

# Winning results, no matter what challenges are thrown at our business...

The enforced working from home seen in 2020 changed the way we work as a country; in fact, it changed the way we work globally. It forced many of us to install new ways of working and come up with new and inventive ways of not only getting the work done but staying connected as a team, to the business and each other.

For the most part this enforced experiment has been a success. Obviously for the retail, restaurants and leisure businesses this was a non-starter, but many other businesses adapted and have been surprised by how quickly and effectively they've adapted.

Many would say that they now prefer the 'new normal' way of working. Many would say they are more productive, efficient and get more work done at home.

Many would also say they like the flexibility working from home affords them.

But this goes directly against the 9-5 office working regime we have been so used to.

What would be the difference to your business if you focused on the results of your teams work rather than the hours they worked?

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**STOP** thinking work is a place you go and spend time

**START** thinking that work is something you do to get results

### 1. The one 'BREAKTHROUGH QUESTION' you must ask to help yourself...

Many businesses have now experienced a large-scale 'work-from-home' experiment because of the world-wide coronavirus restrictions in the Spring of 2020.

This remote working experience showed that where work is done and when it gets done matters less than we thought.

Mon-to-Fri, 9-to-5 in the office isn't the only way to get work done...

Your answer to the question below informs the important decisions and actions for your business.

What would be the difference to your business if you focused on the results of your teams work rather than the hours they worked?

Your answer to this question tells you how big your appetite is for creating a Results Only Working Environment in your business.

Where is the value in this question?

Creating a Results Only Working Environment (ROWE) demands a culture shift both from management and from employees.

Changing attitudes away from 9-5 mentality and towards a 'what-work-gets-done' mentality is fundamental to creating a successful ROWE.

The new habits and attitudes to achieve this clearly require hard work; robust working processes, technology and great communication; clarity of what's required, by when and by who; well understood frameworks and leadership.



## Results Matter Most

Support tools and resources

### 2. Reimagining the office and work life after COVID-19

Before the global pandemic broke at the start of 2020 the conventional way for your team to work was in the office, behind their desks, surrounded by their peers. Normal convention also dictated that normal office hours were 9-5.

Doing these hours and conforming in this way was the norm and it was generally assumed by all of those around you and your team that coming into the office and doing these hours meant a good day's work had been done and that your team were at their most effective.

But does being in the office mean that your team achieve the best results?

Is the office the place where the best work is done?

The importance of human contact and physical interaction cannot be underestimated, but does the office environment affect the results of your team?

According to a **McKinsey & Company Study** on working from home, 80% of people questioned report that they enjoy working from home.

41% say that they are more productive than they had been before and 28% that they are as productive.

Many employees liberated from long commutes and travel have found more productive ways to spend that time, enjoyed greater flexibility in balancing their personal and professional lives, and decided that they prefer to work from home rather than the office.

[Click here to read the report in full.](#)

#### **BUT - Questions need answers!**

The McKinsey article and research focuses on the workplace. They pose some valuable questions as many businesses plan for a blend and balance of homeworking with office working too as part of the new way of working:

- Will planned and unplanned moments of collaboration become impaired?
- Will there be less mentorship and talent development?
- Has working from home succeeded only because it is viewed as temporary, not permanent?

Harvard Business Review recently released an article about the end of ROWE (Results Only Work Environment) being the death of **'Best Buy'**, the consumer electronics retailer.

Best Buy has a new CEO Hubert Joly, who axed the ROWE system (that had increased profits at Best Buy) for a much tougher approach. He axed the flexible working system and demanded that employees conform to a more traditional working system, telling employees that they needed to 'feel dispensable'.

This short term 'get tough' mindset was criticised then, but what would the reaction be now during a global pandemic?

[Click here to read the report in full.](#)

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On the flip side to Hubert Joly and Best Buy, you have '**Semco**', one of Brazil's most successful manufacturing companies.

Richard Semler took over the business from his father at the age of 21.

He felt the business was tired, the people were tired and counting the minutes until the end of the working day.

He changed this. Richard decided to experiment with democratic management principles, principles that put people before processes.

He realised that giving employees the power to participate in decision-making processes held the key to their motivation.

So, he and his management team began including employees in the decision-making processes within the business.

First it was simple things like choosing the colour of their uniform but then it moved onto bigger things like asking them to suggest improvements to the manufacturing process, setting their own targets and deciding where they worked from and the hours they worked.

