



A SMART Working Case Study

FLEXIBLE WORKING PRACTICES AT FIDELITY INTERNATIONAL

June 2020



Fidelity International was one of four Smart Working Pioneers who worked with Timewise and The Diversity Project to explore and embed opportunities for flexible working in the savings and investments industry.

Fidelity International see flexible working as an integral part of their commitment to positive work-life balance. They describe their culture as a compassionate community which supports employees to work in the way they work best. They are also aware that employees prize flexible working highly, and that it is central to their ability to engage and attract talented people.

The challenge

In January 2019, Fidelity International introduced a New Ways of Working programme, to increase the uptake of remote and flexible working. While this was generally well received, it was not adopted as widely by some teams within the Technology department, who still felt the need to be visible in the office. Fidelity International also wanted to consider how to refine and perfect New Ways of Working before expanding the programme globally.

The process

Timewise carried out in-depth analysis of the industry's culture, demographics and talent pipeline. They then interviewed a number of

Fidelity International employees working across different functions within Technology roles, and analysed HR data on flexible working and flexible hiring. They followed up with a report highlighting what Fidelity International were doing well, where they should focus their attention, and recommendations for moving forward.

The impact of Covid-19

The Covid-19 crisis, which occurred in the middle of the project, accelerated the use of remote working at Fidelity International, with positive outcomes. Virtually the entire workforce transitioned swiftly to working from home before lockdown was introduced, including those in call centres, and a survey showed that 80% would like to do so more frequently in the future. Engagement and productivity levels during the crisis were high.

Learnings and outcomes

Key learnings from the project include:

- Fidelity International were good at flexing **where** people work but less good at **when** and **how much**.
- Managers needed more support with understanding how to design jobs for part-time roles.
- Leaders needed to improve how they **internally** articulate why they value flexible

working, so that more employees feel supported to take up those opportunities.

- Fidelity International also identified an opportunity to be more vocal in how they **externally** communicate their position on flexible working, particularly at the point of hire.

Following the project, Fidelity International is carrying out job design workshops and training with managers in the Technology department. These managers and their teams are open to change and keen to make it a reality.

The learnings from the project have also been fed into a working group, set up to look at the future of work at Fidelity International and how to ensure they are offering the kind of workplace that people want and need. This includes:

- Creating a mission statement and principles for flexible working, highlighting the desire to offer a broad framework of choice around working patterns and location whilst still supporting connectivity and a sense of community.
- Promoting Fidelity International's support for flexible working in its recruitment collateral.
- Building on learnings from the Covid-19 crisis to explore how to stop the office being the default working location, whilst ensuring that the positive interactions are not lost.

“We aim to be a flexible employer and encourage our people to perform their role in the way that works best for them and for the business. The findings from this research will help us to develop an ambitious framework for future ways of working.”

Sarah Kaiser, Head of Employee Experience,
Fidelity International.