

## Media Coverage

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# The five-day work week might be fading away

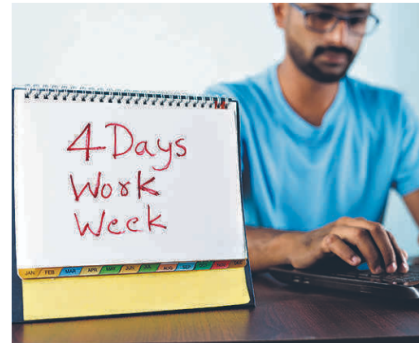
Instead, an old idea, a four-day work week, could become a reality, shaping the future of staff engagement

19/07/2022

A three-day weekend is not beyond anyone's dream, and it may soon be a reality. The idea of a four-day week against the usual 40-hour, five-day work week has been mooted for decades. The call for fewer work hours itself is older than the Great Depression. After the reduction of working hours in the 1920s and 1930s led by Henry Ford, from more than 60 hours a week to the current 40, the notion of fewer working hours for the same productivity aided by higher technology grew prevalent. The noted English economist, John Maynard Keynes, predicted that his grandchildren would only work about 15 hours a week. Even though the prediction seems a little far-fetched right now, the direction of change seems about right as companies from all over the world toy around with the idea of fewer working hours.

### Trial results show benefits

The most recent and widespread adoption of a four-day work week was a trial run by Microsoft in Japan in 2019. The trial was conducted with a typical eight-hour work day for four days and a three-day weekend but a five-day week pay cheque. Microsoft was happy with the result as it saw a 40% increase in worker productivity, presumably due to increased job satisfaction and lower burnouts. Microsoft Japan also reported that a shorter work week led to higher efficiency in the form of lower office costs. It saw a massive 23% dip in electricity costs and a 60% fall in the number of pages printed in the office.



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