



# Flexibility and wellness



*“Before smartphones and email syncing, we tended to have greater separation between work and non-work time. As that separation has diminished, many feel like they never have time to recharge the batteries. We’re not going to change the realities of the online world, so we need to manage the balance through discipline combined with flexibility, as paradoxical as that sounds”*

**SIMON MOUTTER**  
MANAGING DIRECTOR, SPARK NEW ZEALAND



*“As business has had to evolve to be responsive to customers almost 24/7, we’ve expected more of our people. It’s about creating that balance for people to be their best that they can be at work, to create value in the business, and for business to respect the needs of its people.”*

**MICHELE EMBLING**  
CHAMPION AND CHAIR, PwC

# Overview

Flexibility has been named as one of the top corporate wellness trends for 2017 by [Forbes](#) magazine. It states that “flexibility covers a lot of the groundwork needed for employee wellness, as it focuses on improving work-life balance”.

With the rise in dual income families, people are becoming increasing time-poor. Despite changes in society, the workplace operates to a large degree on the stereotype of the ideal worker, i.e. someone who is able to work full time, and to be solely committed to their job, because they are supported by someone outside the workplace who attends to all their non-work needs. The cliché of the full time bread-winner husband and home-maker wife is now uncommon in the real world, but in subtle – and often unconscious – ways continues to shape expectations in the workplace.

By allowing employees to manage their schedule to include being able to do some life admin you are enabling them to be fully present when they are at work.

## Employees with flexible work schedules are:

- More engaged
- More productive
- More likely to recommend their employer

## They have:

- Higher levels of job satisfaction
- Less absenteeism
- Reduced turnover rates

Although technology is a great enabler of flexible working, it can mean that people don't switch off as easily. Taking time to relax and rejuvenate is essential to remain engaged and productive so it is important to clearly manage the expectations of others by being clear about what's urgent and what can wait.

Leading by example and demonstrating that working 24/7 is not expected is the key to avoiding burnout in both yourself and your staff.



## Why flexibility?

**Workplace flexibility is an essential enabler for managing the pace of change in today's world of work.**

It allows you, as an employer, to attract and retain top talent (your people), achieve increased productivity (your business), and foster an agile response to changing market needs (your customers and environment).

It's a diverse and in-depth strategy that goes beyond the traditional thinking of 'part-time work for new parents' to an integrated mindset and way of work accessible to all.

# Why people may want **flexibility** for **wellness** reasons



**Long commute**



**Exercise/training**



**Being able to work the hours when they feel they are at their best, e.g. early in the morning or late at night**



**Health concerns**



**More equal sharing of caring commitments**



**Family commitments**

## Things to **consider**

- Make guilt-free choices between work and life, be committed and make it happen
- Manage the expectations of others by being clear about what's urgent and what can wait
- Lead by example and acknowledge that people handle 24/7 connectedness differently
- Routine helps by taking away decision making for the small things
- Exercise
- Take time to relax and rejuvenate – whatever that means for you
- Use technology to your advantage



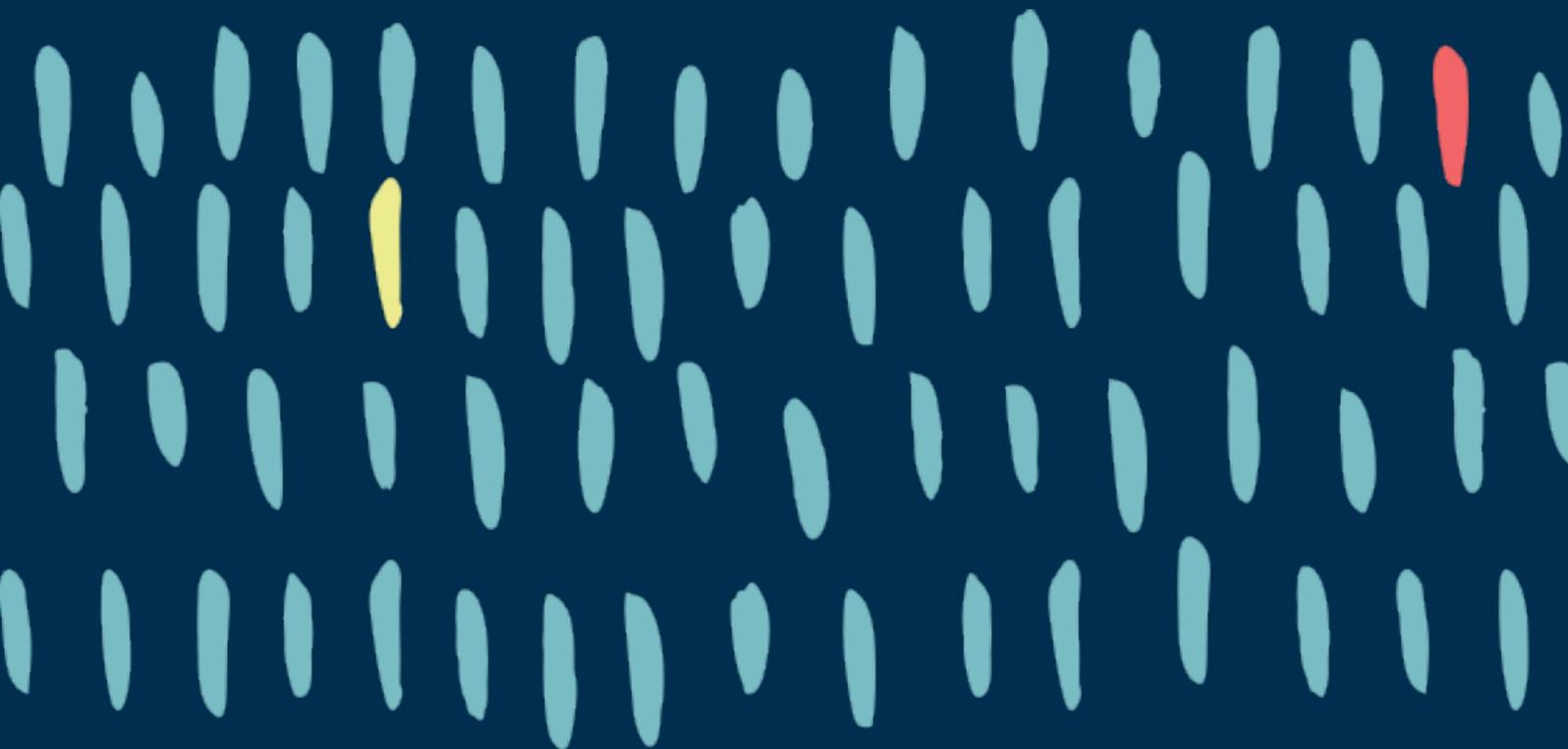
*“Employee well-being is key. At Virgin we believe that if you look after your staff first the rest will follow, a happy workforce is a healthier workforce.”*

**SIR RICHARD BRANSON**  
FOUNDER, VIRGIN GROUP



*“A strong corporate culture can have a positive impact on society.”*

**SIMON SINEK**  
AUTHOR AND SPEAKER



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