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# Is Your Business Ready for a 4 Day Work Week?

By Samantha Sim

**F**ive years ago Lorne Marr made an unorthodox decision about his employees' working hours. At the time, Marr's Markham-based firm LSM Insurance was a small business with six employees. He wanted a way to incentivize his staff but couldn't afford to give a pay increase, so he introduced four-day workweeks.

"Our team still loves it," says Marr, Director of New Business Development. "They're spending less time commuting to work, they're saving on gas and it's reducing their stress."

Marr's employees may only work four days, but they still put in 40-hour weeks. LSM Insurance is open five days a week, employees rotate their day off so that the company can still serve customers. Marr says his employees like the shorter weeks because they're getting more value for their work, taking away a day's commute

Marr acknowledges that this system is more conducive to smaller, more nimble teams. However, he does believe that larger companies could achieve something similar to what he's done.

For teams looking to implement a four-day workweek Marr says it's very important to have a tracking system in place to evaluate the productivity of employees.

"You should ensure there's a system in place to measure an employee's work results. Productivity should be better when you switch to a four-day workweek," says Marr. "But, you still want to make sure there's measures in place to make sure productivity isn't slipping."

Another important factor, Marr says, is to ensure your organization has a team environment that is suitable for a four-day workweek.

## The four-day work week isn't a new concept.

saves them money, meaning they make more per hour.

The four-day workweek isn't a new concept. It originated in the 19th century as labour theorists predicted new technologies would make workers' lives easier. They believed these new machines would take over most of the grunt work and leave workers more time for leisure. More recently, during 2008-2009, it was touted as a way to prevent layoffs during the recession.

Under this new plan the LSM Insurance team can also adjust their working hours to avoid peak traffic, have the freedom of working from home or office and decide which day off best works for them. As long as their work gets done, each person's schedule is really up to them.

"It takes a team effort to create a schedule of rotating days off. The team has to be willing to work together so that everyone gets the day they need and the business still stays open," he says.

Despite additional scheduling needs, Marr says the four-day workweek is worth it because it gives value to employees and allows for more focused work.

"I don't think people have to work 24/7," he says. "Nowadays people are always checking their emails and working at all different times of the day. That's not necessarily productive. Working a lot doesn't mean you're working productively." ▣



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