

eBook

# The 4-day week: A game changer or just a fad?

Professional insights from the top EX influencers



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**THE ENGAGEMENT 101**

## **Introduction**

In the ever-evolving landscape of work and life, a profound shift is underway. The traditional 9-to-5 grind that has dominated our lives for generations is giving way to a new and transformative concept: the 4-day workweek.

As we stand on the precipice of a new era, we are witnessing a seismic change in how we perceive and structure our workdays. The relentless pursuit of longer hours and endless productivity has left many feeling burnt out, stressed, and disconnected.

Amidst this challenge, The 4-day workweek promises to rejuvenate our work-life balance, boost productivity, and enhance our overall well-being. Companies, from small startups to multinational corporations, are reevaluating their work practices and discovering that a shorter workweek can lead to happier, more engaged employees and increased profitability.

In the pages that follow, we will explore whether the 4-day workweek has the potential to revolutionise how we live and work, or not.

We asked our Top Engagement 101 influencers...

**What's your view on the 4-day week? A game changer or just a fad?**

## **Our Contributors**

- Faroshia Ashley, Executive Coach | Trainer | Management Consultant, EmoWorks
- Steve Boese, President & Co-Founder, H3 HR Advisors
- Debra Corey, Chief Pay it Forward Officer, DebCo HR LTD
- Kara Dennison, Executive Career & Leadership Coach | CEO, Optimized Career Solutions
- Gifty Enright, CEO, Author, Keynote Speaker Coach, BUSINESSSCOPE CONSULTANCY LTD
- Gregory F.Simpson, Managing Director, Employee Experience, Agent In Engagement
- Francesca Gino, Professor of Business Administration, Harvard Business School
- Lance Haun, Vice President, Market Insights, The Starr Conspiracy
- Gethin Nadin, Chief Innovation Officer, Benefex
- Sesil Pir, Founder and Board Member, SESIL PIR Consulting
- Eugenio Pirri, Chief Executive Officer, Dorchester Collection
- Marcel Schwantes, Keynote Speaker and Leadership Coach
- Dan Sodergren, Keynote and TedxTalk speaker on the future of work. Expert / guest on national TV / radio and podcasts
- Perry Timms, Founder and Chief Energy Officer, People & Transformational HR Ltd
- Sean Trainor, Founding Partner, SalientKSA



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**Faroshia Berggraaf-Ashley**

**Executive Coach | Trainer |**

**Management Consultant**

EmoWorks

*The fact that the 4-day week is being talked about this much is a clear signal. One I think leaders need to take seriously.*

*People are looking for more opportunities to create balance in their lives. It would be a game changer if we grow to a leadership attitude that can fully support that, so we can keep people at the top of their game, in all areas of life.*

*Beyond the time-aspect (4 days), we need to look at more sustainable ways to look at the role work plays in our lives.*



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**Steve Boese**

**President & Co-Founder**

H3 HR Advisors

*The ongoing experiments with 4-day working weeks are showing that assumptions and pre-conceived notions of the design and organization of work can and should be questioned. What we have learned from these initiatives is that workers have overwhelmingly embraced 4-day working weeks – reporting reduced levels of burnout and stress, more time for caregiving responsibilities, and overall improvement in their engagement and happiness.*

*And the participating organizations in 4-day working weeks trials have seen improved business outcomes as measured by (variously) revenue growth, productivity, and retention. Additionally, it has been reported that over 90% of organizations who have trialed the 4-day working week are planning to adopt the schedule moving forward. So, based on these results, and consistent with earlier trials, it appears that the 4-day working week is beginning to move forward into more mainstream conversation and dialogue amongst organizational leaders and their teams.*

*In my estimation, the 4-day working week may finally have enough momentum and real-world data points to become more common in organizations, as competitive labor market conditions will require organizations to continue to implement measures that demonstrably improve the nature of work, and that put employees at the center of the design of work. Remember that the “normal” 5-day, 40-hour working week was also pioneered by forward-thinking leaders who were seeking a solution to improve working conditions while simultaneously meeting business goals. Today’s modern and inspiring workplaces have the same goals – improving work for everyone and building successful enterprises. The 4-day working week may just be an important mechanism to turn those goals into reality.*



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**Debra Corey**

**Chief Pay it Forward Officer**

DebCo HR LTD

*I believe that a 4-day week can be a game changer in that it addresses many of the challenges our people face in this new world of work.*

*Between the pace of work, the always on mentality, the blurred lines between work and home, using a theme park analogy, work has changed from being a carousel to a roller coaster. And like a roller coaster, you can only ride it for so long before your body and mind can not handle it, needing to get off to recover and get your balance back.*

*If businesses can adapt their processes, scheduling, etc., to a 4-day week, they will reap the benefits from an energized and engaged workforce, one that will help their business thrive and their people eager and ready to get back on the "rollercoaster."*



