*
- *Providing leadership opportunities for other team members*
- *Increase sabbatical takers’ confidence levels*
- *Improve collaboration between leaders and their boards of directors*
- *Increase the effectiveness of interim leaders*
- *Strengthen partnerships between leaders who took sabbaticals and the interim leaders*
- *Allows organizations to “stress test” organizational structures*
 - *These effects last long after people return from sabbaticals*

When Being Unproductive Saves a Career (New York Times)

“According to the [journal Nonprofit Quarterly](#), burnout rates in nonprofits have increased in the last few years from 16 percent to 19 percent of their staffs, and the rise is most pronounced among those who do direct service work.

“Some funders may fear that sabbaticals will lead to more turnover, but the opposite has been the experience. Sabbaticals typically breed loyalty and can encourage leaders to stick around longer than they originally intended. They also create healthier work habits, which influences the culture of the entire organization. Three-fourths of respondents report an organizational culture shift toward a better work-life balance, even 20 years later. “Patterns do change,” Linnell said. “Most people never go back to the level of workaholism they exhibited before.”

When working less is a matter of life and death (New York Times’ Editorial Board)

“A [new study](#) by the two groups says that working 55 or more hours a week is a “serious health hazard.” It estimates that long working hours led to 745,000 deaths worldwide in 2016, a 29 percent increase over 2000. Men accounted for 72 percent of the fatalities; the worst

concentrations were in the Western Pacific and Southeast Asia, and particularly among 60- to 79-year-olds who had worked long hours after the age of 45.”

“Americans, wrote Samuel Huntington in his book [“Who Are We?: The Challenges to America’s National Identity,”](#) “work longer hours, have shorter vacations, get less in unemployment, disability, and retirement benefits, and retire later, than people in comparably rich societies.””

[Employee sabbaticals: Are they right for your company? \(Insperity\)](#)

Includes a list of pros/cons and questions for your organization to consider

[The Durfee Foundation](#)

Since its founding in 1997, the Durfee Sabbatical program has awarded more than 100 sabbaticals to outstanding nonprofit leaders in Los Angeles.

[The Practice of Truly Enjoying Time Off \(Zen Habits\)](#)

7 ways to actually enjoy time off