



CORPORATE VOICES
for **WORKING FAMILIES**

Workplace Flexibility for Lower Wage Workers

WFD CONSULTING
OCTOBER 2006



Acknowledgements

Workplace Flexibility for Lower Wage Workers is a product of Corporate Voices for Working Families' Workplace Flexibility Project. This report was researched and written by Amy Richman, Arlene Johnson and Lisa Buxbaum at WFD Consulting. Corporate Voices' Workplace Flexibility Project is made possible by the support of Kathleen Christensen and the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation. Additional support was provided by the Annie E. Casey Foundation and the Ford Foundation.

About Corporate Voices

Corporate Voices for Working Families is a non-partisan, non-profit corporate membership organization created to bring the private sector voice into the public dialogue on issues affecting working families. Collectively our 52 partner companies employ more than 4 million individuals throughout all fifty states, with annual net revenues over \$1 trillion. Over 70% of our partner companies are listed in the Fortune 500, and all share leadership positions in developing family support policies for their own workforces.

About WFD Consulting

WFD Consulting partners with its clients to create inspiring work environments where businesses succeed and employees thrive. Their research, consulting, and implementation services enable their clients to mobilize the full richness, diversity, and potential of their employees, resulting in a more resilient, productive, and engaged workforce. WFD Consulting achieves distinction through dedication to client needs, collaboration, innovation, and a focus on action that set the standard for the field.

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Workplace Flexibility for Lower Wage Workers

A Briefing Paper

Prepared by WFD Consulting for Corporate Voices for Working Families with Funding from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation¹

Introduction

Recent academic research and business reports have demonstrated strong positive outcomes of flexibility for businesses and employees. This research on the “business case” for workplace flexibility has proven to be influential, both in garnering the attention of business and the press and in demonstrating the feasibility and importance of workplace flexibility as a business tool.² However, the focus of workplace research to date has been primarily on management and professional workers, and relatively little attention has gone to how and whether voluntary flexibility can work for lower wage employees and their employers. Little is known about what kinds of flexibility are successful in lower wage jobs, resulting in a common assumption among employers that flexibility is less feasible, effective, or necessary in lower wage jobs. Research shows that, for a variety of reasons, lower wage workers generally have less access to voluntary flexibility than higher wage workers. But when it is available to them, flexibility can have equal or even more powerful outcomes for the lower wage population.³

If workplace flexibility is to become a more standard way of working, and considering that lower wage workers comprise a large and rapidly growing segment of the U.S. workforce, it is critical to have more information about how flexibility can work among lower wage workers. How can the advantages of successfully implemented flexibility be expanded for lower wage workers, for their benefit and the benefit of their employers alike?

Given that there are few well-publicized corporate case examples of successful flexibility implementation for lower wage workers and very little published

research, additional information is needed in order to catalyze employer action and policy discussions. Therefore, with officer's grant funding from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation and in collaboration with WFD Consulting, Corporate Voices sponsored an exploratory investigation to determine what is known about flexibility for lower wage workers, and to outline a direction for further research and replication which has the potential for the greatest impact on advancing flexibility in lower wage jobs.

Methodology

Corporate Voices for Working Families, a non-profit corporate partnership committed to fostering public and private investments in family supports that are effective for the workforce as a whole, received a grant from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation to broaden and deepen understanding of access to and the impact of workplace flexibility practices for lower wage workers. Assisted by WFD Consulting, a firm with extensive experience in researching and implementing flexibility, Corporate Voices used a multi-method approach to investigate flexibility among lower wage workers.

- Recent academic and business literature on flexibility for lower wage and lower income workers was reviewed.
- Telephone and in-person interviews were conducted with several of the leading academic researchers and policy experts concerning flexibility for lower wage employees to get their expert insights and assessment about the availability, barriers, and impacts of flexibility among this population segment, and to learn about research efforts that have not been published.
- Secondary analyses of data from WFD's multi-company database were performed to quantify the relative availability and value of flexibility in different wage groups. The WFD database was created with support from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation in order to aggregate the findings from 39 employee surveys in 29 different organizations; approximately ten percent of the over 300,000 employee respondents in the database meet the criteria for "lower wage."⁴
- A large part of the investigation involved contacting dozens of leading companies to identify examples of successful implementation of flexibility among lower wage workers and to assess employer interest in the issue. In-depth telephone interviews with Human Resources and business leaders in eight such organizations were conducted to determine what kinds

of flexibility, if any, are available to lower wage employees in their organizations, what success or difficulty there has been in offering flexibility to lower wage employees, what metrics exist that link workplace flexibility practices to outcomes of importance to the business and if there is readiness to participate in an additional research effort aimed at expanding flexibility.

The following sections draw upon findings from the literature, interviews with experts, new findings from the WFD Database, and interviews with HR and business leaders.

Who is the lower wage worker? Key facts about lower wage workers' situations

Lower wage employees comprise a large and fast-growing segment of the U.S. workforce. According to the National Compensation Survey, 25% of U.S. workers earn \$10 per hour or less, or \$20,080 or less annually for a 40-hour work week.⁵ One of the major trends in the American labor market is the increased and increasing numbers of jobs in our economy that are lower wage. Between 2002 and 2012, the Labor Department expects the economy to create more than 7.5 million new jobs. However, almost six million of these jobs will be lower wage jobs that require limited education and provide minimal training. The actual positions of hourly and lower wage workers vary from industry to industry, but they are held most often by the employees that represent the face of the company and serve as the direct line of interaction with the customer, consumer or goods. Examples of lower wage workers are cashiers, housekeeping staff, servers, check processors, product-line workers and others who are necessary to keep a business running, but who are not always recognized as being core to the business.

While there is no hard and fast definition that researchers have agreed upon for “low wage,” a recent paper by the Families and Work Institute⁶ defined “low wage” earners as those in the bottom 25% of the earnings distribution. Many but not all low wage earners live in low income families, which is defined as a family with household income below 200% of the federal poverty threshold. In 2005, the threshold for low income was \$20,320 for a single person with no dependents, \$31,470 for a single parent with two dependents and \$39,612 for a married or partnered family with two dependents.⁷ Using the federal guidelines, low wage earners who are in the bottom quartile of earnings would qualify as both low

wage and low income if they are single or their spouse or partner also is a low wage earner.

Compared to the higher wage workforce, the lower wage workforce is more diverse; it contains more minorities, more women, more single parents and more single earner families.

The lower wage workforce has different demographics from the workforce at large and is made up of distinct subgroups. Lower wage workers are not a monolith; for some, a lower wage job is a temporary, transitional or bridge position, but it is not a career or permanent situation. Low wage workers range from the invisible, disenfranchised illegal immigrant, to the teen who takes a part-time retail or fast-food job, to the high-school educated worker who can only get a low income job throughout his life, to a retired person who works a few hours a week, to a single mother who is caught in a low income job for years as the only way to accommodate her family responsibilities. Compared to the higher wage workforce, the lower wage workforce is more diverse; it contains more minorities, more women, more single parents and more single-earner families.⁸ Recently, some older workers have taken “bridge jobs” that offer more flexibility but lower wages with fewer benefits.⁹ Higher incidence of children with chronic medical conditions or learning issues and heavier reliance on informal child care among low wage workers and low income families create added need for flexibility among parents to manage work-life responsibilities.^{10,11} Mandatory overtime or work overload cause more problems for lower wage workers who are single parents, have child care constraints or have second jobs. It is important to consider the life cycle stage and the permanence of the work arrangement when examining low wage workers and flexibility because the impact or need for flexibility is different and has different salience for each of these categories of worker.

Personal and family demographics – WFD Database

Findings from the WFD database of employees from large companies illustrate how lower income/lower wage workers differ from middle and higher income workers on several important dimensions that have implications for their need and use of flexibility.¹² In addition, there are important gender differences within the lower income worker group. Two patterns emerge within the lower wage group. The first is of younger men and women, more often single, frequently minorities, who may be in lower wage jobs as an earlier career phase. The second group is made up of somewhat older women with children, often single parents who have been in these lower wage jobs for several years. (See Appendix, Table 1.)