These changes were radical then (the 1980s) and until the spring of 2020 would have been frowned upon by most business owners.

However – these changes meant Semco's profits grew by 46.5% over 20 years.

[Click here to read the full article on how Richard Semler changed the working practices at Semco.](#)

And you can watch this engaging Ted Talk where Richard Semler talks about the importance of the work/life balance and how to run a company with no rules! [Click here to watch](#) – it's worth taking the time. He is very easy to watch, funny and describes perfectly how ROWE worked for his business.



### 3. How productive are office workers?

**A study conducted by 'vouchercloud' in the UK** showed productivity of 2 hours and 53 minutes for every 8 office hours worked! Monday to Friday.

Clearly 9-to-5, in the office, doesn't pay off for your business according to this survey.

'vouchercloud' polled 1,989 UK office workers all aged over 18 as part of research into the online habits and productivity of workers across the nation. All respondents currently worked full-time in an office role.

Respondents were initially asked, 'Do you consider yourself to be productive throughout the entire working day?' to which the majority, 79% admitted that 'no' they weren't. Just a fifth, 21%, believed that 'yes' they were productive throughout the day.

[Click here to read the rest of the article and the results – they may surprise you!](#)

**In Norway** - Norwegians work an average of 1,424 hours per year—that's 359 hours *less* than Americans—and still have a higher annual GDP per capita than the U.S.

**In Finland** - Since the 90s, Finland's [Working Hours Act](#) has allowed workers to adjust their start or end times by up to three hours. As if that weren't enough, effective January 2020, Finland's [updated act](#) allows employees to determine the timing *and* location of their work for at least half of their regular working hours.

**In New Zealand** – 5 days' work in 4 days proves to work! In November 2018, Perpetual Guardian, a New Zealand-based financial services company with a staff of 240, implemented a new opt-in labour experiment for their workers. Those who opted in were given one additional paid day off per five-day work week. They were also asked to deliver the same amount of output as in a standard week.

Output stayed the same among those who were granted an extra day off, meaning that these workers were more productive per-hour during the four-day week than they had been during the previous 37.5-hour week.

It worked with some added benefits too.

Employees who worked for 30 hours yet were paid for 37.5 hours reported increases in many measures of wellbeing when compared to a survey of Perpetual Guardian workers taken the year before the opt-in labour experiment. The number of employees who reported positive work-life balance rose from 54% to 78%. Staff who reported work-related stress decreased from 45% to 38%. Importantly, work engagement increased with measures of 'commitment' up by 20%, 'stimulation' up by 18%, and 'empowerment' by 20%.

To ensure that employees did not become complacent, they 'spent a lot of time making sure every person in every team [had] their own plan as to...maintain, and even improve, their productivity'.

And this clarity on expectations and management support to ensure results are achieved sounds like a Results Only Work Environment!

Have a look at this chart <http://ercouncil.org/2019/chart-of-the-week-week-8-2019/>



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**In the UK, South Africa and USA** – David Maister studied 109 professional service firms across three countries to seek out common practices that achieve success. He published his findings in his book 'Practice What You Preach'. He named four elements that underpinned successful firms:

- Sense of Satisfaction – in the job role
- Sense of Accomplishment – getting the job done
- Sense of Commitment – from all your colleagues
- Sense of Challenge – it shouldn't be easy

What happens to all four when a business becomes more focused on getting the job done to a high standard and on-time? Compare this with an insistence first on working Mon-to-Fri, 9-to-5 in the same office!

**More examples** – If you want more examples of how different work environments positively affect productivity of your workers [check out this summary of research into Scandinavian work practices by Trello.](#)

### 4. Checklist of work myths we take for granted, set in stone:

These unspoken and unwritten rules are based on beliefs that we all share about how work gets done and what it looks like to get work done. We have so many beliefs about work it would be impossible to name them all. Here is a partial list:

- Most work happens from Monday to Friday, nine to five.
- People at their workstations are doing work.
- Results are proportional to efforts.
- “Summer Hours” programs help create work-life balance for our employees.
- People who work a lot of hours get more work done than people who work fewer hours.
- Non-exempt employee status is a way for us to protect our employees from working too many hours.
- Working “out of hours” is not good for work-life balance.
- Flexibility creates performance issues.
- People in flexible work environments don’t have enough time to get their work done.
- If people can get their work done in less time, they should get more work.
- The best customer service happens face-to-face.
- Creating more “jobs” helps us manage more work.
- Face time is necessary in order for work to get done.
- Instant availability is the measure of great customer service.
- Roles and responsibilities bring clarity to work.
- Job descriptions help people know what’s expected of them at work.
- Restructuring requires longer working hours.
- If you give people control over their schedules, they will take advantage of the system.
- Managers with direct reports cannot work from home.
- The best collaboration is done face-to-face.

