

Workplace Flexibility Case Study
Texas Instruments and Flexibility
by Ken Giglio

Company: Texas Instruments (www.ti.com)

Company profile: Texas Instruments is a Dallas-based technology company that manufactures digital signal processors and analog technologies for the Internet. In addition to its semiconductor business, T.I.'s businesses also include Sensors & Controls and Educational & Productivity Solutions. The company has manufacturing, design or sales operations in more than 25 countries, with a global work force of approximately 35,000 employees, including 19,400 in the Americas. Of those, approximately 72% are male. T.I. is ranked 166th on the list of biggest U.S. companies by Fortune magazine in 2005, with \$12.6 billion in revenues for Fiscal Year 2004.

Program profile: Texas Instruments offers what it describes as an "ad hoc" flexibility policy to most of its employees. Those in the manufacturing process are excluded from this type of program because of the demands of their job. They are, however, allowed to work under a compressed work week schedule. For nearly all other employees, T.I. has instituted a policy that allows them, on a case-by-case basis, to adjust their work schedule to meet their personal needs. For instance, if a worker has a sick child, they might opt to work from home that day. If another worker has a doctor's appointment, they can come in late and work late. If still another worker has a late-night conference call with an overseas office, they can come in late the following day. The bottom line for the company is that employees are focused on getting their job done and meeting their performance goals in a company-approved time frame that works for them. As a technology company, T.I. provides its employees the tools it needs to work from home or other remote locations. The company also encourages different work units to try out different kinds of flexibility that work for them, and that there's no need for a one-size-fits-all kind of flexible work arrangement.

The Challenge: Texas Instruments initially began its workplace flexibility program after conducting a needs assessment survey of its U.S. employees in 1993. Flexibility emerged as a key item that employees cared about and that the company, at the time, was doing little about.

Benefits to employees: This type of "flexible" flexibility program allows employees to fit their work schedules around their personal schedules instead of the other way around. The way Texas Instruments see it, its employees are all adults and so it treats them that way. The employees then spend less time worrying about outside matters, resulting in a reduction in stress and, ultimately, more productive workers. T.I. has found that it is this type of flexibility that most workers really desire – the ability to deal with the day-to-day things in their life while still being an effective worker.

Benefits to employer: The company does not actively measure the benefits of its flexibility program, although it believes the benefits include higher retention of

employees, lower stress and more effective workers as well as greater “bench strength.” In other words, as team members help cover for each other in times of flexibility, they develop broader and more diverse skills. Despite its lack of measurement in this area, Texas Instruments has no doubt that it benefits from flexibility. As evidence, it cites the fact that no one in the company, whether employee or manager, ever asks that the company stop providing this kind of flexibility. It is a benefit that clearly is embraced at this point by all levels of workers.

Lessons Learned: It’s important to understand your own corporate culture and what will work best for your company. At Texas Instruments, the “ad hoc” type of flexibility program works best, although it might not be the answer for all companies. Conducting the work/life needs assessment was a good starting point for T.I., it allowed them to understand that flexibility was an issue and an interest for its workers.

Personal profile: Liz Moyer is T.I.’s Environmental, Safety and Health Public Affairs Manager. She has been with the company for 28 years. In her current role, she is responsible for developing and implementing various forms of company communication, outreach and advocacy efforts in the areas of the environment, safety and health. Her job requires that she work with teams from many different time zones. In addition to working from home one full day per week, Liz often will spend part of a day working from home and part of the day working from the office. In addition to being able to better coordinate timetables with overseas teams, this schedule also allows Liz to be around home more for her family and helps her to avoid the busy commute hours. She says it requires well-disciplined goal setting and project management as well as coordination and agreement with corporate leadership on tasks. "Workplace flexibility has enabled me to improve my focus and performance," says Liz. "I am very pleased that T.I. has the leadership to recognize objective delivery, not face time, as the most productive performance measurement."