In the WFD database sample of employees from large U.S. organizations, women comprise the majority (66%) of workers in the <\$25K group. Lower wage work-

Lower wage workers are more vulnerable to economic, health and family issues that may affect productivity.

ers tend to be younger than workers in other income groups, but this varies by gender. While three quarters of the men (76%) are under 35 years old, only about half (58%) of women are. Lower income workers are less likely to be married than workers in other income brackets – 34% of men and 31% of women with incomes <\$25K are married compared to 62% of men and 52% of women in the \$25K to \$49.9K range; the percent of married/partnered workers is even higher as income increases. The percentage of lower income workers with a full-time working spouse is quite low compared to other groups; 9% of men and 18% of women in the lowest income group have a full-time working spouse, compared to about 50% of men and 80% of women in higher earning groups. Since they are younger and less often married, lower income workers are less likely to have children 0 to 18 years of age than higher income workers, but almost twice as many lower wage women have children (39%) than men (20%). Lower wage women with children are also much more likely than men to be single parents (20% vs. 3%) and much more likely than women in any other income group to be single parents.

Lower income workers are far more likely to be minorities than workers in other income groups; half (46% of men and 52% of women) in the lowest income group classify themselves as minorities. In contrast, only about one in eight workers (12% of men and 17% of women) in the highest income group classify themselves as minorities.

Implications: For employers, workers in lower wage “careers” are of special significance because they are typically a more permanent segment of the company’s workforce compared to other types of lower wage workers. At the same time, these lower wage workers are more vulnerable to economic, health, and family issues that may affect productivity – they have more work-life demands and fewer financial resources or external sources of support than younger, better educated workers who may take a low wage position for a short time while going to school, or older workers who work to supplement retirement savings.

The nature of lower wage workers’ jobs and schedules are different from those of higher wage employees. Many lower wage jobs have “flexible hours” but at the employers’ discretion. This poses problems of predictability (e.g., work hours always changing and therefore child care needs always shifting and personal life unpredictable) and getting enough work (e.g., this week the employer only needs me 8 hours, which is not enough to meet my needs). Often weekly work schedules and changes in schedule are communicated with little advanced notice which creates added work-life difficulties for workers regarding child care and manage-

ment of other personal or family responsibilities. Forty percent of workers work mostly at non-standard times—evening, night, rotating shift or during the weekend—and these numbers are higher among lower wage employees. Compared to higher wage workers, lower wage workers also experience more mandatory, unscheduled overtime which creates additional work-life challenges. Lower wage workers more often work part-time, often at lower hourly rates and with fewer or no benefits—this includes mandatory part-time schedules and voluntary part-time in order to meet their dependent care responsibilities. Regular part-time workers earn \$3.97 less per hour than regular full-time workers.¹³ In addition, more lower wage workers have multiple jobs to supplement their income.

Implications: For flexibility to be meaningful to lower-wage workers, it must contain a dimension of control and choice.

**Job-related
demographics – WFD
Database**

Lower income workers are far more likely to work shifts other than regular day or first shift hours. Nearly half (45%) of lower income men and a quarter (27%) of lower income women work other than day shift hours compared to employees with incomes over \$75K (24% and 13%, respectively). (See Appendix, Table 2.)

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More than a quarter of lower wage workers intend to leave their current employer in the near future compared to only one-tenth of workers in other income groups. Reflecting their younger age and higher turnover rates, lower wage workers have shorter tenures with their current employers; more than half (67% of men and 47% of women) have been with their employers two years or less compared to 35% of men and 25% of women in the next income group of \$25K to \$49.9K.

While part-time work provides workers with some needed flexibility, it also contributes to being a lower income family; one-third of men (33%) and women (39%) in the lowest income group work part-time compared to 5% and 16%, respectively, in the \$25K to \$49.9K group. In addition, lower income employees who are married more often have a spouse who works part-time (22% of men and 20% of women) compared to higher income groups; this is especially true for women.

Prevalence and availability of flexibility to lower wage and lower income workers

Lower wage workers have less access to flexibility and other work-life policies and benefits than higher wage workers. Lower wage and lower income workers have less access to formal flex-time and other flexibility options. More lower wage and lower income workers are employed by small employers who are less likely to offer benefits or have work-life policies. Even in companies where flexibility policies exist, they are more available to middle and higher wage employees than to lower wage workers. In general, lower wage employees are less likely to have paid time off, either vacation or sick time. Equally important, low wage workers usually have less access to occasional, as-needed flexibility. Management attitudes, production and coverage issues, and personnel policies that do not allow time off in smaller than full day increments all are contributing factors.

Research shows that although organizations may offer flexible work options, hourly and non-exempt employees are less likely to have access than professional or exempt employees. Lower wage/lower income employees are less likely to have access to traditional fringe benefits—health insurance, paid vacations, or paid sick days.¹⁴ In particular, they are 50% to 100% less likely to be able to use paid time off for sick child care, to use flex-time daily or periodically, to telework, or to determine when to take breaks. Lower wage workers are more likely to report that using flexibility will negatively affect advancement; they are three times more likely to plan on looking for a new job next year.

A 2005 National Study of Employers found most organizations with 50 or more employees are more likely to allow at least some employees to have control over when they take breaks (78%), take time off for important family and personal needs without loss of pay (77%), and take extended career breaks for care-giving or other family and personal responsibilities (73%), but the proportion of employers offering these options for working flexibly to all or most workers is significantly lower—from 67 to 3 percent.¹⁵

On average, the proportion of employers offering flexible work options to all or most employees is 24 percent lower than the proportion who offer the same options to some employees. In the Corporate Voices study of model programs for hourly and lower wage employees, only half of the organizations studied offered

flexible work options to hourly workers, compared to 75% who offered them to other employees.¹⁶ According to the most recent 2004 census figures, flexible schedules are available to about one quarter (27.5%) of full-time wage and salaried workers—there has been a slight decline since 2001 (28.6%) and stagnation since big increases between 1991 and 1997 (15.1% to 27.6%). Although the data were not analyzed by employee wage, the differential patterns of use of flexibility are quite consistent with the personal, family and job characteristics of lower wage versus higher wage workers: flexible schedules are more available to whites (28.7%) than blacks (19.7%) or Latino or Hispanics (18.4%), more available to managerial, professional and related occupations (36.8%) compared to service occupations (21.2%) or production occupations (14.3%).¹⁷

Lower wages and lower income are the factors most related to less access to all four types of flexible work arrangements.

A multivariate analysis of the National Study of the Changing Workforce dataset looked at effects of wage/income and other demographics on access to four types of flexibility—modifying start and end times, daily flex-time, taking time off for personal/family, and general control over work hours.¹⁸ The study found that lower wages and income were the factors most related to decreased access to all four types of flexible work arrangements compared to personal, family, or job characteristics including education and hourly vs. exempt status. For some findings, the salary and wage differences were for the highest family income group and/or highest hourly wage earners compared to the others (\$70K + family income or \$18.97/hr vs. other groups), thus the effect was not always at the lowest end of the wage or income scale.

An in-depth study of families in “the bottom third,” as well as employers, educators and child care providers, also found that low wage employees are much less likely to have needed flexibility.¹⁹ Employers who were interviewed did not regard flexibility as an option for low wage employees and many business owners and managers were unsympathetic to employees’ needs for flexibility. Flexibility was highly dependent on the particular supervisor or manager; attitudes of supervisors were a much more important influence on flexibility than workplace policies which were rare or did not apply to these particular workers. Some workers choose to work less than full time as a strategy in order to have the flexibility to meet child care and other family responsibilities; in this study, 40% worked less than full time (<37.5 hr/wk). For workers in the bottom third of the economy, the additional earnings from full-time hours are offset by the opportunity costs associated with leaving needy children for longer periods, higher child care costs and loss of some public assistance.