*From ‘Why Work Sucks and How to Fix It’ (pp. 26-27) by Cali Ressler. Penguin Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.*

### 5. What time feels like in ROWE (Results Only Work Environment)

#### - Team buy-in and engagement goes through the roof

So, how do you get around the issues that so many business owners and managers have with hours worked and the myth of control or time?

What can businesses do to break down the power and control so they can move to a ROWE?

**Here are 13 Guideposts that everyone in a team or business need to work towards to make a true ROWE.**

They cut through the hierarchy and politics and force everyone to examine the beliefs they have about how and when work needs to happen.

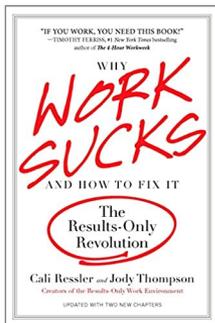
The guideposts are:

1. People at all levels stop doing any activity that is a waste of their time, the customer's time, or the company's money.
2. Employees have the freedom to work any way they want.
3. Every day feels like Saturday.
4. Work isn't a place you go, it's something you do.
5. People have an unlimited amount of paid time off as long as the work gets done.
6. Leaving the workplace at 2pm is not considered leaving early; arriving at the workplace at 2pm is not considered coming in late.
7. Nobody talks about how many hours they work.
8. Every meeting is optional.
9. It's okay to catch a movie on a Tuesday afternoon; it's okay to grocery shop on a Wednesday morning; it's okay to take a nap on a Thursday afternoon.
10. There are no work schedules.
11. Nobody feels overworked, guilty, or stressed out.
12. There aren't any last-minute fire drills.
13. There's no judgment about how you spend your time.

*From 'Why Work Sucks and How to Fix It' (pp. 89) by Cali Ressler. Penguin Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.*

### 6. The books and other resources

A results-only workplace may sound like fantasy, but with the global pandemic changing the way we work now and into the future, it is now a realistic way of working for many businesses.



ROWE means as long as the work gets done, you make the decisions about when and where you do it.

Cali Ressler and Jody Thompson are leading the movement to make ROWE a reality, even implementing it successfully at Best Buy. They show how a Results Only Work Environment not only makes employees happier but delivers better results.

*“Filled with passion and common sense, their book will change the way you think about your job, your company, and your quality of life.” – Business Week Magazine*

Here is a link to buy the book ‘Why Work Sucks and how to fix it’: <http://bit.ly/work sucksbook>



Semco is one of Latin America’s fastest growing companies – acknowledged to be the best in Brazil, with a waiting list of thousands of applicants waiting to join it.

Learn Ricardo Semler’s secrets and let some of the Semco magic rub off on you and your business.

*“In a very personal, yet profound and serious manner, Ricardo Semler shares principles of a truly democratic workplace. Transparency, flexible structures and a different understanding of “hierarchy” are some of the cornerstones that make Semco a successful living experiment worth following.” – HBR*

Here is a link to buy the book ‘Maverick’: <http://bit.ly/maverickRS>

### 3 YouTube videos to watch

1. Here is a very timely video from Ricardo Semler about the new way of working during the Covid-19 pandemic and the importance of appreciating the time and freedom to adjust to the new way of working – just 2 minutes long.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5E1cYUPy0Wk>

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If you want to know more about ROWE and the importance to your business, then watch these videos.

2. Cali Ressler & Jody Thompson are co-authors of the bestselling book, "Why Work Sucks and How to Fix It" and the co-creators of Results-Only Work Environment. These are excerpts from a dynamic keynote they gave in Toronto at the Achievers Customer Experience conference in September 2012.



[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GtgF2L2n\\_g8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GtgF2L2n_g8)

3. Here is another great 3-minute video where Jody and Cali talk about 'Why Management Sucks' and the importance of changing the way you manage to create a success Results Only Work Environment.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1PHTBoZ4hEQ>