

WorkAnywhere

Greater productivity and staff satisfaction while reducing pressure on transport infrastructure through modern work styles.



swisscom



SBB CFF FFS

Research partner



University of Applied Sciences and Arts Northwestern Switzerland
School of Applied Psychology



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Introduction

WorkAnywhere: An intelligent combination of mobility and flexible working

The Swiss are becoming increasingly mobile. According to the Swiss Federal Statistical Office (SFSO), the number of people who commute by public transport in particular has increased sharply in recent years. By 2011 there were already 1.1 million such commuters in Switzerland. The working population is also spending more time commuting to work – currently a national average of 30 minutes each way (SFSO structure survey 2013). This greater mobility of the workforce causes capacity bottlenecks on roads, trams and trains every morning and evening. The infrastructure and transport services are therefore being continuously expanded. In many instances, this focus on peak hour travel is costly because average daily load factors remain low.

At the same time, another trend is emerging in the working world: for an increasing number of companies and professionals, work no longer means being in the office “nine to five” every day. Laptops, smartphones and state-of-the-art software solutions offer flexibility in terms of the where and when of work. Around 23 percent of Swiss employees already do part of their work from home (HR Barometer 2010, Uni/ETH Zurich). Some tasks can also be done in transit, e. g. on the train, thanks to mobile devices and wireless Internet access. From a technical point of view, working anywhere and any time is hardly a problem any more. It is estimated that up to 50 percent of employees in Switzerland could work more flexibly as regards time and place (HR Barometer 2010). Greater work flexibility can blur the boundaries between work, leisure time and family and is therefore not without its pitfalls. Employees who already enjoy a flexible work style, however, usually indicate that they are more productive and happier with their work. Flex work is attractive because it offers the potential of a win-win situation for both the company and the employee: better work performance and greater work satisfaction.

The question that naturally arises is whether these two social developments – increasing mobility and greater work flexibility – could be intelligently harmonised. Should it not be possible, thanks to greater work flexibility, to arrange the working day in such a way that fewer commutes would take place during the main peak traffic periods? What would it mean, for example, if one were to work from home developing new projects in peace and quiet for the first few hours of the day, and then travel to the office mid-morning, even working while in transit without the stress of a rush hour commute? Would a disjointed working day like this only cause more stress? Or would it possibly result in greater productivity and satisfaction, benefitting both the employee and the company? How many employees would need to put this work style into practice to effect a noticeable change in capacity loads on roads, trams and trains during rush hour?

These were the questions that we tackled in this study.

Greater satisfaction with spatial distribution of work

43%



Work

For 43% satisfaction with spread of work between home, office and commute was even higher. For 40% satisfaction values remained unchanged high.

Greater satisfaction with employer

49%



Satisfaction

Great job satisfaction and feeling of well-being

59%



Life

Job satisfaction and well-being increased for 59% of participants.

Flexible and mobile:
Where did participants work?

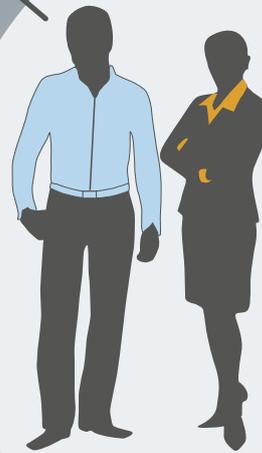
11%



21%

Example of a working day: In the morning, work on e-mails for 1-2 hours and prepare for meetings, catch a train at about 9:00, quietly read a report on the train, arrive at the office knowing "I have already achieved something today."

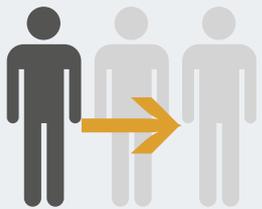
WorkAnywhere



264 employees

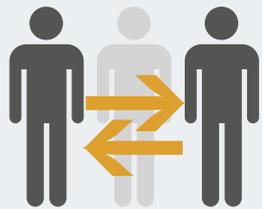
took part in a two-month trial attempting to avoid rush-hour periods by adopting a flexible work style.

Avoiding rush hour



66%

of actual commuting time outside peak traffic periods.



29%

of days saw both trips made outside peak traffic periods.

Main reason for commutes during peak traffic periods: meetings.

Assessment of productivity



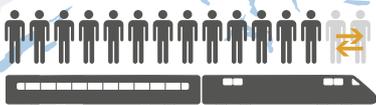
41%

55%

On average, participants worked the same number of hours per week but 41% rated the quantity and quality of their work higher while 55% saw no change.

Potential for switching commutes out of the peak traffic times

-13%



If all the employees in Switzerland who could and would like to work flexibly as the participants of this study did, there would be 13% fewer commuters at peak hours. If work was just a little more flexible (1 to 2 trips a week outside of the peak traffic periods), the number of rush-hour commuters would decrease by 7%. This would, however, require a clear shift away from the conventional fixed work model of Swiss companies.

Requirements



Job profile: it must be possible to perform at least part of the job away from the company workplace. **Technical equipment:** laptop, smartphone, wireless Internet and remote access to the corporate network. **Company:** clear commitment and appropriate framework conditions. **Management:** trust and results-focussed leadership. **Employees:** self-discipline and personal responsibility. **General:** a desire to experiment with the new possibilities.

Summary of study results

For two months in early 2013, 264 SBB and Swisscom employees tried to arrange their work in such a way that they commuted as little as possible during the peak traffic periods. They documented their work and travel behaviour daily and provided before and after statements about productivity, life balance, team work and other factors. The potential of using flexible working arrangements to avoid commuting during peak hours was evaluated with this data. The participants already had experience with flexible and mobile work before the trial. They had relatively long commutes, spending an average of 63 minutes travelling each way, mostly by train. At the end of the study, complete sets of data were available for 228 persons (84 % men and 16 % women; average age 43 years; 44 % non-management, 36 % specialist management, 20 % line management).