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**Kara Dennison**

**Executive Career & Leadership  
Coach | CEO**

Optimized Career Solutions

*The 4-day workweek is an innovative solution to flexibility and autonomy in the workplace. Burnout affects many high achievers and leaders, especially women. Far too often I've seen professionals burn through their PTO in a poor attempt to heal burnout. A quick vacation that ends up leaving them more stressed when they return to the office, or squeezing doctors' appointments in during lunch hours. Allowing for flexibility to have an additional day off during the week will allow employees freedom to handle the stresses of life during the week without having to use PTO. This will free up more time for employees to rest and recuperate or spend time with families, leading to more fulfillment in life and less stress.*

*Additionally, cutting out commuting times once a week will significantly decrease costs for in-office employees. Employees crave more autonomy and flexibility and will seek employers who holistically care about them as humans, not just resources. The 4-day workweek is one way to provide that. The benefits of a less stressed and more fulfilled workforce also benefit employers due to reduced turnover rates, and higher engagement and productivity.*



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**Gifty Enright**

**CEO, Author, Keynote Speaker  
Coach**

BUSINESSSCOPE CONSULTANCY LTD

*As a workplace wellbeing expert, I view the 4-day week as a potential game changer. By reducing the traditional workweek to four days, it has the potential to improve work-life balance, particularly for parents and those with caring responsibilities, enhance employee satisfaction, and boost productivity.*

*However, there is stiff opposition in some circles to the 4 day as it requires a complete mindset shift. Successful implementation will need in-depth planning and significant investment in change management coupled with careful consideration of individual and organizational needs.*



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**Gregory F Simpson**

**Managing Director, Employee  
Experience**

Agent In Engagement

*In today's evolving world of work, discussions around hours worked are prevalent, with the concept of a 4-day week taking different forms. It can either involve working 4, 10-hour days or a total of 32 hours per week with no reduction in pay. I believe that a 32-hour week has the potential to be a game changer.*

*Improved work-life balance is a key benefit of a 32-hour week. By reducing the time spent at work, employees can have more time for personal interests, leisure activities, and family. Additionally, a reduced workweek could enhance productivity and creativity, as employees may feel more refreshed and motivated.*

*Furthermore, a 32-hour week could promote flexible work arrangements, giving employees more control over their schedules and better accommodating their personal needs. It may also be an attractive option for talent acquisition and retention, appealing to employees seeking a better work-life integration.*

*However, potential drawbacks should be acknowledged, such as concerns about workload distribution, meeting availability, and disruptions to business operations. Some industries or roles may also require longer work hours to meet operational demands, making a 32-hour week less feasible.*

*A 32-hour week has the potential to be a game changer in the workforce by enhancing work-life balance, productivity, and flexibility. While careful consideration of organizational needs is essential, customized planning, monitoring, and implementation can help ensure successful adoption and address potential challenges.*



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**Francesca Gino**

**Professor of Business  
Administration**

Harvard Business School

*The 4-day week has the potential to be a game changer for both employees and companies. By offering a shorter workweek, employees can experience better work-life balance, increased productivity, and reduced stress levels.*

*Additionally, companies can benefit from improved employee engagement, lower absenteeism, and a more attractive employer brand. However, it is important to note that the 4-day week may not be suitable for every industry or company, and it requires careful planning and implementation to ensure its success.*



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**Lance Haun**

**Vice President, Market Insights**

The Starr Conspiracy

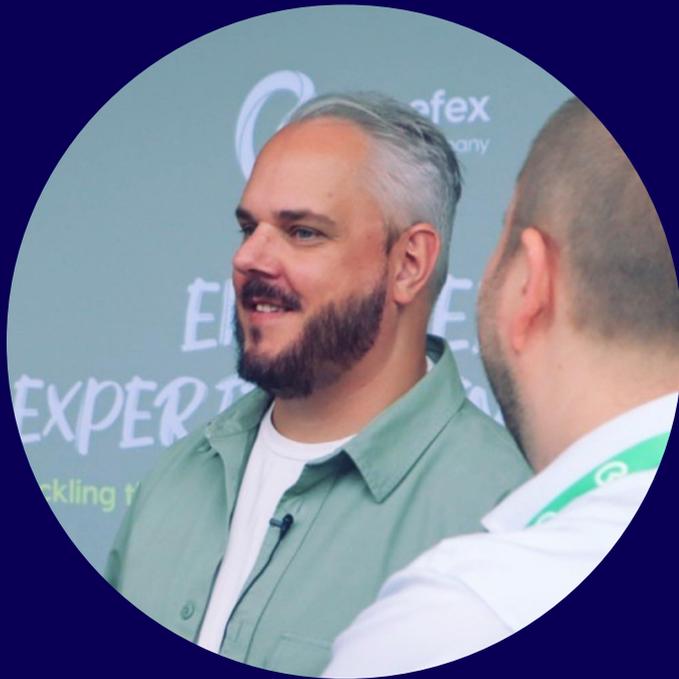
*The four-day workweek is not just a game changer, it's a life changer. It's what we do at The Starr Conspiracy. But, it's not easy, and it's not right for every organization. It's a major cultural shift and every person inside the organization has to be committed to it or it can go off the rails quickly.*

