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Author: Ken Giglio

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Workplace Flexibility Case Study

Rossetti and Flexible Schedules

by Ken Giglio

Company: Rossetti (www.rossetti.com)

Company profile: Founded in 1969, Rossetti is an award-winning design company with expertise and experience in architecture, interior design and graphics. The company employs approximately 58 workers, most of whom are based at Rossetti's Detroit headquarters. Rossetti also has offices in California.

Program profile: Rossetti employees are able to take advantage of several different kinds of scheduling flexibility. From Memorial Day to Labor Day, Rossetti utilizes a Summer Hours policy, in which employees work four 9-hour days and then work 4 hours on Friday mornings, allowing them to leave early for their weekend. As an alternative, employees are also able to come in late on Monday and then work their four 9-hour days from Tuesday through Friday. In addition, the entire staff at Rossetti is allowed to work a flexible schedule whenever Summer Hours are not in effect. Under that plan, they are expected to report to work sometime between 7 and 9 a.m. and end their day between 4 and 6 p.m. The company has found that most employees tend to keep to a fairly consistent schedule, but the flexible hours policy allows them to come in late, leave early, or take a long lunch to handle personal needs as they see fit.

The Challenge: Because Rossetti is essentially a creative design environment in which abstract thought is valued, it can often be difficult for employees to remain motivated. However, the company has found that with a flexible schedule policy, employees are more in control of their work and personal lives, resulting in better focus on the job. The company does admit that it often can be difficult to monitor so many employees coming and going at different times. However, it believes that the vast majority of its workers are honest, self-supervising employees who take responsibility for their own hours. That process takes the pressure off upper management to keep workers under a microscope.

Benefits to employees: The company has found that its employees enjoy the feeling that they have control over their schedules. Rossetti says, a main reason that it offers flexible scheduling is to help motivate its workers. In fact, employees cite flexibility as a key reason for working at Rossetti.

Benefits to employer: Rossetti says, quite simply, that by having flexible work schedules, it is able to attract better employees. And, by having their work and personal lives better in balance, those workers are able to stay better committed to their jobs. The bottom line is a better overall performance for the company.

Lessons Learned: When employees are given the opportunity to essentially set their own hours, it's unrealistic to expect that all employees will always be 100% forthcoming in reporting the hours actually worked. However, as a company, Rossetti feels that it is usually not worth the effort to try and track down a few offenders. On the contrary, it

feels that since the flexibility program is so beneficial, it's willing to look the other way when minor violations occur.

Personal profile: Chiquita Martin is an Intermediate Staff Accountant who has worked at Rossetti for nearly five years. She began as a receptionist and then, after getting her associate's degree, moved into the company's accounting department. She has been able to enjoy flexibility in a variety of ways while at Rossetti. After giving birth to a son in June 2003, Chiquita initially worked part-time for a few months and then transitioned into a four-day work week. She now is back to a full five-day work week. She was also able to take a week off from work this past summer so that she could take a course that she needed for her bachelor's degree. Chiquita says while there have been other job offers available, she couldn't imagine leaving her job at Rossetti and the flexibility it provides. Says Chiquita, "You have a feeling of family here. They know there are other things outside of work – that's the reason you come to work. It's great to work for a company that understands that you work better when you are able to keep the other things in your life in order."

Company Contact: Val Hodge, VHodge@rossetti.com