During the study, the participants increased the proportion of work they did at home or in transit from 24 to 33 percent (while working the same number of hours per week). It was particularly the portion of work performed at home that increased (previously: 14 %; during the trial: 21 %). On half of the days, work was performed in different locations (at the company premises, at home or in transit in various combinations).

Thanks to this flexible work style, participants were highly successful in avoiding travel at peak hours. On the one hand they did this by shifting their commutes, thus moving 66 percent of travel time to the quieter off-peak hours. On the other hand, they spent the whole day at home an average of 0.85 times a week, therefore not needing to travel at all. In total, an average avoidance value of 62 percent resulted (as opposed to a theoretical model with two trips during peak traffic periods each day, i. e. 10 a week). The main reason for commuting during peak hours was to attend meetings that were scheduled too close to these times and required attendance in person.

In retrospect, 41 percent of participants felt that the quantity and quality of their work was higher during the trial than before – even though they did not work more hours on average. No change was seen by 55 percent of them. Furthermore, 22 managers who were interviewed separately felt that their employees' work performance remained the same (14) or increased (8) during the trial.

At a personal level (job satisfaction, personal happiness, motivation, family/social life, employer satisfaction), the participants also saw slightly positive effects. There was also a clear increase in satisfaction with the spread of work across multiple locations (main place of work, at home, in transit). Life balance remained high, and there were no differences specific to gender, employees with/without children in the household, company or position.

At a team level there were no differences. The team spirit remained good during the trial period as did the reachability of team members. Only nine percent of respondents indicated that special arrangements were made concerning flex work during the trial.

These distinctly positive results can be attributed to certain success factors. Over 90 percent of participants were equipped with a laptop and a smartphone. Some also used private devices (additionally). Wireless Internet was available to 48 percent via a Mobile Unlimited option and to 43 percent using their smartphone as hotspots. Ninety-six percent had remote access to the company network. Even before the trial, the participants had made very frequent use of Unified Communication and Collaboration tools such as instant messaging, presence information and desktop sharing. Use of these tools increased only slightly during the trial.

The new work style was successful at all functional levels. Overall, employees without a managerial function showed even slightly more positive results. While they were less experienced with flex work before the trial, stronger effects were seen with regard to improved satisfaction and productivity.

Based on these results, the potential of avoiding commutes during peak hours was evaluated. In order to achieve a noticeable difference on the commuter routes, further companies would have to participate in addition to Swisscom and SBB, and even minor adjustments to routines could then have a considerable impact. If all rail commuters who can and wish to work flexibly were to shift 20 percent of their commutes to off-peak hours, the load reduction on trains at peak hours would be 7 percent. For a full-time employee who theoretically commutes ten times a week, this corresponds to two trips. Even better effects would be seen if these rail commuters were to behave in the same way as the trial participants. In this case, the trains' loadings would be reduced by a full 13 percent during peak hours. In any case, shifting commutes to off-peak hours would smooth out the load factors of trains throughout the day. In order to meet the transport demands of the future, this type of behavioural change is necessary in addition to the planned capacity increases. However, it will require a major shift from the conventional work style of Swiss companies and employees, which is fixed in terms of time and place.

About the study and the participants

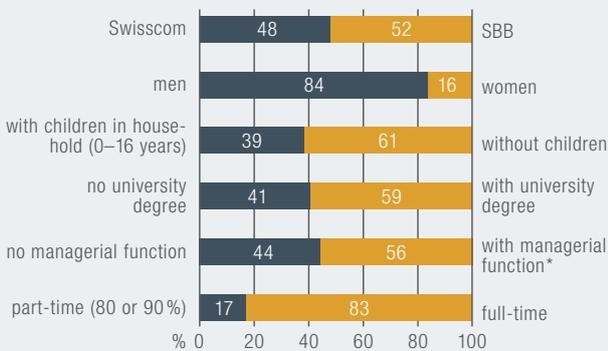
At the beginning of the study, 264 participants were registered, approximately half of whom work for SBB and half for Swisscom. At SBB, they were recruited from the Berne office while at Swisscom all employees were able to take part. Both companies, however, set a minimum commute of 20 minutes and the superior's consent as conditions. The participants had to try to arrange their working day in such a way that they travelled as little as possible during the peak traffic periods (7.00 to 8.30 in the morning and 17.00 to 18.30 in the evening). The trial was conducted in February and March 2013.

Four data collection instruments were used:

- A questionnaire before the beginning of the trial
- A commute diary in which the participants logged information about their commutes and places of work each day during the trial
- A second questionnaire after the trial
- Scripted interviews with a selection of participants (12 individual interviews and 3 group interviews)

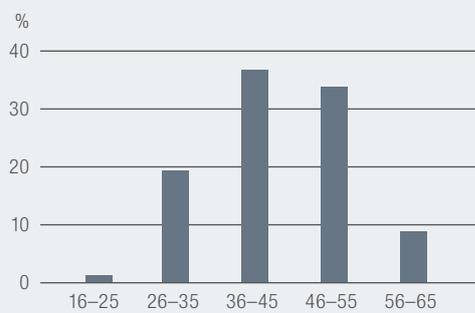
The data of the 228 persons who completed both questionnaires and the commute diary were evaluated (corresponding to an 86 % response rate). ① ②

① Breakdown of the sample.



* Includes 36% specialist managers without formal managerial function and 20% basic and middle management.

② Age distribution of the sample.



Average age: 43 years

The workplace of most participants was in Berne, while some worked in Zurich. Their homes were mainly in the regions of Berne, Basel and Zurich.

