

We work too much, and not for the right reasons

The 40 hour week (Monday to Friday, nine to five) was introduced by Henry Ford 100 years ago & many of us work more.

- [A Stanford study proved](#) that it makes sense only for highly-repetitive work (even up to 50 hours/week), the same cannot be said about self-directed work: where the same task can be done in one hour or 1 day.
- [Microsoft Japan proved that a 4 day work-week](#) boosted productivity.
- A recent study showed that [out of 8 working hours per day, we are productive for less than 3](#) of them.
- Friday is the day [with very low productivity](#), especially in the afternoon according to various studies.
- Paid Time Off varies – some countries offer 30 days/year (Germany) and others only 6 (USA). Despite studies that prove that [more days off result in increased productivity and innovation](#), companies are rarely offering more.
- Extended leave (sabbatical) is rarely encouraged by organizations. Multiple studies show it can lead to an increase in productivity, creativity, employee commitment and work-life balance.



Stop the EMAIL & Meeting Madness

- Email is one of the most common triggers for [social anxiety](#) and [productivity](#)-related anxiety (the feeling that you're not getting enough accomplished).
- Research showing that meetings have increased in length and frequency over the past 50 years, to the point [where executives spend an average of nearly 23 hours a week](#) in them, up from less than 10 hours in the 1960s. And that doesn't even include all the impromptu gatherings that don't make it onto the schedule.



What you could do

- ❖ Consider **shortening your Fridays**, as they are not too productive anyway and the move will likely be welcomed and appreciated by your staff!
- ❖ Offer a **minimum of 30 days time off** per year (Germany is the living example that it works).
- ❖ **Implement Sabbatical.** Most companies already offer unpaid leave but keep it quiet (e.g., only offering it to someone attending a Masters' degree). Why not give everyone access to it?
- ❖ Experiment with the **4 days work week**. You could try **10 hours/day for some employees**, but you should also try implementing **8 hours/day for 4 days** and see what difference it makes.
- ❖ Mandate 30 min meetings. Teach employees how to cope with “meeting madness” and “email anxiety”. They are real challenges.

