

CONCORDAT JANUARY 22nd 2007

This concordat brings together the signatories in a joint statement supporting the development and implementation of smarter working practices and as an example, and encouragement, to others to do likewise. The goal is to increase significantly the use of these practices by 2011. Such advancements will not only benefit companies, communities and individuals, but the UK economy as a whole, making it more productive and competitive in the global marketplace.

In an increasingly complex world employers and employees strive to use their resources effectively; the one to gain better productivity and competitiveness, the other to balance work and life pressures.

The modern workplace is set against a background of a growing global market and increasing competition from the emerging economies, such as China and India. The UK, like a number of other Western economies, needs to become more productive and competitive – changing the way we work, transforming the traditional working cultures and dramatically changing the workplace environment.

In order for us to grow and prosper we must find new ways of working to realise the benefits of our investment in technology and the significant workplace enhancement of recent years.

Smarter working practices, which include flexitime, working from home and remote working, embrace the best examples of progressive workplace management and flexible working practices from around the world. These new ways of working have a positive impact on business process improvements, the social aspects of work, the environment and the transport infrastructure.

The UK is no stranger to innovation – Just as the UK prospered from the Industrial Revolution during the 19th century, leading the world in the introduction of new working practices, which were the foundations of the modern world, it can again take a lead and benefit from the Workstyle Revolution in the 21st.

WORKING SMARTER, LIVING BETTER

The adoption of smarter working practices in the workplace will lead to a number of significant benefits. These include:

Economic benefits – increasing overall efficiency & productivity

- Working smarter will enable employees to make more efficient use of the time available, and make them more productive.
- Greater productivity will improve competitiveness, ultimately resulting in improved efficiency and profitability.
- Enhancing skills investment in human capital.
- Reduced property, heating, lighting and transport costs.
- Employees, who work more efficiently, are more motivated and feel appreciated.
- The increase in staff wellbeing can also reduce staff turnover and levels of absenteeism.
- Access to a bigger recruiting pool.

Social benefits – for individuals, employers & society at large

The impact on an individual's life of long hours coupled with commuting time is fundamental and significant. To be able to reduce both has a number of benefits:

- The work/life balance for employees will be improved. Having to travel less means more time for home, family, leisure and voluntary community activities.
- It will assist those who have traditionally found access to work difficult, such as single parents, carers and those with disabilities, to find employment.
- The ability for workers to choose their working environments or hours helps them to manage their work/life balance more productively.
- A fall in the number of people travelling will ease congestion levels on the roads and over-crowding problems on public transport, making the experience for those who have to travel more tolerable.
- The burden on health services will be lessened with fewer stress related illnesses and general improvement in fitness with increased leisure time.

Environmental benefits – reducing impacts & assessment

Adopting smarter working practices will lead to key environmental benefits:

- Reduced congestion, for example, through staggered travelling hours.
- Reduced emissions, which will benefit noise and overall pollution levels.
- Better utilisation of the capacity of our existing transport infrastructure.
- Reducing the need for future additional infrastructure.
- Slowing down climate change.
- Making our air cleaner to breathe.

CREATING A SMARTER WORKING BRITAIN

We the signatories agree to work towards the common objectives of Work Wise UK, to promote smarter working practices to help the UK become the most progressive economy in the world.

To achieve this, the signatories will encourage a positive attitude to new ways of working that deliver benefits to both employers and employees.

We will encourage the development of positive management cultures in the workplace, focusing on trust between employers and employees and adopting wherever possible smarter working practices.



David Lennan, Chairman



Richard Lambert, Director General



Brendan Barber, General Secretary



Sir Christopher Bland, Chairman



Ben Plowden, Managing Director,
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Philip Flaxton, Chief Executive



THE BRITISH
CHAMBERS OF
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