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Research Paper on the Benefits of 4-day Work Weeks

As the COVID-19 pandemic took control of the world, workers everywhere had to adapt to a new form of labor: remote work. This was met with a variety of reactions from fear of losing one's job to thriving in the comfort of one's home. For example, while remote work is impossible for workers with blue-collar jobs like construction, other industries such as Tech experienced no difference as engineers could simply write their software sitting from home. However, as the pandemic has lasted for over two years, many companies have not only successfully adapted, but also increased their productivity through remote work. In fact, a study by Owl Labs suggests, "On average, those who work from home spend 10 minutes less a day being unproductive, work one more day a week, and are 47% more productive".

These results bring to question the lapse in productivity exhibited by workers in an in-person setting compared to that of a remote workplace. People clearly have the capability of completing more work in a given time, so why didn't we see the same levels of productivity before the pandemic? The research by Goff-Dupont et. al explains this phenomenon via Parkinson's law, stating that "work 'expands' to fill the time you allot for it". Essentially, workers in an office environment are given too much time to complete their assigned work, which results in a waste of time in the form of unnecessary meetings, discussions etc.

Although one could argue that work in companies is largely conducted in teams and collaborating with a shorter work week would be more difficult, this issue can be avoided with proper coordination and responsiveness among workers as demonstrated by Goff-Dupont et.al. In her study, Goff-Dupont ran an experiment with her team, who work in the newsletter industry, by

switching to a 4-day (32-hour) week for 9 weeks. During the experiment, they recorded quantitative data such as the number of views they received on an article, and qualitative data in terms of her colleagues' general experience. Overall, the data shows that their readership increased by 5.2% during the 9 weeks and their newsletter subscriber base also grew by 8%¹. Additionally, one of her colleagues commented, "This week I had to work with a ton of different people. Thankfully, all of them were very responsive [and] I was able to get everything on my list done!". As evidenced, there was no limitation in collaboration with the shortened work week. In fact, the members not only had a better experience but also increased their own productivity reflecting positively on the overall success of the group. Overall, based on Goff-Dupont's and Bolt's data, we can see that 4 day work weeks can be beneficial in labor that is centered around meeting deadlines.

1. Goff-Dupont, Sarah. "The data doesn't lie: what we learned when we tried a 4-day workweek". Atlassian. September 23, 2021.

[https://www.atlassian.com/blog/teamwork/4-day-workweek-productivity-wellbeing-result](https://www.atlassian.com/blog/teamwork/4-day-workweek-productivity-wellbeing-results)