At an average of 63 minutes per trip, the participants had exceptionally long commutes. Ninety-four percent of them took the train for at least part of their commute and only 15 percent used a car or motorcycle.

At SBB approx. a quarter of the total workforce is able to work flexibly based on their work duties. Relative to this group, the sample is fairly representative in terms of age, gender and full/part-time work. Only the employees with managerial functions are over-represented (especially specialist management).

Of all the Swisscom employees, approx. 70 percent can already work flexibly. This figure is to be increased further. Compared to the entire Swisscom workforce, employees with a managerial function are over-represented in the sample and women are somewhat under-represented.

Relative to the Swiss workforce, the sample had a significantly larger proportion of men and a somewhat higher proportion of persons with university degrees and managerial functions.



Part 1: WorkAnywhere – characteristics of a new work style

To what extent were the peak traffic periods (PTP) avoided?

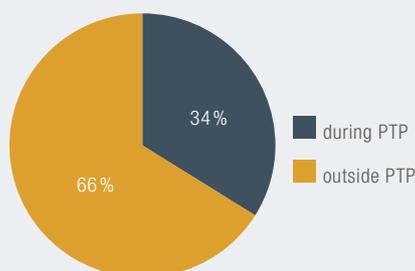
The participants succeeded exceptionally well in avoiding rush hour, i.e. the peak traffic periods, through their flexible work style. On the one hand they did this by shifting 66 percent of their office commutes to the quieter off-peak hours. On the other hand, they spent 17 percent of their work days entirely at home (an average of 0.85 days a week). **3 4**

Commutes shifted to off-peak hours or dropped altogether can be represented as a combined PTP avoidance value. A five-day week with a theoretical 10 trips to the office and back during PTP would correspond to a PTP avoidance value of 0 percent. During the trial, the participants achieved an avoidance rate of 62 percent.

From the interviews:

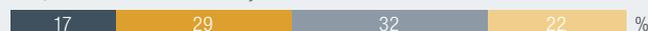
“What I found very pleasant when commuting during off-peak hours is that one does not have to move in a stream of people which is in itself a source of stress. If I only catch the train at 9.00 I have more space, a better Internet connection and I might even be able to make phone calls because it doesn't bother anyone. It's the same in the evening.”

3 Proportion of minutes travelled.



4 Documented work days.

of 9,591 documented work days

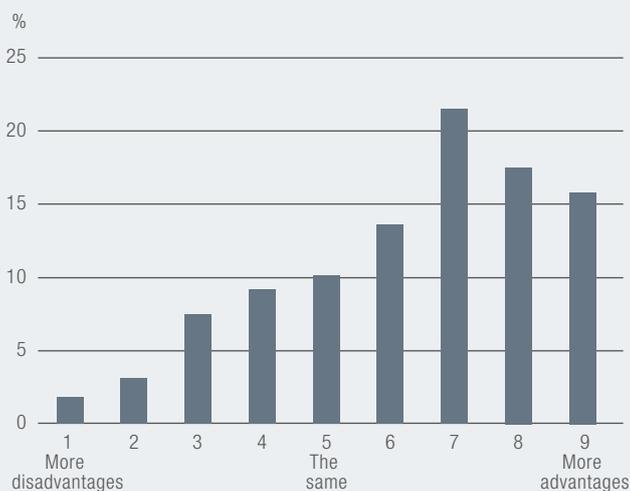


Legend for Figure 4:
■ worked only at home (no commuting) ■ both trips outside PTP
■ one trip outside PTP ■ both trips within PTP

Every time a participant travelled during peak hours at least once in a day (on average 20.4 days or 54 % of the work days), the participant was asked for the reason. The main reasons for commuting at peak times were meetings and team work requiring the person to be present. Private reasons (including family-related ones) were hardly mentioned.

For 70 percent of participants the advantages of commuting outside peak hours outweighed the disadvantages. **5**

5 In your view, are there more advantages or disadvantages in commuting outside the PTP?



How did you make use of the flexibility of WorkAnywhere?

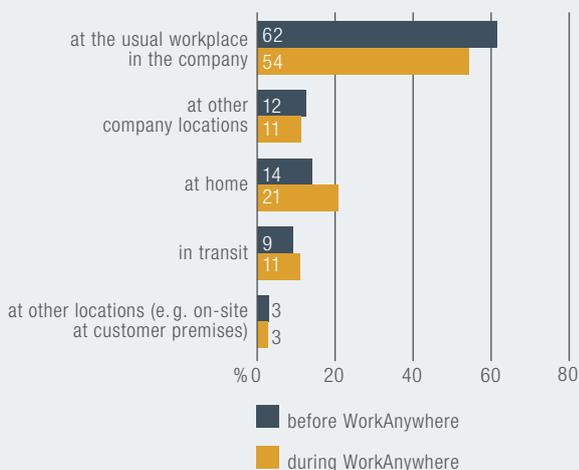
The average number of work hours per week was 45.5 (extrapolated to 100 % employment, self-assessment). No change was recorded in this regard; the participants did not work more during the trial than before. A significant change resulted in the distribution of work hours across various work locations (self-assessment). **6**

The clear majority of respondents had already worked while in transit and from home before the trial but they increased this proportion again significantly during the trial. The proportion of work performed at home showed a particularly marked increase (from 14 to 21 %). The proportion of work that was done in transit increased only slightly (from 9 to 11 %).

