

## Transcription - Case Study: Team Agreement On Hybrid Work Days

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Welcome back, I'm Kim Baillie, she's Fulyana Orsborn and this is Inside Exec. Today we have a case study for you and Fulyana is going to outline what we're going to do.

Thank you. I've got this question from one of our listeners that said, at the moment the hot topic we're all talking about is how many days you work from the office and the team is talking about whether it's two days, three days, what hours, how, etc.

They're nearly all in favor of working hybrid. I personally, she said that she personally, does not want to work from home. She is much more comfortable working from the office, but she's a bit reluctant to voice that because she feels that maybe the team will be like she's not supporting what the majority want and that she feels that she might come across like she's trying to impress or try hard. Her question to us is, what's the best way to deal with that?

So is this a situation where everyone has to work the same? They can't individually choose, it has to be everyone works from home or everyone works in the office or everyone works hybrid?

It's a given that they will all work hybrid, but the discussion is around, is it three days and which three days and a bit of flexibility within that, but saying overall we're looking for three days in the office or two days from home or something like that. We all have to be here on X day.

Then is the decision based on them voting or is it going to be them making a recommendation? Is there consensus or is there voting happening?

It's not voting. I think management said, look discuss it amongst yourselves and then come up with the thoughts and then we'll try and accommodate it with what we will work as well.

And so this person who wants to work only in the office, is there a reason why they don't want to do the hybrid thing?

For this person, they're saying I am much more focused when I work in the office. I know that not everybody's there at the same time. I also like to learn by observing and listening. The other thing is, she plans the discipline of getting up in the morning, getting ready and making the journey to work, getting in that mindset and it's all about work today, no interruptions. Then the same, she enjoys the same at the opposite end of the day, going home and then switching off work. I think she feels it suits her better. It works better for her. She is more productive and all of that. So how to tackle it is what we will offer now.

One of the things is to say, look the whole thing to remember is about working from home and hybrid and all of that, is about giving people some flexibility and balance. And this is not one size fits all. People might prefer to start at seven a.m. in the morning, some will say I can't start till nine because dropping kids off or whatever whatever. So I think it allows that person to input and I don't believe she should feel that she's being disloyal to the team or anything like that.

It is exactly the same as when what we used to call flexi time was introduced. We had anywhere between seven and nine thirty to start any time between four and six to finish. And there was a period of time in the day where everybody was there together. There was, at that time, pressure put on people in certain areas to start at a certain time and others couldn't do it. I think it's a matter of just being straight up honest. You know, in those days, it was about can't start at that time because I can't get a bus before this time in the morning, it won't get me here until or I've got these other things that have to be done before I start work but when I work I'm focused and I can stay this extra bit of time because that fits into the other things.

I think that perhaps a generation has forgotten that that's what it was like. To me, honesty is always the best path to follow. If you give people a reason that they can understand, they don't have to agree with it, but if they can understand your reasoning and feel that that works for you and you're doing that because you're supporting the team, then that's the way to go.

I think that the best thing is to say, I like the discipline. I need the discipline of coming in and that makes me work better for everybody. I can be a better support to everyone. I can do the things that you all need me to do if I come into the office every day. I appreciate that you've got these other skills that mean that you can work this other way. I can't do it.

And it's as simple as that, not a confrontation. It's not a value judgment. It's just simply saying, I work differently. No different to when flexi time was first introduced. I can't be there at seven o'clock but I can be there at 8.30 and I can give you everything you need from 8.30 to 6.

I'll totally agree. One thing to remember, just because you don't go a hundred percent with a recommendation or within the team, doesn't mean it's right or wrong. It's what works. The other thing is, what's very very important about this by her choosing to do it this way, she's contributing more and not adversely impacting anyone. It's actually a plus rather than a minus.

So I would say definitely go ahead, I certainly would if I was in that situation and I wouldn't see it as anything other than, I respect that you need that and then I would expect people to respect that I can only do from these hours or the day.

But I think too, we have to acknowledge that it may well be in her speaking up and saying these things, may well give someone else in the group who is not quite so confident the opportunity to say well, actually I want to work this way and open up the discussion a bit more, rather than just say the majority of people saying Tuesday Wednesday Thursday but that doesn't work for me.

This is exactly right in her situation I think it's very very doable and it's a plus not a minus so the confident talk about it openly, exactly what you just told us and do it. It's about the individual's contribution to the team and the best way they contribute to the team is to work in this way. Now that we have the opportunity to do that we should be embracing it in all its forms, not just looking for the common solution, the the lowest common denominator solution, and having people who are uncomfortable with it because that just creates further problems down the line where you get to a stage where you feel like you're not contributing because you're not going in every day. If you are not in that routine that you want

to be in, it affects the approach you take to the work and the results that you get from the work that you do, so it's got to be, draw the line, make the statement.

So what happens she says all this to the team and they still say well, we've got to come to some consensus, everyone's got to agree?

I don't think that that's the case. I think that all of the views should be presented to those who are going to make the decision, for them to decide and have the justifications for those decisions, those choices, within what goes into the presentation. Because at the end of the day, they can't agree on exact specifics because the whole idea of hybrid, when you say i'm working from home, literally doesn't have to be at home. So it could be in the holiday house. that could be at a friend's place. as long as I'm 100% working for that duration.

Well I think we've covered our views on that. I hope that that helps and if any of our listeners have got suggestions or are in the same position and have come across roadblocks in that decision making process, please drop us a line and we'll continue the discussion or share our further thoughts on it. Let's leave it for today. I'm Kim Baillie, she's Fulyana Orsborn and this is Inside Exec.