

## Considering a move to reduced work hours?

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Statistics indicate that Canadian companies will face a serious labour shortage in the next 5 to 10 years. A sizeable portion of the population will retire and there aren't currently enough people in their 30s and 40s to fill the vacancies. The problem will be exasperated as a staggering number of professional women continue to leave the workforce because of the difficulties of managing work and family responsibilities.

What an incredible opportunity to demand more flexible work options – to change the beliefs and behaviours of our organizations and to participate in solving the work/life balance problem for ourselves and for future generations of parents. Employers, faced with a labour shortage, need to find creative ways to entice people like you back to work – even if it's on a part-time basis.

- **Have confidence in your value as an employee.**  
Stop worrying about how your desire to work reduced hours will affect your long term career opportunities. By the time you're ready to work full-time again, it's highly likely your company will need you! Badly.
- **Be clear about your needs and ask.**  
Just ask! What's the worst that can happen? They say "no". Too many employees let corporate legends and untested assumptions get in the way of having a frank discussion with their manager. If you're a solid performer, your manager will recognize it's better to have you part of the time rather than not at all. One manager's view on a particular work arrangement may not be the view of the company or of other managers. If your manager isn't supportive, talk with Human Resources for their insight and advice.
- **Demonstrate to your employer how this arrangement will work**  
Managers are busy people so do the work for them. Do your homework. Document the arrangement you are proposing and address the possible implications for all stakeholders.
- **Be prepared to leave!**  
If your current employer can't or won't accommodate your needs, find one that will! Why work for an employer who doesn't recognize the social benefits of your involvement with your children when there are many who do? Let unsupportive employers know why you're leaving. As employee attrition rises, employers will need to address the root cause – make sure they know what it is! In many cases, faced with the possibility of losing a good employee, an employer will rethink their decision and find a way to accommodate you!