Some researchers have distinguished types of as-needed flexibility in order to study or advocate for increased flexibility for low income workers; these types of as-needed flexibility are different in terms of frequency and predictability.^{20,21} In addition to the typical formal types of flexible arrangements, the Georgetown University Flexibility Project has defined three types of flexibility that may be especially important in understanding flexibility for lower wage workers given the nature of their jobs, their limited access to paid time off, and their often greater work-life demands:

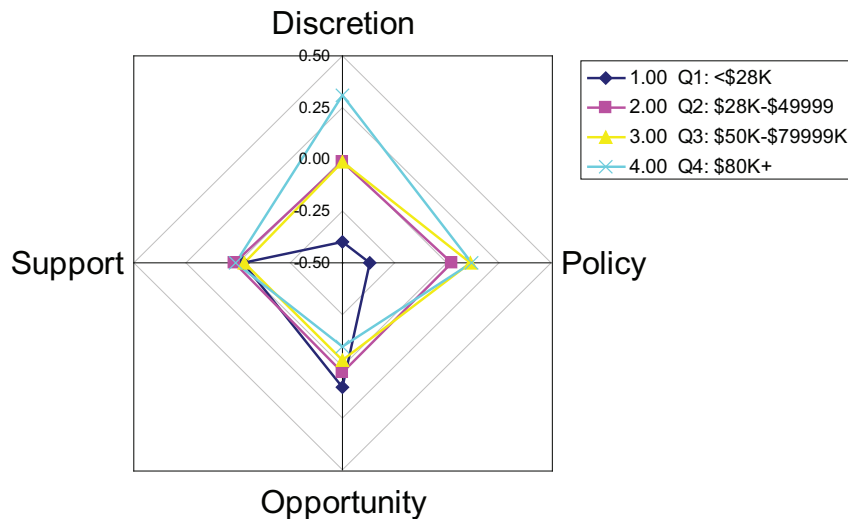
Short-term time off (STO):	5 days or less and could be less than a full day; requested for situations not covered by FMLA; usually situations that require this are highly unpredictable and come up suddenly.
Episodic time off (EPTO):	This type of time off is the result of a known condition, such as illness of a parent, chronic health condition of worker or dependent; for example, a person with an asthmatic child will have emergencies regularly and unpredictably.
Extended time off (EXTO)	Extended time off of several days; there are situations where this is needed that do not qualify under FMLA (e.g., transitioning an elderly parent to assisted living).

While there are studies of availability of and utilization of formal arrangements and some studies of availability of informal arrangements (e.g., Do you have the flexibility you need?), little is known about the availability of STO, EPTO and EXTO in the workplace.

MacDermid's (2006) new model of the four dimensions of flexibility using the NSCW 2002 dataset shows that lower income workers are markedly different from all other income groups on two dimensions of flexibility—discretion and policy, but more similar on support and opportunity. (See Figure 1.)²² This is consistent with other evidence that lower income workers tend to work for employers who either do not have flexibility policies or the policies do not apply to them, and given the nature of their work and their positions in the organization, they have very little control over their schedules on a regular or as-needed basis.

Figure 1.

Dimensions of Flexibility by Family Income
 Shelly MacDermid, Purdue University, 2006
 2002 NSCW Dataset



**Access to Flexibility
 – WFD Database**

Lower wage workers work in environments with little access to traditional flexible arrangements and have very little discretion to use the "as-needed" flexibility taken for granted in higher wage, white collar environments.

Lower income workers in the WFD database have significantly less access to flexibility. They are less likely to say they have the flexibility they need; about half (52% of men and 53% of women) report they have the flexibility they need compared to two-thirds of higher income employees. (See Appendix, Table 3.) Less than 10% have used a flex-time schedule—altering their start and end times of their work schedule (8% of men and women) compared to 22% of workers in the \$25K to \$49.9K group (23% of men and 20% of women) and 40% of workers in the \$100K+ group (38% of men and 42% of women). Few workers in this sample (about 3%) use a compressed workweek schedule regardless of income. A multivariate analysis indicates that workers’ income is a powerful predictor of perceived access to flexibility compared to several demographic characteristics. (See Appendix, Table 4.) Employees with annual incomes of less than \$25,000 are much less likely to have flexibility than employees with higher incomes. Employees in the \$25,000 - \$49,999 household income range are also less likely to have flexibility than higher income workers.

Implications: Flexibility is an entirely different experience for lower wage workers. Lower wage workers, for the most part, work in environments with little access to traditional flexible arrangements and have very little discretion to use the “as-needed” flexibility that is taken for granted in higher wage, white collar environments.

Impacts of flexibility

Flexibility has powerful impacts on lower wage workers in terms of engagement, turnover and financial results.

Flexibility has powerful impacts on lower wage workers in terms of engagement, turnover, and financial results. Impacts on lower wage workers’ economic well-being and satisfaction may be somewhat stronger than for higher wage workers. Access to flexibility results in reduced absenteeism and higher employee retention, reduced cycle times, and enhanced customer service, and contributes to greater customer retention and higher profits. Some findings indicate that the impacts of flexibility are greater among lower wage workers than higher wage workers. It may be that the greatest effects of flexibility are in the pervasive lack of flexibility in working class jobs and the serious, negative repercussions of the current state. Low wage workers often suffer job action or job loss when they lack flexibility to handle routine family emergencies or predictable personal or family issues that require some leave but are not covered by FMLA. These frequent job changes have cumulative negative effects on wages and advancement.

Corporate Voices’ recent report, *The Business Case for Flexibility: An Imperative for Expansion*, which summarizes internal business data from 28 major U.S. companies, demonstrated that effective flexibility programs increase productivity drivers such as commitment and retention and have a direct impact on financial performance; these findings were documented for lower wage hourly as well as higher wage salaried workers. (See Table 5.)

Table 5

Impact of Flexibility on Commitment and Burnout by Job Types

	Company 1 Difference between employees who use flex work arrangements and those who don't.	Company 2 Difference between employees who "have the flex they need" and those who don't.	Company 3 Difference in scores between those who agree with this statement and those who don't. "My manager grants me enough flexibility to meet my personal/family responsibilities.
Commitment Score			
Exempt	+6%	+27%	+44%
Non- Exempt	+9%	+23%	+63%
Burnout Score			
Exempt	1.25 times higher for non-flex.	4.3 times higher for non-flex.	2 $\frac{2}{3}$ times higher for non-flex.
Non-Exempt	1.5 times higher for non-flex.	3.5 times higher for non-flex.	2 $\frac{1}{2}$ times higher for non-flex.

Source: Corporate Voices for Working Families. *The Business Case for Flexibility: An Imperative for Expansion*. (2005), Washington, D.C.

Job and workplace conditions can have stronger effects on low wage employees than others but differences between high and low wage employees in satisfaction and retention disappear when controlling for access to flexibility.²³ Frequent overtime requirements with little notice, fewer flexible work arrangements, and less support from supervisors and workplace climates contribute to higher job dissatisfaction, higher likelihood of seeking other jobs, greater job-related stress, and greater job interference with family. But the patterns of effects for low wage workers with flexibility are comparable to patterns for their higher wage counterparts: they are more satisfied with their jobs; less likely to seek other jobs; experience less job interference; experience less job related stress when they have more flexible work options; they believe they can use them without jeopardizing advancement; and they have more job autonomy. Analysis of the most recent national survey confirms the positive impacts of a flexible workplace for lower wage and income employees on engagement, retention, and life satisfaction. The impacts on job satisfaction, work-life spillover, and mental health are even greater for lower wage and income employees than for employees with higher wage and income status.²⁴

A new study reviewing union arbitrations revealed the severe consequences of lack of flexibility in working class and lower wage jobs, including discipline,

probation, loss of pay, and termination due to the inflexible schedules, mandatory overtime, rigid attendance, and vacation and sick leave policies extant in so many organizations.²⁵ The author notes that in many instances, workers were attending to serious family illnesses or children's school issues for which professional employees faced with similar circumstances could more easily navigate given their greater access to flexible work options and informal, "as-needed" flexibility.

Unreliable child care and higher prevalence of children with special care needs in this population intensify the need for parental availability.

Other studies confirm that for low wage workers, adjusting one's work schedule often means leaving one's current job and finding another given the lack of access to flexibility, especially occasional flexibility or flex-time.²⁶ Unreliable child care and higher prevalence of children with special care needs in this population intensify the need for parental availability. Nearly half of participants in one study had experienced some kind of sanction, including terminations, lost wages, denied promotions, and written and verbal warnings as a result of trying to meet family needs. For low wage workers, the high incidence of job changes, job sanctions and part-time hours all reduce annual incomes even though many individuals make more than \$10 per hour.

