

GUIDE TO DECIPHERING NEW TERMINOLOGY

Jargon can be pervasive when discussing strategies for returning to the workplace or extending options for working in other locations. Everyone needs to understand the vocabulary for policies, procedures and implementation plans to succeed. Here are some definitions to help build consensus and prevent confusion from the start.

COMPRESSED WORK SCHEDULE – Allows employees to complete a full-time job in fewer than the traditional number of workdays. Frequently used schedules are 9-80s where employees complete two traditional work weeks in nine days, 4-10s where they complete a 40-hour work week in four days and, frequently used in healthcare, 3-12s where they work three 12-hour shifts.

COWORKING SPACE – Part of the flexible workspace industry. Allows workers of different companies to share common spaces, physical offices, conference rooms, equipment, utilities, receptionist and custodial services and in some cases refreshments. Privacy may be more limited than in virtual offices, but coworking spaces are used more frequently.

FLEXIBLE WORKSPACE INDUSTRY – Businesses that own or lease shared spaces to companies so they can avoid the capital expenses of owning or leasing a traditional office for all employees. Allows employees to work from a more convenient location than a centralized office and often includes some form of hoteling. Flexible workplace denotes an employer's willingness to adapt to changing circumstances. It places more emphasis on getting the work done and less on when and where it is accomplished.

HOT-DESKING – A method of office management in which a work station is not assigned or reserved. Desks, cubicles or offices are available on a first-come, first-served basis.

HOTELING – A method of office management in which reservations are made to use a work station. Desks, cubicles or offices aren't assigned to a worker but are available to any worker who schedules time there.

HYBRID WORKFORCE – Combines working at the office and working from home in ways that improve employee and company productivity and support work-life balance. Schedules and frequency of employees working in an office may vary in frequency and length of time, depending on tasks, needs and convenience.

JOB SHARING – Allows two or more individuals working part-time or reduced time to divide responsibilities to complete the work typically performed by a single individual in a full-time position.

MOBILE WORK – When an employee may work from a home work station, coffee shop, library, etc., or on the road as in a sales person.

REMOTE WORK – May be broad and allow WFA or WFH or may be restricted to other specific locations such as distributed offices or approved coworking spaces.

STAGGERED TIME – Allows employees to vary their work hours, including start and end times, to suit their work obligations, personal commitments or operational demands.

TELEWORK – Also referred to as telecommuting. A work arrangement in which employees do not commute to a central place of work but work remotely in a variety of ways.

VIRTUAL OFFICE – Part of the flexible workspace industry. Provides limited brick-and-mortar facilities but provides businesses with any combination of services associated with an actual office, such as a physical address, call answering services and parcel acceptance services to avoid using a home address as a business address. Virtual offices may also include offices and meeting spaces used less frequently, but with more privacy than coworking spaces.

WORKING FROM ANYWHERE (WFA) – Work from anywhere allows workers to move to any location and continue to work remotely. For instance, if someone has kept a job throughout the pandemic but moved to another state or country. There may be tax implications for both the employee and employer in this instance.

WORKING FROM HOME (WFH) – Work from home is a common term used to describe telework.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BENEFITS, PERKS AND WORK ARRANGEMENTS

EMPLOYEE BENEFITS are defined as indirect, non-cash or cash compensation paid to an employee above and beyond regular salary. Some benefits are required by law. Benefits are generally offered to all employees of an organization.

EMPLOYEE PERKS are offerings above and beyond standard benefits. They are generally offered to all employees and used to boost employee morale and demonstrate employee appreciation. Sometimes they are used to attract prospective employees.

WORK ARRANGEMENTS are optional, conditional and sometimes temporary agreements that allow employees to fulfill job responsibilities. Some examples are compressed work schedules, telework, job sharing and staggered time.

More policy development resources and options to request support are available online. Find the accompanying document to these definitions, 3 Questions & 10 Conversations to Kick Start Hybrid Workplace Development guide, along with webinars and other Hybrid Workforce Resources at gotriangle.org/hybrid.

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