

# THE NINE DAY FORTNIGHT

WINDWAVE



# CONTENTS

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<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>METHODOLOGY</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION TO INSIGHTS</b>	<b>10</b>
Time spent so far	12
Greatest benefits	14
Time management	16
On balance	18
Drawbacks	20
<b>FURTHER COMMENTS</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>INSIGHTS BY TEAMS</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>CONCLUSION</b>	<b>26</b>



# INTRODUCTION

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In 2020 the UK experienced a high rate of citizens working from home following the global outbreak of COVID 19.

Many companies required their employees to transition to working from home instead of the office. The age of “The new normal” began as everyone adapted to online routines to stay home and stay safe. The entire nation was then expected to juggle their family and work obligations whilst reducing the transmission of COVID 19 by staying at home. This led to some companies offering more flexible hours to help manage work and lifestyle expectations.

Now in 2022, some companies have adapted to a flexible culture as they have found that their employees are more productive and better rested. This further led to the UK government inviting companies to trial out flexible working weeks to test whether this work culture would be beneficial to incorporate long term.

At Mindwave, we trialled the 9 day fortnight to see if it could offer employees a better work-life balance and improve our productivity.

“GREATER AUTONOMY AND CONTROL  
OVER THE COMPLETION OF WORK HAVE  
BEEN FOUND TO HAVE A POSITIVE EFFECT  
ON JOB SATISFACTION”<sup>1</sup>

For Better or for Worse? An Analysis of how Flexible Working Practices Influence Employees' Perceptions of Job Quality (Hyman and Summers, 2004; Igbaria and Guimaraes, 1999)<sup>1</sup>

**Mindwave could provide the flexibility and better work life balance that working from home provides and so decided to trial a nine day fortnight for all employees.**

Research shows that by giving workers less time to complete tasks, this would typically improve their productivity.

This led to the UK government inviting companies to trial out the 4 day working week to test whether this work culture would be beneficial to incorporate into work culture long term.

We at Mindwave Ventures were one of the companies to attempt this trial to determine whether it is a useful way of working for us. Our approach entailed the 9 day fortnight as our belief is that by working the same hours but compressed with a day off, it will improve our productivity and provide a better work life balance collectively.



# METHODOLOGY

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In March 2022, we as a company began our trial with the 9 Day Fortnight to determine if this way of working would be beneficial to us. The trial began on 1st April and is due to end on Friday 15th July giving us just over 3 months to determine if this way of working would be beneficial for us at Mindwave or not.

The proposed approach we have taken at Mindwave is the compressed hours where we work for 7 hours and 45 minutes as opposed to the 7 hours we did previously. With this new approach, we would still be working the same hours in total, but as it is compressed, we could have Fridays off every fortnight.

Additionally, there is added flexibility where employees of Mindwave can determine the hours that they would like to start their work, provided that they use their proposed hours between 7:00am and 6:30pm.

Towards the end of the 3 month trial, we conducted some research and asked members to complete a survey about their experience with the compressed hours. We wanted to use this survey to determine if the compressed hours approach would be a great programme to adopt moving forward.

“AT A GENERAL LEVEL IT MIGHT BE ANTICIPATED THAT ACCESS TO FLEXIBLE WORKING ARRANGEMENTS WILL HAVE A POSITIVE IMPACT ON JOB SATISFACTION.” <sup>2</sup>

For Better or for Worse? An Analysis of how Flexible Working Practices Influence Employees' Perceptions of Job Quality (Hyman and Summers, 2004; Igbaria and Guimaraes, 1999) <sup>2</sup>

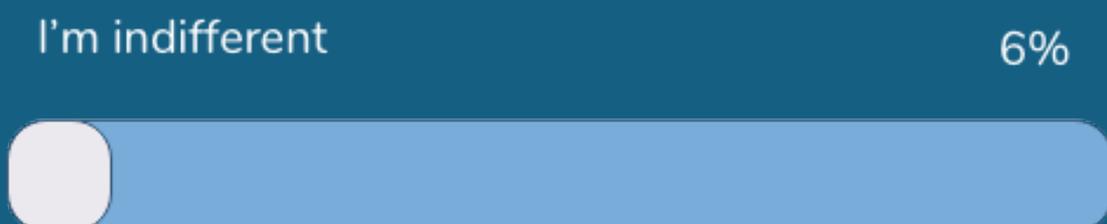
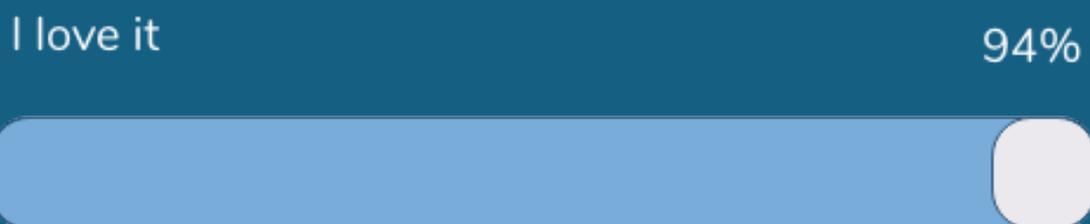
# INTRODUCTION TO INSIGHTS

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After receiving the results from the surveys, we have been able to see a range of benefits and some drawbacks that Mindwave employees have about the proposed 9 day fortnight approach.