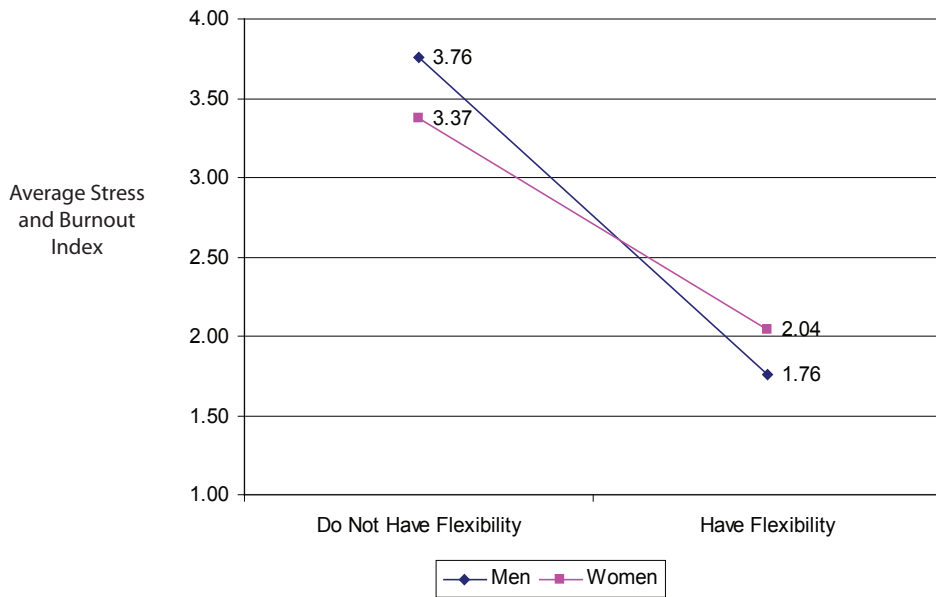
WFD Database

The impacts of flexibility on commitment/engagement, stress and burnout, and turnover intention are striking among lower income workers. We found in all cases, having flexibility had a large significant impact on these outcomes. Commitment/engagement is 50% higher for lower income workers who have flexibility compared to lower income workers who do not have flexibility. Stress and burnout is 45% lower for workers with flexibility than those without. Finally, intention to leave the organization within two years is 30% lower for workers who have flexibility compared to those lower income workers who do not have flexibility. (See Figures 2-4.)

In hierarchical linear modes used to examine the impacts of flexibility compared to various demographic and job factors on commitment/engagement, stress and burnout, and turnover intention among lower income workers, personal and family demographics, and job characteristics were entered before perceived flexibility.²⁷ We found that compared to all of the demographic and job characteristics tested, flexibility had the biggest impact on stress and burnout and engagement, and a significant effect on turnover intention. (See Appendix, Tables 6-8.)

Figure 2

Average Stress and Burnout Index for Low Wage Employees by Their Perceived Flexibility



The presence or absence of flexibility may be more critical for lower wage workers than other employees because the lack or absence of even the least flexibility can mean the difference between keeping or losing one's job, economic security, or poverty.

Figure 3

Average Engagement Index for Low Wage Employees by Their Perceived Flexibility

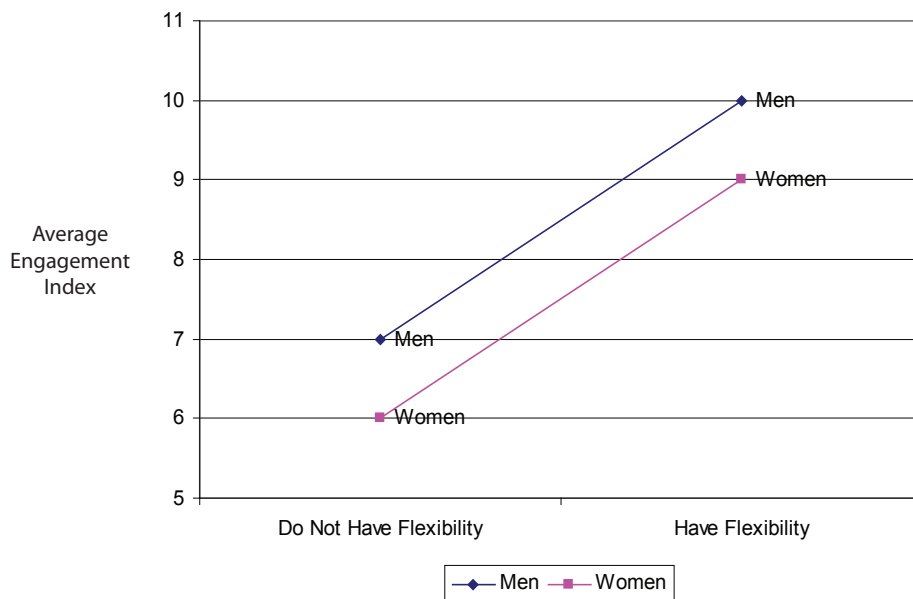
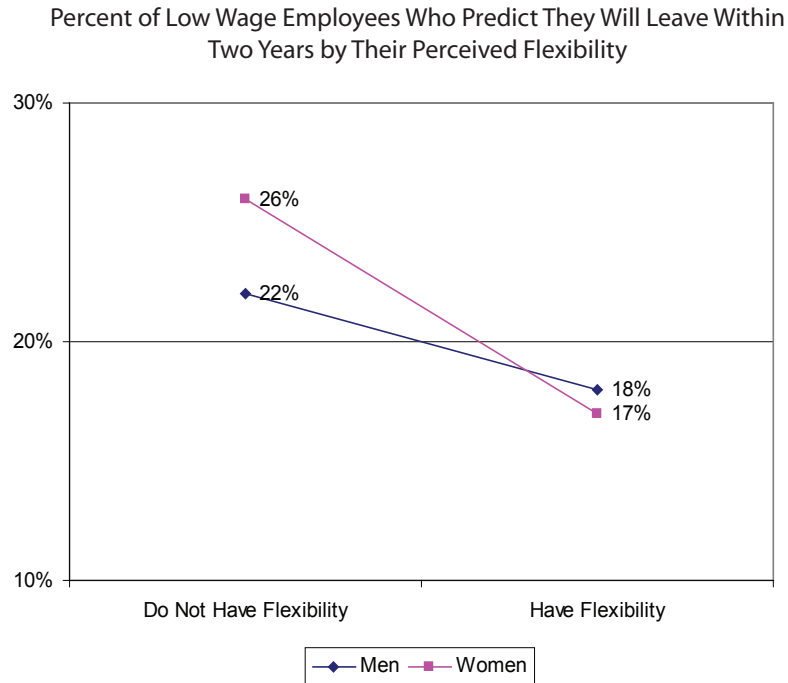


Figure 4



Implications: Similar to the findings for professional and managerial workers, flexibility has strong impacts on engagement, retention, and productivity for lower wage workers. These effects may be stronger and mitigate some of the job characteristics and working conditions that may differentially affect lower wage and hourly employees. The presence or absence of flexibility may be more critical for lower wage workers than other employees because the lack or absence of even the least amount of flexibility can mean the difference between keeping or losing one's job, economic security or poverty.

Barriers and challenges for flexibility

Among the perceived barriers to flexibility is a historic lack of trust in the discretion and judgement of lower income workers.

There are a number of barriers – both perceived and real – to the implementation of flexibility in lower income environments. Among the perceived barriers to flexibility is an historic lack of trust in the discretion and judgment of lower income workers, and the consequent prevailing management attitude that greater control of work processes and schedules is needed in lower income jobs. Business managers express concern about loss of control and also fear that more flexibility might raise costs. Other challenges are based in the nature and context of low wage jobs. These include lean staffing, need for coverage (often around the clock,

seven days a week) in production and customer service environments, and the influence of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and union controls which may limit experimentation with schedules.