*There are obviously other positive ways to improve flexibility for your workforce but the four-day week is an amazing new tool and I'm happy to see that we have scientific results that shows it can work in a variety of industries.*



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**Gethin Nadin**

**Chief Innovation Officer**

Benefex

*For almost ten years I've been predicting huge changes in where and when we work. While the pandemic was a forced experiment in more flexible working, all it actually did was further enhance a growing trend for people to work away from the office.*

*Similarly, the advance of the four-day working week is just another evolution of a trend that has seen our normal working time reduce from an average of 12 hours, seven days a week 150 years ago, to its current average of 8 hours, five days a week.*

*From the mechanical loom to computers, workplace technology has been delivering a promise of higher output for less work. In 2023 and beyond, the only way we will solve the growing productivity and wellbeing problems in the world of work is to make the next change in the progression of our working hours.*

*I genuinely believe that within ten years, at least a quarter of full-time workers will be working less than five days a week.*



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**Sasil Pir**

**Founder and Board Member**

SESIL PIR Consulting

*The existing and current scientific studies prove time and time again that 4-day work weeks reduce stress without hurting productivity. In some studies, we see a significant impact on well-being and increased creativity.*

*That said, I think the key driver has been and continues to be a sense of autonomy here. Autonomy along with connection, purpose, and self-interest is a key motivator in human behavior development.*

*A 4-day week is a tool, a model for how people can gain a better sense of control over different aspects of their lives, including work.*

A woman with long dark hair, wearing a teal top, is laughing heartily and clapping her hands. She is holding a glass of champagne. The background is dark and out of focus, suggesting a social event or party.

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**Eugenio Pirri**

**Chief Executive Officer**

Dorchester Collection

*I believe everything is about balance, but the reality is that there is a very large part of companies globally that don't have the option of providing this way of working.*

*Therefore, employers need to review all practices to achieve the right balance for their people to ensure the right employee experience is happening.*

*Nothing is a fad, but not all things can be game-changers to all businesses.*



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**Marcel Schwantes**

**Keynote Speaker and Leadership  
Coach**

*It's a game changer for remote workers banging away on their keyboards and collaborating through digital apps and video screens. However, this concept isn't always realistic for a whopping 80% of the global workforce: deskless workers.*

*Think about those workers in your supply chain network providing goods and services. I'm talking about those extremely valuable frontline workers, many of them paid by the hour; these are the people staffing our grocery stores and restaurants, those providing waste management services, the people operating public transportation, the ones delivering things to us.*

*So, what do they want?*

*It's certainly not a four-day workweek. A study conducted by WorkStep of 18,000 frontline workers across 150 companies found that the top driver of turnover is lack of career growth. Those employees who don't feel like their company is investing in them in the same way they are investing in the company, who don't feel there are opportunities to grow their skills, grow their wage, and grow their career within an organization, are the employees who are most likely to quit.*

*Those workers who are most aligned to that growth pathway are most likely to stay, and so for them, a four-day workweek would be merely putting lipstick on a pig.*



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### **Dan Sodergren**

**Keynote and TedxTalk speaker on the future of work. Expert / guest on national TV / radio and podcasts**

*The 4-day week has the potential to be a game changer, but it depends on how it's implemented and the specific context of the organization. By giving employees more time to recharge and focus on their personal lives, a 4-day week can lead to increased productivity, better mental health, and higher job satisfaction. It also signals a shift towards valuing outcomes over hours worked, which is crucial for the future of work.*

*However, a 4-day week may not be suitable for every organization or industry. It's important for businesses to carefully consider their specific needs and the potential impact on their employees and customers before making such a change. Ultimately, the 4-day week is a part of a broader conversation about redefining work and finding the right balance between productivity, employee well-being, and business success. I would love for us at Your FLOCK - the employee feedback survey to move to a 4 day week - but right now it's not right for us.*



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**Perry Timms**

**Founder and Chief Energy Officer**

People & Transformational HR Ltd

*I'm biased as we are an existing 4-day Operating Week organisation, now almost 3 years in. IMHO it IS a game changer. For the reasons highlighted recently about the human energy crisis, something I wrote about in The Energized Workplace in 2019/20.*

*It's a 7-day week for retailers, logistics, utilities, transport, entertainment, hospitality and healthcare. So the 5-day week is a "privilege" largely afforded to bosses and knowledge work. All moving to 4-day weeks (and commensurate shifts/covering rotas etc) is good for all as it reclaims that day to create regenerative energy in people and thereby higher quality work and better life balance and closes the gap in senior roles for those on part-time hours.*



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**Sean Trainor**

**Founding Partner**

SalientKSA

*The 4-day working week is becoming more common in some countries and has been shown to improve productivity and work-life balance.*

*It's a simple case of arithmetic: on average, five people employed four days a week will create more sustainable economies and societies than four people employed five days per week. This shift can also lead to reduced stress and burnout, increased creativity, and improved job satisfaction.*

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