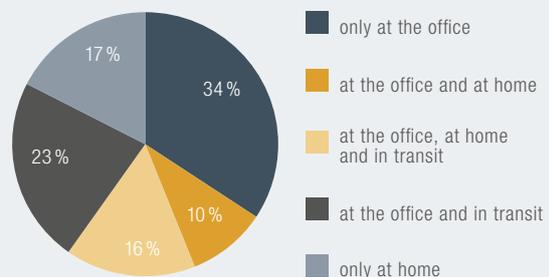
If the hours of work put in at home and in transit are set against the total work hours, the result is the so-called work mobility index. A statistically significant increase in this index, from 24 to 33 percent, was recorded during the trial.

On approx. half of the work days during the trial, work was done at multiple locations. On 39 percent of days, the participants worked during their commute. **7**

6 Distribution of work hours across various work locations (self-assessment).



7 Where did you work today? (average number of work days).



From the interviews:

“I have realised that it is possible to work on e-mail in peace for two hours from home and then take the train after the peak traffic periods. This is a win.”

“You arrive at the office knowing that you have already achieved something.”

On average, satisfaction with the spread of work across the various work locations (home, in transit, office) increased. For 43 percent of participants it rose, while for 40 percent it remained unchanged.

How were the communication tools applied?

All participants were equipped with a laptop and 99 percent with a smartphone; some also used their private devices. Swisscom participants made use of a comprehensive Unified Communication and Collaboration (UCC) system which they also used for their landlines. Approx. half of the SBB participants were equipped with a UCC solution (presence information and instant messaging). In addition, 96 percent of all participants had remote access to the company's internal network (remote access service, RAS).

Overall, the usage frequency of the various communication tools changed very little during the trial. However, there were some differences between the two companies.

Swisscom participants made very frequent use of the UCC solution to make phone calls: 83 percent selected “daily/several times daily” here. Before the trial, 46 percent of the SBB participants regularly used a landline telephone (daily or several times daily) but during the trial, this figure dropped to 33 percent.

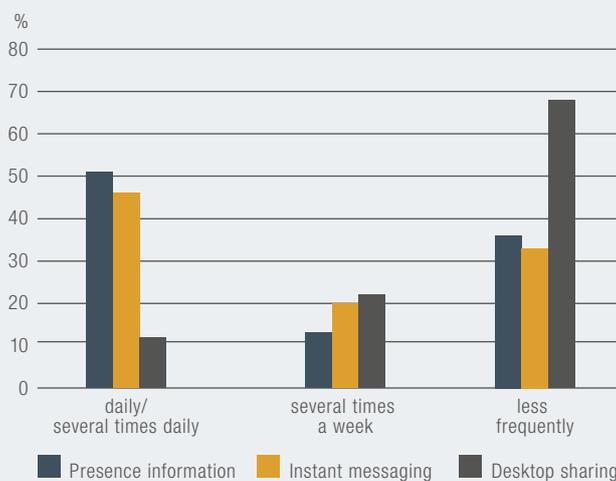
Mobile telephones were used most frequently (almost 80 % responded with “daily/several times daily”, and a further 18 % with “several times a week”).

Telephone conferences (more than two participants) were used mainly by the Swisscom participants: 71 percent specified “daily” or “several times a week” here compared to only 10 percent of SBB participants.

The various communications tools offered as part of the UCC were applied as follows. **8**

It must be noted in this regard that the Swisscom participants used the UCC functions significantly more frequently – possibly because these software solutions had already been in use at Swisscom for some time. Among SBB participants there was a small increase in the use of instant messaging and presence information. The SBB participants hardly made use of desktop sharing. The roll-out of a comprehensive UCC solution at SBB is planned for 2014. Overall, an average of 54 percent of participants made use of some UCC function at least several times a week.

8 Use of various communication tools as part of UCC.



Part 2: Effects of the new work style

What were the effects on work performance?

We asked:

“How much work did you do during WorkAnywhere compared to before?” 9

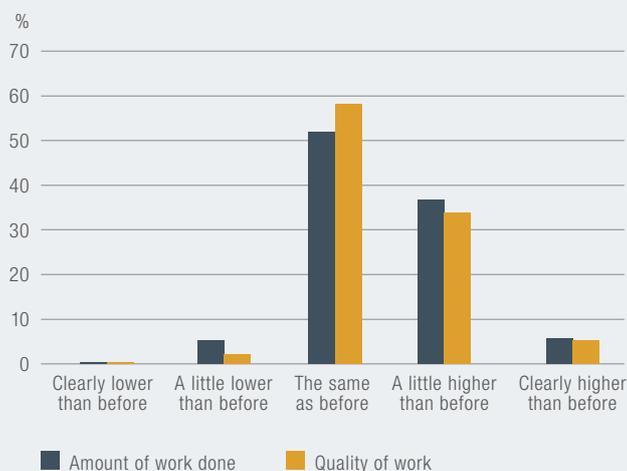
and

“How do you rate the quality of your work during WorkAnywhere compared to before?” 9

With the same number of work hours (45.5 hours a week), a little more than half of the participants rated their performance as the same during the trial as before. The remainder of the participants mostly stated that they had accomplished more (43 %) and better (39 %) work. Only a fraction therefore saw a deterioration in work performance.

For a further assessment of work performance, all participants with a formal management function (basic and middle management) were interviewed separately. Of 44 interviewees, 14 stated that the productivity of their participating employees was “the same as before”, 7 “slightly higher” and 1 “significantly higher”. The remaining 22 did not answer this question, generally because none of their team members took part in the trial.

9 Effects on work performance.



In which way did satisfaction and life balance change?