A number of barriers and challenges to implementing flexibility for lower wage workers are closely linked to the nature of the jobs and working conditions. For production and service workers, keeping the line running, getting the product out the door, and providing service 24/7 or for extended hours of operation are of paramount importance. Personnel policies reflect the focus on coverage and productivity. For instance, in some environments, being more than seven minutes late is considered an occurrence of tardiness. In these environments, systems and policies for providing employees some control over their work hours that are successful for professional and managerial workers may not be appropriate for lower wage employees; different kinds of flexibility are required. For example, it is possible to develop effective coverage and back-up systems for workers who cannot report due to unavoidable family care responsibilities.²⁸

Another barrier stems from the assumption that workplace flexibility is available only by means of individualized arrangements negotiated between an individual worker and an individual supervisor. This model, developed primarily for professional jobs, is more suitable for professionals where knowledge workers have the skills and job autonomy to negotiate informal, individualized arrangements; this approach may not apply in settings where scheduling and coverage affect customers, production and co-workers, or where workers may not have the negotiating skills or relationships with their supervisors to transact such an arrangement.²⁹ Lack of scheduling systems which would allow managers to more carefully match business demands and employees' scheduling preferences and needs result in overstaffing and understaffing, last minute schedule changes, unscheduled overtime, unscheduled absences and disciplinary action against workers. Seniority systems also exacerbate scheduling issues when younger, newer employees who often have more family responsibilities end up with the least desirable work hours and the least control over their schedules. All of these scheduling challenges and lack of flexibility result in unwanted turnover which adds to unpredictable staffing, resource shortages, and quality and productivity issues. Lack of flexibility also limits the firm's ability to respond quickly to fluctuations in market demands, labor force shifts, or changes in the business cycle.

Since many hourly or lower wage employees work in environments where flexibility policies do not exist or do not cover them, company culture and attitudes of supervisors towards flexibility are extremely important. However, many managers of lower wage workers have very traditional attitudes towards flexibility, lack evidence or examples of successful implementation for lower wage workers, are skeptical about potential benefits, and fear it will be abused. Furthermore, lean staffing, higher productivity goals, and the expectation to do more with existing resources make flexibility seem like an anomaly to managers.

Current company and national employment policies also limit flexibility. “No-fault” progressive discipline systems and punitive personnel policies, designed to limit abuse, are regularly applied to lower wage workers but are rarely applied to professional and managerial workers. These result in disciplinary actions, and economic and career impacts for lower wage and hourly workers who need to attend to fairly routine and predictable family situations. Finally, the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), designed to protect workers and limit work hours, is proving to be a barrier to meaningful flexible scheduling which would balance work hours across weeks, months or annually.

Implications: To counter the perceived and real barriers, it will be important to document the over-riding benefits of flexibility to employers and employees. To date, few employers have quantified the results of their flexibility efforts with the low wage population.

Best practices and examples of flexibility

Manufacturing plants that are hiring younger workers are finding them less willing to work second shift and third shift jobs as spending time with family is becoming more important to this population.

Successful examples of flexibility for lower wage employees do exist, but they are not well publicized or widely understood. In recent years, several companies have successfully implemented flexibility for their lower wage workers including flexibility in work schedules and informal, “as-needed” flexibility. In light of anticipated labor shortages, flexibility often is seen as a way to meet business demands and the need for short-supply labor. For example, some employers in the call center industry are using telework as a competitive talent strategy rather than adopting an off-shoring or independent contractor strategy. Among Working Mother’s Top 100, Fortune 100 and AARP Best Employers are several organizations whose lower wage workers are essential to their business success; companies in the health care, retail, financial, manufacturing, and hospitality sectors are using flexible ways of working to attract and retain critical talent and respond to business needs. As new business niches emerge, some employers are designing their workforce strategies and work practices to harness the benefits of flexibility to attract and retain talent and compete more effectively. In several other countries, flexible schedules and part-time work for employees across the wage scale and in different work settings have already been successfully implemented.

Shifting workforce demographics and competition for workers amidst labor market shortages are contributing to the need for employers to provide greater flexibility as a strategy to attract and retain workers. Manufacturing plants that are hiring younger workers are finding them less willing to work second shift and third shift jobs as spending time with family is becoming more important to this population. Banks also are having more difficulty than in past years finding qualified candidates to fill openings in some markets. As the workforce ages, organizations are considering how flexible work practices might be implemented to engage the next generation.

The types of flexibility that may be possible and most beneficial for lower wage workers may be somewhat different from those for middle or higher wage workers due to the nature of their jobs and their personal and family needs. Flexible schedules and as-needed flexibility are both important. Beyond traditional types of flexible work arrangements, application of meaningful flexibility in lower income environments requires a range of flexibility options that embrace choice and control, that include episodic flexibility, that incorporate leave policy and that

limit mandatory or unscheduled overtime. To date, successful implementation of flexibility for lower wage workforces includes several areas that increase worker's choice and control over time:

- alternative work schedules—compressed work week, flexible start and end times, and part-time schedules
- scheduling systems that enable bidding for desired shifts and shift swapping
- personnel policies that enable episodic flexibility and short leaves—personal time in hour increments, vacation time in days rather than weeks, sick leave banks, and access to unpaid personal leaves

Current examples of successful implementation of flexibility in hourly and low wage environments include better use of technology; scheduling systems that workers can access and that allow self-scheduling; cross-training; staffing according to demand; use of temporary employees; and management practices that enable more flexibility such as setting work schedules far enough in advance; openness to innovation and experimentation; acceptance of alternative schedules; and giving employees more control over how work is accomplished.

The following examples, based on phone interviews and published reports, illustrate how some high-potential approaches have been successfully implemented in a few key organizations.

Alternative work schedules

Compressed workweeks have been successfully implemented in several industries.

- At the plant of a large consumer packaged goods company, three different operations schedules are available—a six days/week schedule, a five days/week schedule and a four days/week schedule. Employees can bid on jobs in any of these work systems based on their personal scheduling needs. Employees gravitate toward the schedule that best fits their needs.
- At some locations of a national corporation in the food industry, there are “alternative work schedules” where people can work three 12-hour shifts. In places that do have alternative schedules, there has been a positive impact.

Staffing positions with part-time employees has enabled employers to match customer demand to workforce preferences and to attract other segments of the labor pool.

- Most Alpine Access customer service representatives work part time. Alpine has found that this part-time model results in better job performance, higher retention and lower burnout. Shift preferences are given to their best performers. Typically, their employees are age 38-40 with some college education, retirees, people with disabilities, and stay-at-home parents.
- The call center for the retail branches of a national financial institution, responsible for reconciliation, hires with part-time schedules. These workers are often women returning to the workforce after leave, retirees, or college students.
- At PNC Bank, a member of The PNC Financial Services Group, the increased use of part-time employees has enhanced service during the hours when customers want to do their banking, whether in the branches or via the call center. This enhancement to staffing brings PNC closer to its customers and, simultaneously, reduces costs during off-peak hours, increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of the company.
- At JetBlue, most reservations "crewmembers" work part time (24 hours/week)—either three eight-hour shifts, four six-hour shifts, or four five-hour shifts plus one four-hour shift. They are eligible to pick up additional shifts. JetBlue does not pay overtime unless the additional hours are requested by the company. Crewmembers can exceed 40 hours with picked up shifts from other crewmembers; however, overtime will only be paid for the hours of overtime requested by the company.

Flexible scheduling systems

Flexible scheduling systems give workers more control and choice over their schedules, free managers' time, and better match business demand.

- In Sweden, several manufacturing, hospital, service companies, and government agencies use the Time Care self-scheduling system which enables employees to indicate their preferred hours of work and optimizes

staffing according to the peaks and valleys of demand, while taking into account employee preferences. Hours of work are scheduled by hours rather than by shift, workers can vary the start and length of daily work, and vary number of work hours for given periods.

The Swedish Time Care self-scheduling system enables employees to indicate their preferred hours of work and optimizes staffing according to the peaks and valleys of demand, while taking into account employee preferences.