Generally, the trial has been largely appreciated and beneficial for all teams and individuals. This new way of working has been something that many employees love because of the obvious personal benefit it brings to their lives.

94% of Mindwave and Mediwave employees stated that they “love” the 9 day fortnight, 6% of staff were indifferent. This working pattern is clearly appreciated by the vast majority of staff surveyed.



## Time Spent So Far

For part of our research, we asked Mindwave employees how they have spent their time so far to observe any trends across the company. Employees could select up to three choices. The top three choices were:

**71%** - More time with family and friends

**45%** - Start/continue self development projects

**35%** - Leisure/entertainment

These findings suggest that employees are able to choose to spend more time doing the activities that they love and that perhaps the traditional way of working may not always provide. This supports the decision to continue with the 9 day fortnight as it allows for employees to spend time doing activities that they may have found difficult to do prior to this way of working.

It is also offering employees with more opportunities to develop themselves outside of their working day which could improve their skillset for their general performance in their lives as well as their work performance at Mindwave.

Leisure and entertainment seems to also give employees an opportunity to relax and indulge in activities that they enjoy participating in or watching outside of work.

**71%** spend more time with family and friends



**45%** start or continue self - development projects



**35%** enjoy taking time for leisure entertainment or time away



## Greatest Benefits

We found that across the company, the top 3 most popular benefits were:

**67%** - Destress/relax

**33%** - Feeling more in control of own life

**31%** - Feeling more fulfilled or joyful

From these findings, we can see a correlation between what employees spend their time doing and what the most important benefits are. Most employees feel more relaxed with this new approach compared to the traditional work schedule, as they are better able to choose how they spend their time.

Employees also appear to be feeling happier, having a more pleasant approach to life and may thereby feel more motivated to be productive during their working hours.

This supports that the 9 day fortnight should be a continued way of working, as it is positively impacting the well-being of employees. It is also offering them with more autonomy to do activities that aid a balanced and more fulfilling lifestyle.



-  **67%** Destress/relax
-  **33%** Feeling more in control of own life
-  **31%** Feeling more fulfilled or joyful

# TIME MANAGEMENT

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**74%** of employees choose to start early and finish early

**20%** of employees prefer a more flexible approach where they change it daily

**14%** of employees choose to start late and finish late depending on what tasks they need to achieve each day.

Perhaps from the 74% of the employees that chose to start and finish early, most of them are most productive earlier on in the day which is reinforcing for them, knowing that they can work at a time that better suits them.

Those that chose to start late and finish late may feel more productive later on in the day which allows for them to also work at a time that they are most productive. Alternatively, they may have some tasks outside of work to complete that are required to do before their working day.

This supports the idea that the 9 day fortnight allows for employees to work more flexibly as opposed to having rigid work hours. The flexibility has allowed employees to achieve their work objectives in a way that caters to their individual lifestyle and thereby is beneficial to adopt moving forward.



-  74% Start early and finish early
-  20% Flexible approach
-  14% Start late and finish late

# ON BALANCE

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For part of our research, we further wanted to discover if the 9 day fortnight feels worth it to employees. The results show that:

**80%** - Yes

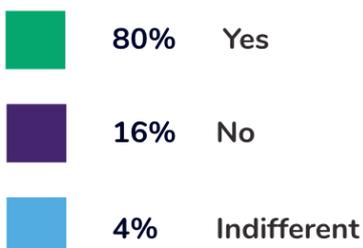
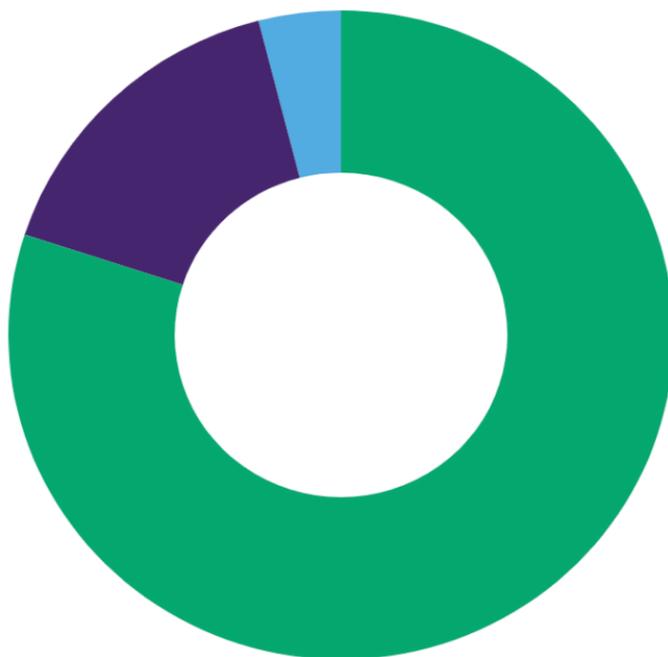
**16%** - No

