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FLEXIBLE WORKING FOR LAW FIRMS

Julia Shallcrass
KiwiBoss
Christchurch
November 2017

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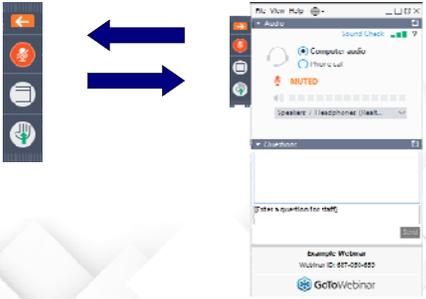
Introducing



Julia Shallcrass, Director of KiwiBoss



Webinar Toolbar



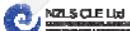
The image shows a vertical toolbar on the left with icons for back, forward, mute, chat, and help. To its right is a screenshot of a webinar interface showing a 'MUTED' status and a 'GettoWebinar' logo. Two blue arrows point from the toolbar to the screenshot.



Objectives

Our learning objectives today are:

- Flexible work options for your law firm
- How flexible working improves staff wellbeing, productivity and increases diversity
- Challenges to flexible working and key ways to overcome them



Flexible working in NZ



- Flexibility one of NZ's top issues in diversity study!
(Diversity Works NZ research - Oct 2017)
- Most common forms of flexible work include:
 - Flexible work time (76.4%)
 - Part time or reduced hours (64.2%)
 - Remote working (62.4%)



Who wants flexible working?



Why do we need flexible working in Law?

- 61% of employed lawyers are female
- But only 30% of partners or directors are female!
- Male lawyers also want flexible working



Flexibility of time and place for diversity!

Stacey Shortall – Partner
MinterEllisonRudd Watts



- “Maternal Wall”
- “Unconscious Bias”
- “Flexible working arrangements for all”
(Vaughan 2016)



Benefits of flexible working

- Greater gender diversity
- More productive workforce
- Reduced turnover and absenteeism



Law firm leader in flexibility

**Odette Wilson –
Chief people and performance officer**
MinterEllisonRuddWatts



- Implemented flexible working arrangements including:
 - job shares, condensed hours
 - part time equity partners
- EDI Workplan, flexible policies and toolbox
- 40% of board are women



Flexible Equity Partner

Stephanie Ambler – Partner
Tompkins Wake



- Flexible working arrangement
 - Can change arrangements based around childcare commitments
- Retain good staff by offering flexible working
- Be clear and ensure you have good support



Remote Worker with Paperless Practice

Philip Cornegé – Barrister
Thackeray Chambers



- Provides training on paperless practice
- Flexible hours to accommodate young family
- Can work anywhere meaning more accessible for clients
- Less interruptions = More productive



Flexible Legal Services Provider

Helen Mackay – Director
Juno Legal



- Provides in house legal consultants on a flexible basis
- Recruit for fit
- All employees have flexibility



Poll

Would you like the option for more flexible working arrangements in your workplace?

- A. Yes
- B. No
- C. Maybe



Informal flexibility

- Glide time
- Time off for special events
- Unpaid leave
- Irregular working from home



Remote Working

Working from home or another location outside of the workplace



- Pros – More productive, less overheads, less distraction
- Cons – Lack of trust, lack of social engagement, less collaboration with colleagues



Part time/Flexi-time working

Less than full time work or compressed hours



- Pros – Better work/life balance, more productive, less time in traffic
- Cons – Less visibility can mean less opportunity for promotion, less interesting work, overwork



Job Sharing

One job is completed by two or more people, who share responsibilities between them

- Pros – Better work/life balance, up to 25% more productive (Jobsharing NZ 2017), caseload always covered
- Cons – Difficult to replace if one decides to leave



Outsourcing

Use independent contractors to complete work

- Pros – Short term without commitment, specialist skills, less training
- Cons – Expensive, quality of work not assured



Poll

Which of the following challenges are the biggest obstacle to flexible work in your organisation?

- A. Trust and supervision
- B. Health and safety
- C. Technology and confidentiality
- D. Career progression
- E. Other



Challenge – Trust and Supervision

- Are they working when they should be?
- How do you check the quality of work?
- Is their work area free of distractions?



Solutions for Trust and Supervision

- Employees must keep accurate time records
- Monitor work regularly
- Trial before making it a permanent change



Challenge – Health and Safety

- How do you ensure employees don't overwork?
- Stress/fatigue/isolation
- Is the office H&S compliant?



Solutions for Health and Safety

- Visit employees workspace if remote working to ensure it meets H&S requirements
- Ensure employees are training on H&S including effects of overwork and stress
- Keep the lines of communication open



Challenge – Technology & Confidentiality

- Keep documents secure and confidential
- Lack of IT support
- Access to files/client information



Solutions for Technology & Confidentiality

- Remote access to networks
- Procedures for document security
- Remote IT support



Challenge – Career Progression

- Negative impact of working part time
- Lack of visibility
- Less interesting work



Solutions for Career Progression

- Don't overlook flexible workers
- Flexibility is a two way street
- Ensure training is available for all employees



Challenge – support for flexibility

- Buy-in from clients and managers
 - Communicate expectations of availability
 - Urgent cases
 - Transactional files



Solutions to improve support

- Client and manager support
 - Lead from top and make flexibility visible!
 - Have 2 people available on each case
 - Meet clients' needs for flexibility



Poll

- Do you have the following:
 - A. Flexible working policies/programme
 - B. Training for managers on flexibility
 - C. Both of the above
 - D. None of the above



Creating change – overview



Legal obligations

- Every employee has the right to request flexible working
 - Employers have duty to consider any written requests
 - Can decline request if it comes under s 69AAF Employment Relations Act 2000
 - Must respond to written requests with one month



Strategy

- Decide on your strategy
 - What are your business needs?
 - Will flexible working align with your firm?
 - Will you still be able to provide a high quality service to your clients?



Create policies

- Create a flexible working policy
 - Include when the employee should be contactable, health and safety considerations, confidentiality, use of technology and when they will be required in the office
 - Regularly review the policy



Create Culture

- How to create change?
 - Provide training on flexible work practises
 - MinterEllisonRuddWatts– Empowerment, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) workplan
 - Talk about flexibility



Measure success

- Employee engagement surveys
- Staff retention and absence rates, productivity and diversity



Top tip

- Communication!



How can KiwiBoss help?

- Work with **You** on strategy and policies
- **Facilitate** discussion in your business
- Provide training to **Leaders**
- Email julia@kiwiboss.co.nz



Questions



Thank You



Julia Shallcrass
Email julia@kiwiboss.co.nz for free e-newsletter



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43



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