

Wake-up call: Workers want more flexibility in their jobs

A new study takes the pulse of the working-age population. It shows that workers would like more flexibility to organize their work and to work less.

When it comes to flexible working hours, there is a discrepancy between desire and reality in the Swiss population. Many workers would also like to reduce their working hours. These are the findings of a representative study by swissstaffing and gfs-zürich, which surveyed 1230 people of working age. Even more surprisingly, the study finds that half of those not working would enter the labor market if they had some flexibility in managing their working hours and volume.

Due to the growing labor shortage, there is an increasing focus on the needs of workers. The latest study by industry association swissstaffing shows that flexibility is a key requirement of workers, but this is only sometimes actually available. Flexible working is important for around 80 percent of workers, but only just over half are able to work in this way. So it is no surprise that the overriding majority would welcome flexible working: 79 percent see it as an opportunity to better combine career and family and to encourage personal responsibility, 67 percent believe it increases productivity.

Increasing working hours is not a solution for fulfilling working potential

Politicians and businesses are seeking to make better use of domestic working potential in order to alleviate labor shortages: They want part-time workers to work longer hours and non-workers to join the labor market. How effective are these approaches? Our survey shows that increasing working hours does not guarantee success. Overall, more workers want to reduce their working hours (33 percent) than increase them (13 percent). Flexibility is one possible solution: If workers have more leeway in organizing their work hours, they can take on a higher workload. There is a similar picture when it comes to integrating the non-working population: Around half of those not working (48 percent) would join the labor market if they could flexibly shape their working hours and volume.

The current shortage of labor and skills is set to get worse in the years to come. This means that if businesses want to attract or keep staff in future, they will have to allow flexible working. The potential for migration is real: Even though most workers are happy in their job, almost half would be prepared to move if the right opportunity arose.

Staff leasing helps increase working potential in the Swiss labor market

Temping as a flexible form of work integrates non-workers into the labor market thanks to low entry thresholds. A total of 45 percent of the non-working population would be open to working via a platform or a staffing service provider. Secondly, the business model of staffing service providers already enables flexible working. This is demonstrated by the fascinating approach of an institution in the care sector: The permanent nursing staff initially choose their shifts themselves, then any gaps remaining in the rota are filled by temporary staff from a staffing service provider. This means that workers can plan their working hours themselves over the month.

Regulations do not reflect the interests of the future labor market

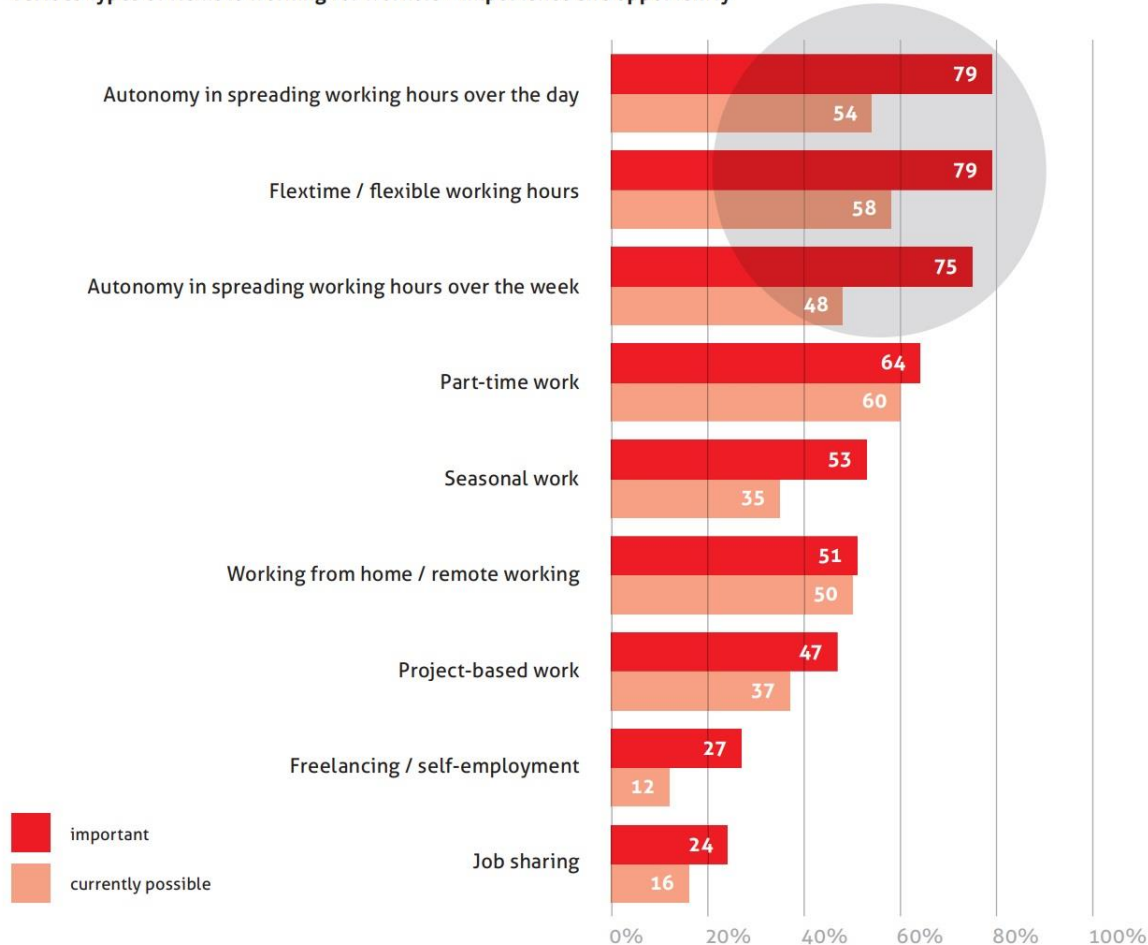
The study clearly demonstrates that in order to optimally fulfill domestic working potential, it is important to meet the demand for flexible working hours by modernizing the legal framework conditions. Rigid statutory working hour stipulations do not meet the demands of the working population. Flexible work is the answer to making the most of the domestic working potential and could alleviate the labor shortage. As a pioneer of flexible working, temping contributes to this solution and will help manage the future challenges of the labor market in a regulated framework based on law and social partnerships. Politicians' demands to limit temporary work are, therefore, neither reasonable nor solution-focused with regard to a functioning labor market of the future.

The study

The gfs-zürich institute surveyed 1230 working-aged people from 18 to 70 years in Switzerland on behalf of swissstaffing. A sample of 169 non-workers aged between 18 and 66 was also taken. Thus, 325 non-working people in total were surveyed. The survey was conducted online (74%) and by telephone (26%) between September 21 and November 11, 2023. It is representative in terms of age, gender and language region.

The full **white paper «More workers thanks to autonomy»** is available for download at <https://www.swissstaffing.ch/whitepaper>.

Various types of flexible working for workers – importance and opportunity



Basis: Workers surveyed (n=1074). Source: swissstaffing/gfs-zürich 2023

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swissstaffing is the centre of excellence for staffing service providers in Switzerland. As an employers' association, swissstaffing represents the interests of its 480 members in matters of policy, the economy and society. swissstaffing is a social partner of the CBA on Staff Leasing, the contract covering the majority of Switzerland's employees.

Studies on temporary workers and staffing service providers in Switzerland
 The market research institute gfs-Zürich completes regular surveys on behalf of swissstaffing. The current study can be found at [this link](#).