**4%** - Indifferent

Overall, the 9 Day Fortnight is worth continuing to employees. An employee commented that “it is good to be relaxed” and that this new work culture is offering them more balance.

Although some employees do not feel that it is worth continuing on balance, 94% previously mentioned that they love it. This may suggest that it is still very desirable by these employees, but may take some time to adjust to for it to feel worth continuing.

The 9 day fortnight is thereby offering employees many benefits which seems to make it worthwhile to most. It is helping employees to balance their work and other aspects of their lifestyle, suggesting that it is something that we at Mindwave would like to adopt.



“IT IS HELPFUL  
TO BALANCE  
LIFE AND WORK”

# DRAWBACKS

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The most common drawbacks that employees reported moving forward were:

**31%** Client disapprovals

**29%** Colleague expectations for different working times

**25%** Inconsistent working times

Although the 9 day fortnight has many benefits, there are some drawbacks that we would need to consider. Even so, there are some solutions to these drawbacks, for example, communicating the Fridays that we are away with clients to avoid disapprovals.

In addition, for colleague expectations, many employees are indicating their start and end times to communicate with their colleagues when they are available. This also allows for employees to plan ahead of time and respect each others' boundaries.

As for inconsistent working times, the flexibility of choosing working hours can make it difficult to plan at times. However, being proactive by trying to keep to a consistent pattern may help.

By incorporating some simple systems and procedures to our work, such as set working hours and clear client communications, we can mitigate many of the indicated drawbacks.



# FURTHER COMMENTS

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## **Design team:**

The design team reported having a greater sense of mental clarity which could help to fuel them creatively for when work commences. This is a benefit to Mindwave as it could help to enhance the team's inspiration to provide visual solutions to user problems.

## **Corporate team:**

The corporate team reported feeling more relaxed. As they spend much of their working day managing finances and systems, the 9 day fortnight gives them the freedom to enjoy other activities that they love and provide intentional downtime.

## **Operations team:**

The operations team also feel more relaxed. Where they spend much of their day strategising, planning and managing, the 9 day fortnight is beneficial to Mindwave by giving these employees more time to switch off. They can engage in activities that require less strategising such as leisure and entertainment and take intentional time to rest.

## **Development team:**

The development team additionally feel more relaxed as they mostly spend their free time on leisure and entertainment. As their typical working day involves problem solving and building apps, the 9 day fortnight gives them the freedom to engage in activities that help them rest and ease their stress levels.



# INSIGHTS BY TEAMS



## Design Team



All love the 9 Day Fortnight



Spend most of their time with their family



Start early to finish early



Have a greater sense of organisation or mental clarity



Inconsistent working patterns with colleagues



## Corporate Team



All love the 9 Day Fortnight



Spend time on leisure or entertainment



Start early finish early



Feel more relaxed



Working days are long

The 9 day fortnight allows teams at Mindwave and Mediwave to rest more intentionally and have down time engaging in activities that allow them to take a break from their typical day to day work.



### Operations Team



All love the 9 Day Fortnight



Spend time on leisure or entertainment



Start early finish early



Feel more relaxed



Client disapprovals



### Development Team



All love the 9 Day Fortnight



Spend time on leisure or entertainment



Start early finish early



Feel more relaxed



Inconsistent working patterns with colleagues

# CONCLUSION

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## Should we continue the 9 Day Fortnight?

The 9 Day Fortnight trial has provided Mindwave employees with many benefits such as offering a better work-life balance, providing mental clarity and helping employees to feel better relaxed.

Although there are some potential drawbacks such as client disapprovals or colleague working expectations, there are solutions to these drawbacks. We as a company are still adjusting to this new approach of working, but after some more time, we will be able to establish some systems that can aid our working patterns.

Employees at Mindwave are able to have intentional rest which can boost their performance and job satisfaction. This approach can provide various opportunities for the growth and development of employees at Mindwave whilst also giving us the balance and autonomy that a traditional work pattern did not offer us.

Most employees love the 9 day fortnight and believe it is worth pursuing moving forward. It is increasing productivity and providing a more fulfilling lifestyle for employees. For Mindwave, this benefit provides a clear incentive to help attract and retain high quality, committed staff.



CONCLUSION



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