- Alpine Access recruits and hires for specific projects/clients and their employees specify the total number of hours and which days they are interested in working. Employees go onto a web-based interface to enter the hours they want to work and hours they normally would not work, but could in an emergency (someone else calls in sick, etc.). The Resource Management Team is responsible for scheduling and making sure that there are an appropriate number of employees working at any time. They combine the information given by employees and match that to the forecast for volume of calls to come up with a schedule. If someone calls in sick, the team leader or account manager coordinates coverage.
- J.C. Penney's on-line scheduling system enables associates to request a preferred schedule, swap shifts with colleagues and request temporary schedule changes to attend to family or personal responsibilities. The on-line system gives lower wage workers more control over their schedules, minimizes management time spent monitoring worker schedules, and involves the team in developing solutions.
- Kraft Foods' Fast Adapts program provides greater scheduling flexibility for hourly workers including shift swapping, single-day vacations, and job sharing; the program also utilizes retirees to provide some of the coverage when employees and managers take time off. Plant managers are held accountable for developing flexible solutions in their own plants. Fast Adapts designs flexibility solutions that meet the needs of the 24-hour plant operations environment and responds to employees' needs for episodic or short-term flexibility that is assumed to be difficult in manufacturing plant or hourly work environments.
- At the manufacturing plants of a large consumer packaged goods company, employees have the option of a "Shift Trade" – finding a peer with whom to trade a shift. The employees complete a form and both agree to the schedule change. The employee needing coverage is responsible for finding someone with whom to switch.
- At the JetBlue Airways reservation center, there is an on-line trade board for individuals to post shifts they need covered or pick up additional shifts. Once a shift is picked up, the employees send an email to the Op-

erations department who oversees scheduling. All shift trades need to be submitted by 6:00 pm the day before the shift.

- At a large consumer packaged goods company, there is “shift preferencing” – every quarter, employees are given the opportunity to move to a different shift. When necessary, a more junior person is bumped to make room for a more senior person requesting a switch.

Personnel policies supporting greater flexibility—use of personal time and sick leave.

- Some manufacturing plants allow for vacation by the day—employees do not have to take a week at a time.
- At some manufacturing plants of a large consumer packaged goods company, employees can request one week unpaid leave of absence (for a death in the family, personal illness, etc.). Decisions are made on a case-by-case basis by the plant HR Manager and Assistant HR Managers.
- HEB Grocery Company offers MedBank, a sick-leave program which enables employees to use their personal time bank for their own medical appointments or illness, or for a family member; this unique program addresses one of the main issues for lower wage workers around family illness and medical needs. MedBank is one of the company’s most popular benefits; it has had positive impacts on recruiting and is a valued part of HEB’s being an employer of choice.

Several management practices support successful implementation of flexibility.

Staffing to meet business demands

- Many organizations hire people to work specific shifts. They post open positions and all employees have the option to “bid” for a different shift. The first shift (most desired) is often filled internally by employees previously on other shifts.
- To cover various shifts (i.e., 9-3 and 3-9), Alpine Access recruits employees specifically for shifts, thereby minimizing excess through their

recruitment and hiring practices.

- JetBlue strives to overstaff their reservation team by 15% to allow for emergency time off. If a shift is overstaffed due to less than anticipated demand, the operations team will offer "voluntary time off" to reduce the number of employees working.

**Cross training to
provide backup
coverage**

- One of the larger plants of a consumer packaged goods company has a "Relief Pool"—25 employees who are cross trained and can be plugged in to cover for any absence (whether several hours or a whole day or multiple days). Relief Pool employees are hired specifically into the Relief Pool and trained so they are able to fill in for any plant employee.

**Technology to
support virtual work,
work from home, and
virtual training**

- A consumer packaged goods company plant has installed a video conference system that enables employees to partake in distance learning. This allows for upgrading the skills of the workforce without requiring employees to travel for all courses. Training is usually in partnership with community colleges that are far from this rural plant. Multiple plants have video conferencing capabilities, allowing for people at one plant to train employees at another plant.
- Alpine Access indicates that turnover among home-based agents is 20-30%, considerably better than typical call centers where turnover is often 100-200%. Employees feel that working from home is a great perk and a more enjoyable way to work.
- Most of the 1100 JetBlue Airlines reservation crewmembers work from their homes. All live within 45 minutes to an hour of the reservations center in Utah—in case of technical difficulties, they must be able to work from the center. Training takes place at the reservation center; managers, support teams, and supervisors work from the center. JetBlue's at home

reservation crewmembers are almost all stay-at-home moms, students and retirees.

Use of temporary employees and retirees to meet needs

- The plants of a large consumer packaged goods company use temporary employees when coverage is needed. There are several advantages to using temporary employees to fill these needs—the employee gets a sense of the demands of the job and the employer is able to evaluate a potential future permanent employee. Many times, those who have worked in a temporary capacity are hired as permanent employees. The result has been lower turnover due to more educated hiring.
- Sodexo has “per diem workers” who are on-call substitutes prepared to fill in on little notice. Maintaining its own group of temporary employees is less expensive for the business than going through an outside temporary employment agency. In addition, the per diem workers who have proven themselves and shown they are dependable are often hired on a permanent basis when opportunities arise.
- Kraft Foods’ Fast Adapts program utilizes retirees to provide some coverage when employees and managers take time off.

Flexibility in office environments

- In office environments of a national corporation in the food industry, lower wage workers have access to working from home, compressed work weeks, and summer hours (40 hours completed by noon on Friday); individuals work out arrangements with their supervisors.
- At Wachovia, flexible work options are one of the most utilized benefits for hourly workers, and offering flexibility has had positive impacts on ease of filling entry-level positions and merging banks with different schedules.

Successful implementation of flexibility in Europe

Flexible schedules and part-time work for employees across the wage scale and in different work settings have already been successfully implemented in several other countries. A number of European Union countries (including the UK, Netherlands, Germany, Sweden, Belgium and France) provide workers with the right to part-time work or flexible schedules and have enacted legislation to prohibit discrimination against part-time workers.

Implications: There are examples of successful implementation of flexibility in lower wage environments. These examples of flexible work practices provide more control and choice to employees and have positive results for the business.

Conclusions: Implications for research and practice

The potential benefits of flexibility have been largely unrealized.

The evidence is clear: the potential benefits of flexibility—for enhancing the well-being and productivity of lower wage workers as well as the effectiveness and nimbleness of the organizations that employ them—have been largely unrealized. It is also clear that closing this gap between potential and actual cannot be accomplished by simply extrapolating employer experience with flexibility in moderate income and professional jobs. Instead, to catalyze expansion of flexibility's benefits in lower wage environments, it will be necessary to answer several key questions:

To encourage expanded thinking and experimentation: Beyond traditional and typical formal arrangements, what are the kinds of flexibility that are meaningful and practical for lower wage workers and their employers?

To motivate experimentation and expanded accessibility: What are the measurable business and personal benefits of flexibility in lower wage jobs?

To inform successful implementation and overcome perceived and real barriers: What are the key elements for successful implementation of meaningful flexibility in lower wage jobs? How does flexibility need to be structured in different job situations and industries? Can current examples be translated and replicated in other environments?

These questions must guide the next phase of research and inquiry, so that, as workplace flexibility increasingly becomes part of the national dialogue, lower wage jobs are not excluded from that dialogue. Addressing these questions has the potential for improving recruitment and retention as well as increasing organizational effectiveness and productivity in the myriad industries that employ low wage workers (production-line workers, call center customer service reps, bank tellers, data processing clerks, retail sales associates, food service workers, housekeeping and maintenance workers, health aides, etc.). Moreover, focusing increased flexibility research on lower wage workers will help to assure that these employees—for whom the positive effects of flexibility may very well be even more powerful than for any others—have increased access to the kinds of flexibility that enable them to come to work and be effective.