We wanted to know the following:

“During WorkAnywhere...” ¹⁰

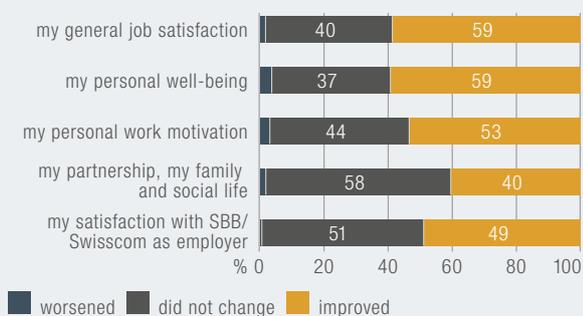
Slightly more than half of respondents regarded the experiences they made during the trial at individual level as positive in terms of personal and work-related aspects. Forty percent of participants saw an improvement in their family/social life. Almost half were also happier with their employer.

From the interviews:

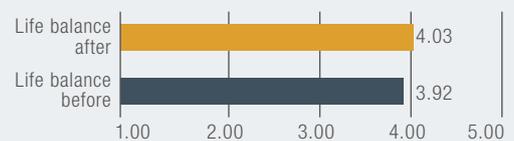
“I get to see my family much more. In my home office I see them in the morning, at lunch time and in the evening. This is an advantage. Before, there were days when I hardly saw them. “

The participants' life balance (previously also referred to as work-life balance) was assessed on a scale consisting of multiple questions. Here 1 means very bad and 5 means very good. ¹¹

¹⁰ “During WorkAnywhere...”



¹¹ Life-Balance.

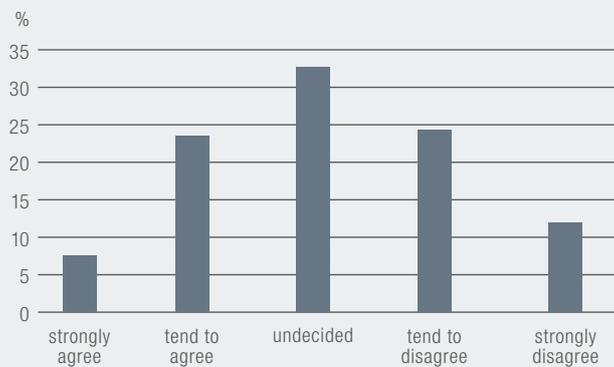


Before the trial, the participants already had a good life balance. This increased slightly during the trial. There were no differences between men and women, those with and without children in the household, or with and without a managerial function or between the two companies.

However, the responses to one question on the life balance scale in our study stood out:
"I find it difficult not to think about work outside my work hours." ¹²

Here the mean value for all participants was only 3.1 (before and after). This means that approx. one third of them find it difficult to "switch off" after work. This did not get worse during the trial, but neither did it improve.

¹² "I find it difficult not to think about work outside my work hours."



What were the effects on team work?

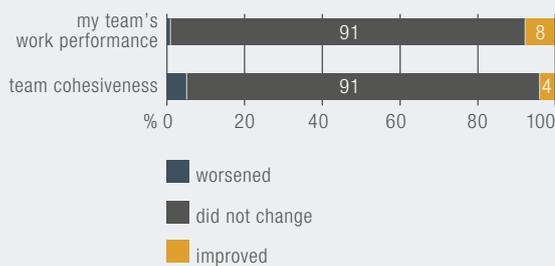
At team level, the great majority of respondents saw no change. ¹³

In addition, team spirit was also assessed on a scale of 1 (bad) to 5 (good) with multiple questions similar to the life balance assessment. The average value remained at a high level of 4.2 before and during the field trial.

We also wanted to know if flex work and commuting outside peak hours was accepted by colleagues who were not participating in WorkAnywhere. Forty-two percent of participants stated that they “strongly agree” and a further 36 percent said they “tend to agree”. Seventeen percent were undecided and only 5 percent saw problems with acceptance.

The reachability of team members was not considered a problem (before and after). However, Swisscom employees actually indicated that reachability was even better. This is probably largely due to the more intensive use of Unified Communication and Collaboration solutions at Swisscom.

¹³ “During WorkAnywhere ...”



Part 3: Requirements for success

The highly positive results of the study raise the question as to which conditions are required for successful flex work while avoiding peak hours. Shortly after the study began, we provided the participants with five useful tips that address the individual and team levels in particular. You will find these tips at the end of this brochure on page 26. On the following pages, we will highlight the success factors with regard to technical facilities and workspace, the task at hand and the topics of personal responsibility, leadership and culture.

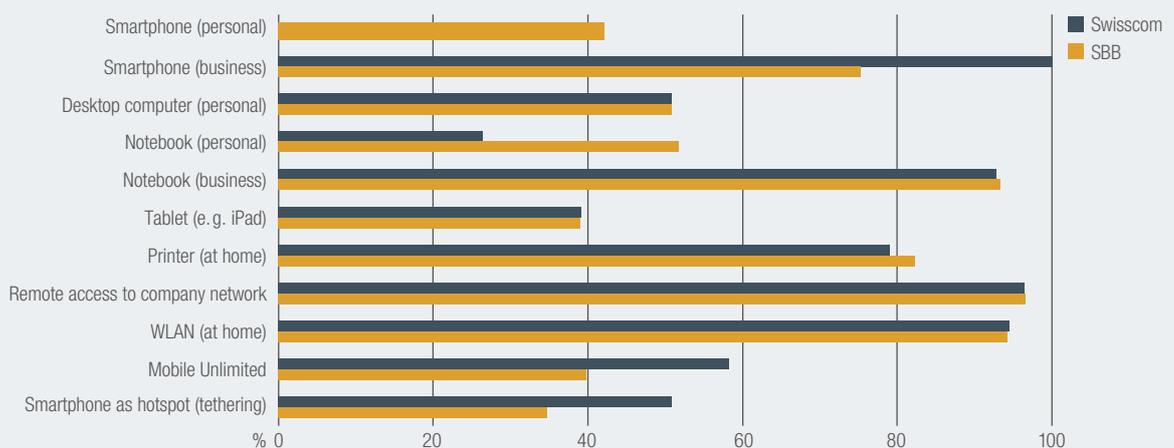
Technical facilities and workspace

At the beginning of the trial we asked the participants:

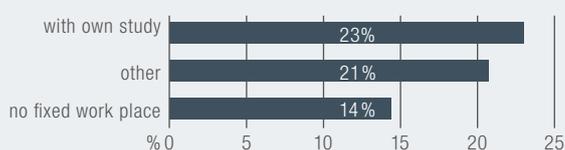
“Which of these devices or technologies are available to you for work at home?” ¹⁴

More than half of the participants had a separate study to work in at home. Almost a fifth, however, indicated that they did not have a fixed place to work (e.g. they worked at the kitchen table). The remaining participants shared a study or had a fixed place to work, e.g. in the living room. Those with better work spaces at home worked there more. ¹⁵

¹⁴ “Which of these devices or technologies are available to you for work at home?”
(multiple an-swerns permitted)



¹⁵ Proportion of work at home, by type of set-up.



Work tasks

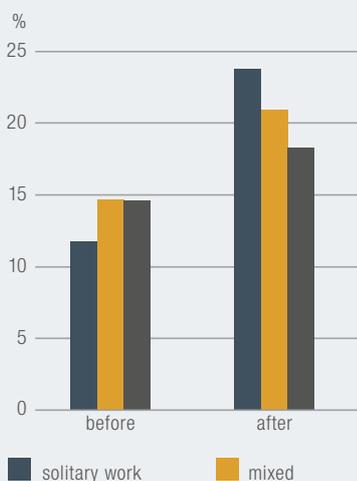
Based on their job descriptions, it was possible to split the participants into those whose tasks consist of solitary work (18 %) and those whose tasks mainly involve intensive exchanges with others (25 %). Most have a mixed job profile (56 %). There was no difference between these groups with regard to performance. However, various effects showed up in relation to the geographical spread of their work and satisfaction levels with this. ¹⁶

Employees whose work consists mainly of solitary work worked at home least before Work-Anywhere (12 % of their work hours), but most during the trial (24 %). Their satisfaction with the spread of work increased to the same degree. This means that they benefitted from the new work style even more than the other groups.

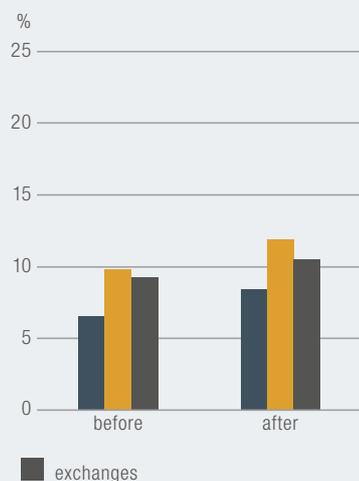
Working in transit appears to be best suited to employees with a mixed job profile.

¹⁶ Distribution of work by work location.

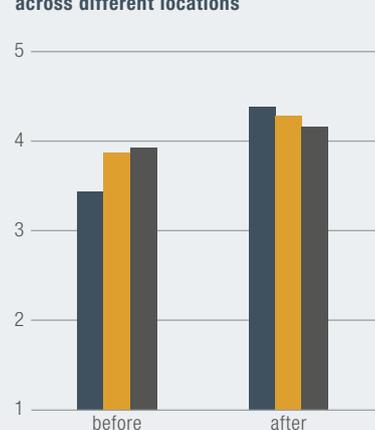
Proportion of work at home



Proportion of work in transit



Satisfaction with the distribution of work across different locations



Personal responsibility

It is obvious that the new work style demands a high level of personal responsibility from the employees. We wanted to know if the freedom afforded by the new work style was experienced as overwhelming or if the participants wanted even more freedom. ¹⁷

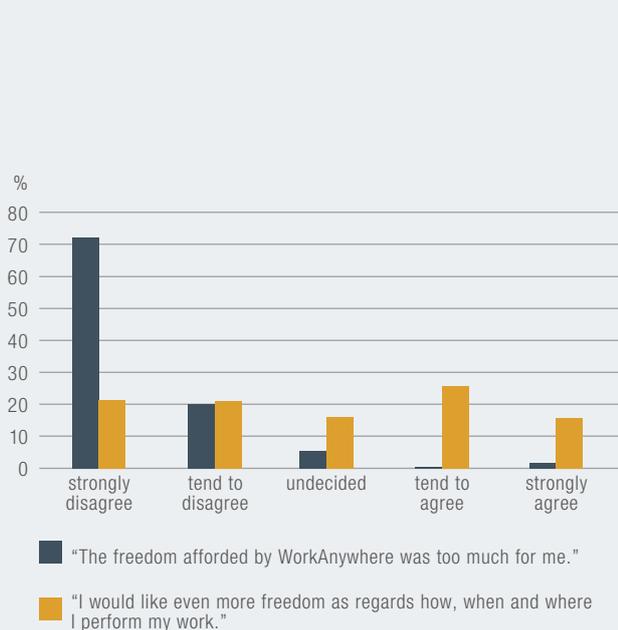
Thus the great majority of participants did not feel overwhelmed. There was a mixed response to the question of whether further freedom was desired. No difference could be discerned between men and women or between employees with or without a managerial function. There was also no correlation with education level or age.

