



The case study has been prepared on behalf of "Fifty Acres - The Communications Agency"  
by 'School Hours', Australia's family friendly employment experts.

Flexible Working Arrangements or Family Friendly Working Arrangements as we like to refer to them as, are taking the corporate world by storm. Work is evolving. When, where and how people work is evolving and businesses all over the world are looking at the benefits this evolution brings with it and how it provides their businesses with better outcomes.



There is a positive shift towards measuring employee output or what an employee produces instead of the more traditional measurement of input or how long an employee works. This shift has proven to increase engagement, gender imbalances, productivity and loyalty with decreases in absenteeism, staff turnover and recruitment costs (attraction, induction and training).

One of our core goals as Australia's family friendly employment expert is to ensure businesses using flexible or family friendly working arrangements are showcased. What was done? How was it done? What did it achieve? The answers to these questions should be displayed for all to see. The more these practices are demonstrated to work, the greater the acceptance and implementation of them will be and that is good for everyone.

We hope you enjoy this exposé on family friendly employment practices being used effectively. If you need more information on how to become a family friendly employer, please email or call us today.

Yours sincerely  
Leigh and Yasmin Grigaliunas

Directors and Co-Founders



## introduction



The  
Communications  
Agency

This case study focused on ***Fifty Acres - The Communications Agency***. Fifty Acres are a big picture communications company for Corporates and Not-For-Profits who can boast assisting companies like Global FMCG giant Kellogg's, national broadcaster SBS and The McGrath Foundation, to name but a few. Creating a world class strategic communications company whilst splitting your time between your rural and city home is a challenge most would doubt possible, however Fifty Acres has done just this using world class flexible working arrangements to attract and engage the very best team and they are delighted with the results.





## WHAT senior management SAYS...

**Q. Please tell us your name, position and provide us with a brief position description?**

*Jo Scard, Founder and Principal. I manage the business which means my responsibilities include liaising with clients, exploring new business opportunities, supervising staff, overseeing our internal marketing and branding, and developing strategic communications plans for the organisations we work with.*

**Q. How long have you been providing flexible arrangements to your team?**

*I started my business because I wanted to have a better work life balance, so it was natural for me to extend that courtesy to my staff. It has also been a product of our 'virtual office' arrangement where all of us work from home. This has been very helpful for a new business like mine as it's helped keep overheads down and allowed me to bring on talented casual staff who may not live in the same city, or not want or be able to work traditional hours.*

**Q. What kind of flexible arrangements do you offer?**

*All of the above! We have a number of students who work on a casual basis and two part-timers who work from home (both of whom have flexible start and finish times).*

**Q. What do you see as the main benefits of offering flexible working arrangements?**

*I am able to hire talented people who don't want to or can't work traditional hours!*

**Q. Is flexibility available to all staff members?**

*It's available to everyone.*

**Q. Do you formally measure any aspect of the arrangement(s) to confirm that is in fact providing you with value as an employer?**

*I keep track of how staff are spending their time (time sheets) and make an assessment based on the quality and quantity of work I receive from them.*

**Q. When hiring, do you advertise that you're an employer that is open to providing flexibility?**

*We always mention flexibility when advertising for positions or speaking with potential recruits as I think it's a great way to distinguish the agency and has proved an effective tool so far.*

**Q. Do you think your approach to flexibility assists in attracting and securing and retaining talent?**

*Yes I think it definitely helps attract and retain talented staff. I have even had one staff member return to work for me after taking another job after realising the benefits of being allowed to work in a flexible arrangement.*

**Q. Please rate the importance of providing flexibility within the workplace?**

*Extremely important.*





## WHAT THE EMPLOYEES SAY...

**Q. Please tell us your name, position and provide us with a brief position description?**

*Tambelin Mueck, Senior Account Executive. I am responsible for managing day-to-day client needs for example, drafting media and other communications materials, liaising with stakeholders and contributing to strategy documents. I am interacting regularly with my boss, colleagues, clients and stakeholders both via phone and email. I have three direct reports currently, each in a different city (all working remotely). I report to Fifty Acres Founder and Principal, Jo Scard.*

**Q. What are your current working arrangements?**

*I currently work 4 days a week from home. While I typically work an 8 hour day during standard work hours, I am allowed the flexibility to alter this when I wish so long as I am attending to my workload efficiently and meeting deadlines. This may mean I work a shorter day some days and make up the hours at another time. I also believe Jo (Scard, Founder) would be very happy for me to arrange to work less days if other commitments presented themselves. And to institute a job share arrangement or similar.*

**Q. Has the role always offered this level of flexibility?**

*Yes, I decided to take the job at Fifty Acres because it provided more flexibility than most roles available.*

**Q. Are there any mechanisms in place to measure your productivity against the norm?**

*I believe Jo simply assesses my productivity through the level and quality of work I deliver on an ongoing basis. I am required to complete time sheets outlining what tasks I am working on and*

*the time taken as well, but I think she mainly looks at what's being delivered and is comfortable that she's receiving value from the arrangement.*

**Q. Do you think you are treated differently by your colleagues because of your working arrangement?**

*All staff at Fifty Acres work remotely and flexibly and I know for a number of staff this is part of the appeal of working for the agency.*

**Q. What does being afforded this flexibility mean to you?**

*I am infinitely more content in my current work arrangement than I have been in more traditional arrangements. It means I have the freedom to enjoy life outside of work and to meet personal commitments I'd not otherwise be able to. I am less run down and even think I'm more productive because I am happy in my job and don't have the distractions of a traditional office. I am grateful to my employer for offering this flexibility and it definitely makes me want to stick around!*

**Q. How do you feel about flexibility in the workplace in general?**

*I think more flexibility in the workplace generally would be wonderful. People often look at me in disbelief when I explain my arrangement and say things like 'wow, that's amazing.' I think people are less stressed when they are afforded a level of flexibility that allows them to look after their wellbeing and meet commitments outside of work - and this has flow on effects in the form of higher productivity, creativity and loyalty to an employer. I think the 'culture of presenteeism' is an issue that prevents greater adoption of flexible work practices and employers need to get better at assessing an employee's contribution and productivity in ways beyond the hours someone is sitting behind a desk. Delivering quality results should be the benchmark instead.*





## conclusion:

Clearly these responses are evidence the flexible working arrangements being utilised by **Fifty Acres** are working well for them. Offering flexible or family friendly work arrangements is a leap of faith for some businesses, particularly smaller ones, and so it's always great to see data from SMEs proving these arrangements are as good for a big business as they are for small.

Contact us today for assistance to transform your business into a 'family friendly employer'. Aside from bringing your business in line with some of the world's leading businesses, it may help launch your business to the next level. We're certain you and your staff will be grateful for joining the family friendly employment revolution.



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