Appendices

Tables

Table 1
Personal and Family Demographics by Employee Family Income

	< \$25K		\$25K - \$49.99K		\$50K - \$74.99K		\$75K - \$99.99K		\$100K+	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Distribution of Family Income for Male and Female Workers	6%	14%	19%	30%	30%	22%	20%	14%	26%	20%
Gender Distribution within Family Income Category	34%	66%	44%	56%	63%	37%	64%	36%	61%	39%
Percent of Workers who are Married/Partnered	34%	32%	62%	52%	84%	77%	92%	87%	94%	92%
Percent of Workers with Full Time Working Spouse	9%	18%	24%	39%	38%	67%	49%	81%	51%	87%
Percent of Married Workers with Full Time Working Spouse	27%	57%	39%	76%	46%	87%	54%	93%	54%	94%
Age:										
Less than 25 years old	35%	29%	8%	10%	2%	3%	0%	1%	1%	2%
25-34 years old	41%	29%	40%	33%	28%	37%	22%	32%	13%	27%
35-44 years old	12%	20%	28%	28%	34%	33%	41%	35%	38%	42%
45 +	11%	23%	25%	29%	35%	28%	37%	32%	48%	30%
Percentage of Workers Who are Minorities	46%	52%	26%	34%	19%	20%	16%	16%	12%	17%
Percentage of Workers Who Have Children Under 18	20%	37%	42%	39%	53%	45%	54%	51%	44%	48%
Percentage of Parents Who Are Single Parents	3%	20%	5%	12%	2%	4%	1%	3%	1%	2%
Percentage of Workers with Elder Care Responsibilities	9%	10%	11%	15%	10%	13%	10%	12%	11%	14%

Source: WFD Database, n=154,353.

Reference: Page 8.

Table 2
Job Characteristics by Employee Family Income

	< \$25K		\$25K - \$49.99K		\$50K - \$74.99K		\$75K - \$99.99K		\$100K+	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Percentage of Workers Who Work Part-Time	33%	39%	5%	16%	1%	9%	1%	6%	1%	8%
Percentage of Married Workers Whose Spouse/Partner Works Part-Time	22%	20%	21%	7%	18%	5%	18%	3%	15%	2%
Percentage of Workers Whose Spouse/Partner Works Part-Time	8%	6%	13%	4%	15%	4%	16%	2%	14%	2%
Percentage of Workers Who Work the Regular Day Shift	55%	73%	51%	78%	61%	80%	76%	87%	90%	95%
Percentage of Workers Who Work Other Shifts	45%	27%	49%	22%	39%	20%	24%	13%	10%	5%
Percentage of Workers Who are Non-Exempt	82%	93%	76%	75%	57%	59%	33%	42%	10%	18%
Employee Tenure:										
0 - 2 Years	67%	47%	35%	25%	22%	20%	15%	17%	16%	14%
3 - 4 Years	4%	3%	13%	6%	12%	10%	11%	8%	7%	8%
5+ Years	29%	51%	52%	69%	66%	70%	74%	75%	83%	78%

Source: WFD Database, n=154,353.

Reference: Page 10.

Table 3
Access to Flexibility by Employee Family Income

	< \$25K		\$25K - \$49.99K		\$50K - \$74.99K		\$75K - \$99.99K		\$100K+	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Percentage Who Work 39 or Fewer Hours Per Week (n=103,710)	43%	46%	12%	23%	7%	20%	6%	18%	4%	16%
Percentage of Workers Who Feel They Have the Flexibility They Need (n=43,156)	52%	53%	48%	62%	59%	66%	67%	59%	69%	61%
Percentage of Workers Who Have Used Flex-Time (n=66,847)	8%	8%	23%	20%	35%	28%	39%	40%	38%	42%

Source: WFD Database.

Reference: Page 14.

Table 4
The Relationship of Individual and Organizational Characteristics to Employee Perception of Having the Flexibility They Need at Work

Variable	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3			Model 4		
	B	SE	t	B	SE	t	B	SE	t	B	SE	t
<i>Intercept (B0)</i>												
Intercept (y00)	1.08***	.209	5.17	1.71***	.337	5.06	1.89***	.373	5.08	2.06***	.384	5.37
Pharmaceutical	--			-1.14*	.381	-2.99	-1.10*	.391	-2.81	-1.19	.565	-2.11
Manufacturing	--			-.713	.563	-1.27	-.703	.565	-1.25	-.751	.500	-1.50
Finance	--			-0.618	.457	-1.35	-0.607	.458	-1.33	-.465	.666	-.699
Mean Income<50K	--		--					--		-.352	1.31	-.270
Gender	--		--				-0.192***	.053	-3.63	-.192***	.031	-.616
Spouse/Partner	--		--				.013	.064	.204	-.061*	.043	-1.42
Elder Care	--		--				-.096*	.042	-2.29	-.091*	.046	-1.98
Child<18	--		--				.016	.037	.432	.007	.034	.232
Age ¹												
25-34.9 years	--		--				-.162	.163	-.992	-.249**	.088	-2.80
35-44.9 years	--		--				-.289	.167	-1.73	-.399***	.090	-4.45
45-54.9 years	--		--				-.209	.174	-1.20	-.321***	.091	-3.54
55+	--		--				.025	.188	.134	-.074	.105	-.707
Household Income ²												
<25K										-.372***	.084	-4.42
25-49.9K										-.143*	.052	-2.77
50-74.9K										-.065	.043	-1.50
75-99.9K										.016	.044	.368

Source: WFD Database, n=24,244; studies=13.

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

¹ Individuals less than 25 years old are the reference group.

² Individuals who reported a household income \geq \$100K are the reference group.

Reference: Page 14.

Table 6

The Relationship of Individual and Perceived Flexibility to Employee Engagement among Lower Wage and Income Workers

Variable	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
	B	SE	t	B	SE	t	B	SE	t
Intercept (B0)									
Intercept (y00)	8.93***	.462	19.33	9.23***	.520	17.75	9.17***	.484	18.96
Gender		--		.046	.183	.250	.021	.176	.120
Spouse/Partner		--		.529*	.204	2.60	.477*	.196	2.44
Child<18		--		-.043	.199	-.217	-.113	.191	-5.92
Age ¹									
25-34.9 years		--		-.453	.274	-1.65	-.475	.263	-1.81
35-44.9 years		--		-.266	.298	-.894	-.192	.285	-.673
45-54.9 years		--		-.615	.341	-1.81	-.635	.326	-1.95
55+		--		1.11*	.546	2.03	.940	.523	1.80
Perceived Flexibility							2.65***	.219	12.08

Source: WFD Database, n=3,125, studies=12.

*p <0.05, **p <0.01, ***p<0.001

¹ Individuals less than 25 years old are the reference group.

Reference: Page 17.

Table 7

The Relationship of Individual and Organizational Characteristics and Perceived Flexibility to Employee's Level of Stress and Burnout among Lower Wage and Income Workers

Variable	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3			Model 4			Model 5		
	B	SE	t	B	SE	t	B	SE	t	B	SE	t	B	SE	t
Intercept (B0)															
Intercept (y00)	2.65***	.188	14.1	2.86***	.310	9.21	2.40***	.346	6.94	2.55***	.281	9.06	2.78***	.317	8.774
Pharmaceutical	--			.019	.645	.030	.076	.671	.113	.428	.552	.775	-.056	.627	-.090
Manufacturing	--			-.250	.490	-.510	-.367	.510	-.719	-.414	.403	-1.03	-.846	.458	-1.84
Finance	--			-.428	.427	-1.00	-.381	.448	-.850	-1.15*	.450	-2.56	-1.40*	.525	-2.67
Mean Income<50K										2.38	.944	2.52	2.4	1.10	2.25
Gender		--					.432***	.103	4.19	.432***	.103	4.19	.408***	.100	4.12
Spouse/Partner		--					.168	.118	1.43	.175	.118	1.49	.200	.113	1.76
Elder Care		--					.499*	.165	3.02	.493**	.165	2.98	.423**	.159	2.67
Child<18		--					-.427***	.115	-3.73	-.424***	.115	-3.70	-.369***	.110	-3.34
Age ¹															
25-34.9 years		--					.525***	.148	3.54	.528***	.148	3.56	.473***	.143	3.32
35-44.9 years		--					.590***	.166	3.55	.595***	.166	3.58	.474**	.160	2.96
45-54.9 years		--					.537***	.187	2.87	.546**	.187	2.92	.492**	.180	2.73
55+		--					.288	.257	1.12	.285	.257	1.11	.318	.247	1.29
Flexyn3		--											-1.78***	.115	-15.57

Source: WFD Database, n=2,975, studies=10.

*p <0.05, **p <0.01, ***p<0.001

¹ Individuals less than 25 years old are the reference group.

