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**ЭФЕКТИВНІСТЬ
ЧОТИРИДЕННОГО РОБОЧОГО
ТИЖНЯ В УМОВАХ
«ІДЕАЛЬНОГО ШТОРМУ»**

**EFFICIENCY OF A FOUR-DAY
WORKING WEEK IN "PERFECT
STORM" CONDITIONS**

Анотація: У роботі розглядаються переваги та недоліки переходу до чотириденного робочого тижня у сучасних умовах «ідеального шторму». Досліджуються приклади різних країн світу, де ця практика була введена на той чи інший період.

Ключові слова: чотириденний робочий тиждень, продуктивність, концепція «work-life balance», робочі години.

Abstract: This research paper explores the advantages and disadvantages of the transition to a four-day work week in today's "perfect storm" conditions. Examples of different countries where this practice was introduced for one or another period are studied.

Keywords: four-day work week, productivity, «work-life balance» concept, working hours.

Radical changes in the modern world are happening faster and faster. Moreover, over the past few years, they have become sharply negative, which allows us to talk about life in the conditions of a "perfect storm" [1].

At the same time, business processes are forced to change, since many of them no longer meet the existing realities. Thus, worker who has normal working week with more weekends is more productive than overworked one. That's why nowadays 4-day working week, which means that employee will work 28 hours and have 3-day weekend instead of two, is becoming more and more popular.

Back in 2016, some scientists started talking about the fact that the VUCA world was replaced by the world of BANI – brittle, anxious, non-linear and incomprehensible [2]. And at the same time, the first significant experiments on the introduction of a four-day working week appeared.

Many companies thinking about 4-day working week for their employees, and several countries and companies have already tried such way - and got the ambiguous results.

For example, Sweden has made several experiments in 2015 to define the significance of working shorter hours. The proposal was to try 6-hour workdays instead of 8-hour ones without loss of pay. The reaction was mixed. On the one hand, nobody wants to pay money for not working, as one deputy mayor has said to the New York Times.

On the other hand, the experiment ended in success in some case. For instance, the university hospital's orthopedics unit switched eighty nurses and doctors over to a six-hour workday and hired new staff to make up for the lost time. The response from the medical workers was positive. Yet the experiment also faced a lot of criticism and was not renewed for a longer period [3].

Andrew Barnes, a New Zealand-based entrepreneur and philanthropist who founded New Zealand's largest corporate trustee company, Perpetual Guardian, in February 2018 announced the company's trial transition to a four-day working week.

After 2 months, Barnes said that due to this innovation, employees got more time to pay attention to their personal lives. The number of those who felt they had a work-life balance rose from 54% (according to a survey in November 2017) to 78%.

Until July 2018 company's productivity has grown up 20%, staff stress levels down, customer engagement levels up more than 30%, revenue remaining stable and costs decreasing [2].

In Iceland, the trials of a four-day week run by the government included about 2,500 workers, which amounts to about 1% of Iceland's working population. Preschools, offices, social service providers and hospitals took part. Productivity improved in the majority of workplaces, moreover, employees reported feeling less stressed and at risk of burnout, and said their health and work-life balance had improved [5].

In early 2022, Panasonic's CEO also announced that the company is introducing an optional four-day working week. In their free time, employees can do volunteer work or find part-time work on the side [6].

Talking about advantages, the most important is that 4-day work decreases stress level. Stress contributes to decreased organizational performance, decreased employee overall performance, poor quality of work and absenteeism because of the health problems such as anxiety, emotional disorder, work life imbalance, depression [7].

At the same time, 4-day week will help to increase worker's satisfaction and teamwork without even harming their productivity or company output.

Moreover, in the report "Stop the clock: the environmental benefits of a shorter working week" that was published in May 2021, the analysis indicated that shifting to a 4-day working week by 2025 could shrink the UK's annual carbon footprint by 127 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions, address some of the hardest to decarbonise emissions from international transport and manufacturing, and reduce the outsourcing of pollution to poorer countries [8]

There are also disadvantages. The main one is the wrong approach. A lot of owners of business confused the concept of a four-day work week with compressed hours. Workers who are expected to still work 35 hours, but across 4 days will actually show decreased levels of productivity and it can also impact employees' engagement, work-life balance and overall happiness. To achieve the right effects, a four-day working week should consist of standard seven-hour workday [9].

Another question is which day to choose to be taken off. For workers better a flexible day off, so they can choose free day spontaneously. It can bring a lot of problems to the company. If every workers take different day off, it will be so confusing. The social test proved that Friday is the best day to take off, because you are focused on your work, don't think about weekend and then you have 3 days to rest.

To sum up, the 4-day week is really good solution to fight with unproductiveness and laziness. Our world is developing so fast and we need to find and deploy new ways. At the same time, it is important to remember that this is just a tool that, if used incorrectly, can lead to undesirable consequences.

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