It is sometimes proposed that flex work is only appropriate or possible for management. The results of our sample clearly refute this view. Employees without a managerial function benefited even more from the new work style. They tended to have a little less experience with flex work (especially with working in transit) but they saw greater improvements after the study and rated their productivity increase as higher. ¹⁸

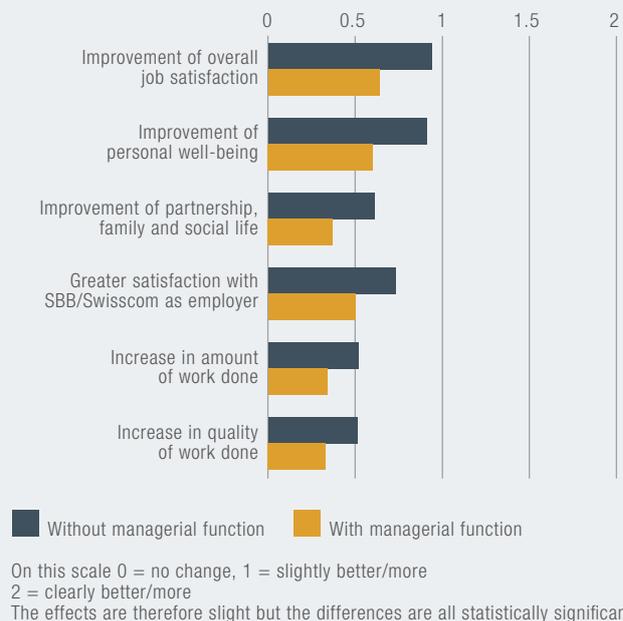
Employees without a managerial function worked at home slightly more during the trial in terms of the number of hours (management: 20 %; non-management: 22 %). They also worked distinctly more full days at home (management: average 0.7 days per week; non-management: 1 day per week).

Flex work therefore shows clearly positive effects, and particularly for employees without a managerial function who perhaps did not have much experience of it previously.

¹⁷ Appreciation of the afforded by the new work style.



¹⁸ Comparison of employees with and without managerial function.



Leadership and culture

We asked the participants how they rate their superiors' support for flex work. This was again assessed on a scale of 5 with multiple questions. The values remained unchanged at a high level of 4.6. This is to some degree a selection effect because their superiors had to agree to their participation. However, employees with no managerial function and women returned slightly lower values (4.4 and 4.3 respectively).

From the interviews:

“A higher level of self-organisation is necessary. If I notice that someone is struggling with that, I help them to prioritise”.

From a management perspective, it is necessary to consider whether special regulations are needed for flex work while avoiding peak hours. We asked each of the 44 participants with a formal managerial function (basic and middle management):

“If one or more of your employees took part in WorkAnywhere, how did you coordinate the flex work with PTP avoidance?” ¹⁹

Hardly any special agreements were made, or if so, they were verbal.

The topic of agreements and rules was also touched on in the interviews. Some participants appeared to be unsure about questions such as whether work done in transit could be counted as work time and why some teams do not permit work from home. Here there is therefore a need for clear, company-wide regulations.

From the interviews:

“To me it is important that people are reachable. We agreed to meet every Tuesday and it is important that this agreement is honoured. We also have a log where everyone records what they did in the previous week.”

“Clear rules are needed between managers and employees and sometimes the manager needs to say expressly: I don't expect you to be reachable or writing e-mails at 21.00.”

We also asked the managers:

“In your view, what are the three most important success factors for flex work?” ²⁰

In the view of the managers, trust and personal responsibility are the most important success factors for flex work. In the interviews, target and results-driven leadership was also frequently mentioned.

From the interviews:

“Our company is open and innovative. But it also irritates me that in some areas flex work is no problem and yet it is not desired or tolerated in other areas close to us. And we all work for the same company.”

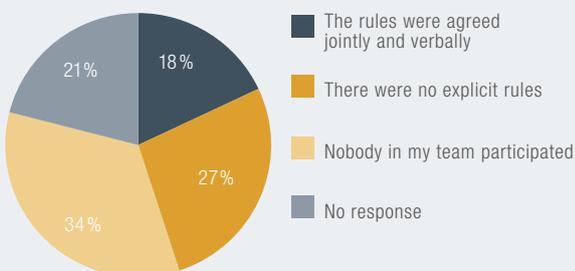
“We often had to put up with critical remarks such as ‘It’s nice for those who come in late and go home early.’ But I know that my people work hard.”

“I talk about people’s attitudes towards flex work. I need independent people who like their work and who are performance and results-driven. If they happen to work very fast I don’t care if they put in fewer hours.”

“My team is focussed on doing good work, and that is what they are assessed on. This is a great advantage. It is of no significance to the company if the employee works 41 hours; what is important is that he produces results.“

“Management is about output and not about presence – that requires other managerial competencies. That is the most difficult thing about implementing flex work.”

19 “If one or more of your employees took part in WorkAnywhere, how did you coordinate the flex work with PTP avoidance?”



20 “In your view, what are the three most important success factors for flex work?”

	Mentions	of which in first position
Trust	21	14
Personal responsibility, (self-)discipline, independence	23	8
Tools, infrastructure etc.	19	4
Acceptance, support, respect	16	6
Team, coordination, communication, culture	15	3
Motivation, commitment	8	4
Target agreements, results orientation	8	1

Part 4:

Potential for transport and work in Switzerland

During the trial, the participants succeeded very well in shifting their commutes away from rush hour, i. e. the peak traffic periods (PTP), while also working more productively – and all that without any negative impact on job satisfaction, life balance or team spirit. This means that this work style could basically be successful. What potential does the new work style have for effectively reducing commuter numbers in peak traffic periods?

To determine this, we first extrapolated the potential of the two companies on the basis of our sample. What would happen if all employees from the two companies whose job description would permit flex work and avoidance of peak traffic periods did this to the same extent as our sample (approx. a quarter of SBB employees and 70 % of Swisscom)? Each company could reduce commuter figures by approx. half a percent.