Reference: Page 17.

Table 8

The Relationship of Individual and Organizational Characteristics and Perceived Flexibility to Employee's Intent to Stay among Lower Wage and Income Workers

Variable	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3			Model 4			Model 5			Model 6		
	B	SE	t	B	SE	t	B	SE	t	B	SE	t	B	SE	t	B	SE	t
Intercept (B0)	4.68***	147	38.87	5.00***	.143	34.95	4.95***	.148	33.37	4.93***	.152	32.40	4.94***	.153	32.34	4.98***	.125	39.79
Intercept (y00)																		
Pharmaceutical	--			-.873*	.204	-4.27	-.866*	.206	-4.20	-.847*	.212	-3.99	-.848*	.213	-3.99	-.700	.184	-3.80
Manufacturing	--			-.394	.205	-1.92	-.396	.206	-1.92	-.377	.212	-1.78	-.378	.212	-1.78	-.343	.171	-2.01
Finance	--			.000	.202	.000	.008	.203	.041	.024	.210	.115	.015	.210	.069	-.354	.240	-1.47
Mean Income<50K	--			--			--			--			--		1.01	.475	2.13	
Gender	--			--			-.024***	.024	-.993	-.023	.024	-.948	-.025	.024	-1.01	-.024	.024	-1.01
Spouse/Partner	--			--			.059*	.029	2.05	.058*	.029	2.05	.060*	.028	2.12	.060*	.028	2.11
Elder Care	--			--			.046	.037	1.23	.049	.037	1.31	.047	.037	1.26	.045	.037	1.21
Age ¹																		
25-34.9 years	--			--			-.067	.041	1.64	.061	.041	1.49	.067	.041	1.64	.067	.041	1.65
35-44.9 years	--			--			.079	.041	1.92	.076	.041	1.85	.082*	.041	1.98	.082*	.041	1.99
45-54.9 years	--			--			.019	.046	.418	.015	.046	.324	.022	.046	.476	.022	.046	.474
55+	--			--			-.170**	.081	-2.11	-.173*	.081	-2.15	-.167*	.081	2.08	-.167*	.081	-2.07
Fulltime										-.064	.051	-1.26						
Flexyn3	--			--			--			.066*	.029	2.24	-.064*	.029	2.18	.063*	.029	2.17

Source: WFD Database, n=1,414, studies=8.

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

¹ Individuals less than 25 years old are the reference group.

Reference: Page 17.

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Organizations and individuals who have conducted research and/or have experience with flexibility for lower wage workers who were consulted for background and context:

Emily Allen, AARP Foundation

James T. Bond, Families and Work Institute

Marcie Pitt-Catsoupes, Center on Aging and Work/Workplace Flexibility, Boston College

Chai Feldblum, Workforce 2010 Project

Netsy Firestein, Labor Project for Working Families

Lonnie Golden, Center for Work and Family Research, Penn State

Jacquelyn B. James, Center for Work and Family, Boston College

Ellen Ernst Kossek, Michigan State University

Andris Kreicbergs, Karolinska Institute, Stockholm, Sweden

Shelley MacDermid, Center for Families, Purdue University

Jennifer Swanberg, School of Social Work, University of Kentucky

Harvey Thomson, The BOLD Initiative

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Endnotes

- 1 This report was researched and written by Amy Richman, Arlene Johnson and Lisa Buxbaum with assistance from Karen Noble and Sandee Shulkin of WFD Consulting. The report was prepared for Corporate Voices for Working Families with funding from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation.
- 2 With funding from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, Corporate Voices for Working Families and WFD Consulting recently collaborated on the report, *The Business Case for Flexibility: An Imperative for Expansion*, which summarized internal business data from 28 major U.S. companies that collectively demonstrate a powerful business case for management and professional flexibility; effective flexibility programs increase productivity drivers such as commitment and retention and have a direct impact on financial performance. The report was well-received by the media and the business community. The report spurred the convening of a Flexibility Summit, at which senior business leaders released a joint Statement of Support for Flexibility. The Flexibility Report generated significant earned media and the findings have been presented at eleven conferences in the first six months of 2006.
- 3 For example, this was the finding reported in *The Business Impact of Flexibility: An Imperative for Expansion*, the research summary of internal business data from 28 major U.S. companies prepared by Corporate Voices for Working Families and WFD Consulting, with funding from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation. It has also been corroborated for the national workforce in the 1997 and 2002 waves of the Families and Work National Study of the Changing Workforce which is based on a nationally representative sample of U.S. workers.
- 4 The WFD corporate dataset includes 39 work-life needs assessment surveys conducted in 29 large U.S. firms and organizations between 1997 and 2005. The database contains data on employee demographics, both personal and job-related, work-life and work environment topics, including dependent care arrangements, work-life support, access to and attitudes about flexibility, satisfaction with existing policies and programs, and outcome measures along multiple personal and job dimensions. For this study, data representing approximately 150,000 employees from 12 organizations were analyzed where information on both income and flexibility were available. The analyses include employees from financial and professional services, manufacturing, technology and pharmaceutical industry sectors. The companies in the WFD dataset are large employers in industries where the majority of workers are middle and high wage earners. Lower income employees in these organizations who work full time are also covered by benefits and policies that provide paid vacation, sick leave, medical benefits, access to flexibility and so forth. Compared to many other types of lower income workers, they have more access to the benefits and policies that enable them to have and use formal and informal flexibility. As the analyses will show, access to and use of flexibility varies by income in this sample as well.
- 5 “National Compensation Survey: Occupational Wages in the United States, July 2004, Supplementary Tables.” U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. August 2005.
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- 10 Dodson, Lisa, Tiffany Manuel, and Ellen Bravo. (Radcliffe Public Policy Center and 9to5 National Association of Working Women). “Keeping Jobs and Raising Families in Low-Income America: It Just Doesn’t Work.” Presidents and Fellows of Harvard University, 2002. 23 March 2006 <<http://www.radcliffe.edu/research/pubpol/boundaries.pdf>>.
- 11 Urban Institute. “Low-Income Working Families: Facts and Figures Assessing the New Federalism.” 2005 <http://www.urban.org/url.cfm?ID=900832>
- 12 The WFD database contains broad family income categories: under \$25,000, \$25,000 - \$49,999, \$50,000 - \$74,999, \$75,000 - \$99,999, and \$100,000 and above. For these analyses, we define respondents with family incomes below \$25,000 as lower wage and lower income. While \$25,000 is somewhat higher than the more strict definition of lower income based on federal poverty guidelines, in these organizations, employees with family incomes in this lowest category are most definitely the lowest paid and constitute the bottom 9%, ranging from between 4% to 30%, depending on industry.
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20 Chai Feldblum, Georgetown University Workforce 2010 Project, personal communication.

21 Bond, James T., Ellen Galinsky, Stacy C. Kim, Erin Brownfield. “2005 National Study of Employers.” (Alfred P. Sloan Foundation & Families and Work Institute).

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23 Bond, James T. (2003) “The Impact of Job and Workplace Conditions on Low-Wage and Income Employees and their Employers.” New York: Families and Work Institute.

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25 Williams, Joan C. “One Sick Child Away From Being Fired: When ‘Opting Out’ Is Not an Option.” (Work Life Law: UC Hastings College of Law) San Francisco: University of California, 2006.

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27 For this more comprehensive analysis we included lower wage workers (all workers with incomes of less than \$25K) and lower income families (two wage earners with combined family income less than \$50K). The rationale for this definition enables us to include employees who are both lower wage and lower income (family income below \$25K) and other employees who are also in lower wage positions but whose combined family incomes are slightly higher. Using this second definition, we find that 19% of the WFD client database sample can be categorized as lower wage/lower income.

28 Williams, Joan C. “One Sick Child Away From Being Fired: When ‘Opting Out’ Is Not an Option.” (Work Life Law: UC Hastings College of Law) San Francisco: University of California, 2006.

29 *Ibid.*

30 New America Foundation. “Working Families’ Catch 22: Inflexibility or Part-Time Penalty.” Apr 2004. 23 Mar 2006. <http://www.newamerica.net/Download_Docs/pdfs/Pub_File_1549_1.pdf>.

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