It is therefore worth taking a look at the whole of Switzerland. It is estimated that up to 50 percent of the Swiss workforce could work more flexibly as regards time and place and that 66 percent would wish to do so (HR-Barometer 2010, Uni/ETH Zurich). This concerns primarily the knowledge-intensive sector, which consists of high-tech industries and modern services and contributed a net value added of 50.9 percent in 2005 (KOF, 2009). More recent studies, however, show that employees in sectors closer to production as well as the education sector could also increasingly work more flexibly (Konradt & Köppel, 2009). We therefore based our calculations on 50 percent of the Swiss workforce who could work flex time and 66 percent who wish to do so. This results in a third of the Swiss workforce who could potentially avoid peak hours through flex work.

During the WorkAnywhere trial, the participants achieved a PTP avoidance rate of 62 percent by shifting commutes away from the peak traffic periods or dropping them altogether. In an optimistic scenario we assume that peak hours would be avoided to the same degree as during our field trial. However, the trial took place under almost ideal conditions (high experience with flex work even before the trial; managers supported the project; high motivation). In a conservative scenario it is therefore assumed that a lower avoidance rate would result.

The avoidance rate of 62 percent refers to a theoretical working week with 10 commutes during the peak traffic periods. However, even now, i. e. without WorkAnywhere, 25 percent of commuter trips take place outside the peak hours for a variety of reasons. We therefore calculated two scenarios, one with 37 percent additional avoidance (optimistic) and one with 20 percent additional avoidance (conservative). 20 percent means that an additional two trips per week are moved outside of peak hours compared to the current situation (based on a theoretical figure of 10 trips). ²¹

Depending on how intensively the new work style is applied by the employees in order to shift their commutes outside the peak traffic periods, the resulting effect would be noticeable to a greater or lesser extent. If all Swiss workers who can and wish to work flexibly did so, a reduction of up to 10 percent should certainly be possible. This would of course mean a major departure from the classic work style. In particular for companies with fixed times and places, an entrenched culture of presence and no extensive technical facilities this would mean a big change, but one that would nevertheless possibly be attractive in view of the positive effects.

²¹ **Potential for switching commuter trips away from the peak traffic period.**

	Scenario 1 (optimistic)	Scenario 2 (conservative)
Assumed PTP ratio (in addition to current situation)	37 %	20 %
Potential to avoid or shift travel in person-trips per day (SBB only)	71 900	38 900
Effective shift of person-trips outside PTP	-13 %	-7 %

Five tips for mobile and flex work

PLANNING

Good planning will help you to muster the necessary work discipline while also meeting your personal needs for recreation and leisure as well as meeting family demands.

1. Plan your tasks

Always look for the correct location for each of your tasks. The privacy of a home office is ideal for conceptual, creative tasks. The train is good for writing e-mails and working through to-do lists with smaller tasks. In the office you can reach your colleagues for quick clarifications and informal chats (provided that good rules have been agreed – see point 3!).

2. Plan your day

Every person has their own biorhythm – find out yours and make use of it! If, for example, you are most productive early in the morning, don't "waste" this time commuting to the office. If you tend to have a low energy phase in the afternoons, travel home during this time and take a nap – or choose to do non-intellectual tasks or sport. Everyone has a phase of maximum activity during the course of a day, for most it is in the morning. Try to schedule your most difficult tasks during this time.

At team level and in relation to your manager, "flexible" doesn't mean a lack of structure but a continuous adjustment of the structure. You therefore have to develop new and versatile habits together with your colleagues.

3. Honour your agreements with colleagues and superiors

If a flexible work style results in long delays or people being difficult to reach, frustration is bound to mount in the team. Depending on the level of coordination required and the intensity of collaboration, appropriate agreements must be made. Usually it is a good idea to define core times for the team during which everyone should be present in the office if possible (e.g. every Tuesday or always from 10.00 to 15.00). Use the calendar to show when you will be present. Generally, talk to your team openly and regularly about work hours and availability!

A similar approach also applies to your relationship with your manager. If you don't see each other enough due to flex work it helps to make fixed appointments (e.g. lunch every two weeks). Talk about the issue of being able to reach each other!

4. Don't neglect informal exchanges

It is usually the informal chats with colleagues and superiors that are missed most. Conversations during break times are more than just gossip: they are important for staying in touch with your colleagues. Take an active approach to create opportunities for these exchanges: arrange a regular weekly lunch break with your team – or if you are working from home, perhaps with a colleague who lives nearby.

When you are working outside the office, you may find instant messaging software useful. Instant messaging chats are often more suitable for brief and informal exchanges than e-mail. You can use presence information to see if someone is available or does not wish to be disturbed. So don't neglect the small talk that normally takes place in the office!

5. Take an active role in developing the new work culture!

Generally: The new work styles are not yet cast in stone – and they never should be. So feel free to experiment – both personally and with your team. Ideally, flex work means allowing structures to develop in which everyone works better (i.e. more happily and productively). Take a proactive role by planning, coordinating and always trying out new ideas to help develop this new working environment.

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TAKE DELIGHT IN EXPERIMENTATION



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Authors:

Dr Johann Weichbrodt (ifk)

Dr Martin Sprenger (IBR)

Martin Steffen (ifk)

Alexandra Tanner (ifk)

Prof. Dr Jens O. Meissner (IBR)

Prof. Dr Hartmut Schulze (ifk)

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Contact

Swisscom (Switzerland) Ltd
P. O. Box
CH-3050 Berne

www.swisscom.ch/workanywhere-study

SBB AG
Communication & Public Affairs
Hochschulstrasse 6
CH-3000 Berne 65

www.sbb.ch/en/mobile-working

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