

# Flexible Working for Procurement Professionals: Reality or Myth?

There is an expectation amongst many Procurement Professionals when seeking a new job, that flexible working should be offered as part of the package; but is the Procurement job seeker and the Employer always on the 'same page?'

Flexible working has been a hot topic for some time now and we would suggest that many procurement professionals looking to make their next career step, would look at flexible working arrangements as a key attraction, when making their 'to move' decision; but what is the reality of finding an employer that offers a truly flexible working environment?

At Beaumont Select we work with many of the World's leading companies, so we have a pretty good understanding into what our Procurement Candidates expect, and the packages leading companies are offering them. We would suggest that true flexible working contracts are not as prevalent as maybe the hype suggests.

There are plenty of reasons from both the client side and the employees as to why flexible working works, done properly it can provide the employee with a better work/life balance, more flexibility, reduces travel costs, and it can enhance job satisfaction. From the Employers perspective, flexible working can increase productivity, reduces infrastructure and improve bottom line savings.

## **So why are we seeing hirers falling at the final stages, when flexible working is discussed?**

Surprisingly we have seen some major employers advertising and promoting roles with flexible working, but then not actually covering this off in the employment contract they offer to the candidate; so, what is going wrong?

## **Maybe it's a trust thing?**

Like any new relationship, there is a learning/trust curve. Employer and employee need to learn to trust each other and offering flexible working from the start, can put a subtle strain on the relationship.... What is my new employer doing when they are not here, how will we get to know each other if we are not together? Likewise, the employee won't get to know the business, the stakeholders and the culture of their new organisation. For this reason, many employers choose not to put flexible working contracts in place from the start, even though they do have an environment that supports it.

Flexible working environments evolve over time, once the new hire has found their feet and is known to the business and stakeholders; ***and maybe this is where the problem lies....***

## ***Companies are offering flexible working, because that is what they do, but they are not including it in their employment contracts, and the Hire is confused!***

This is not an insurmountable problem by any means. As an agency, we always ascertain *what* the flexible working arrangements are, *when* the employer will be entitled to them and where we can, the details of the *employment contract* with regards to flexible working. If we do this in the early stages of the recruitment process, we can prevent a lot of problems and confusion at offer stage and are much more likely to secure a successful Hire for our Client.

## **Flexible Working / Agile working.... Same thing isn't It?**

Well not really; "Flexible working is a way of working that suits an employee's needs, e.g. having flexible start and finish times, or working from home." However, "Agile working is a

way of working in which an organisation empowers its people to work where, when and how they choose – with maximum flexibility and minimum constraints – to optimise their performance and to do their best work” For the purposes of this discussion we have looked at flexible working. Agile Working is you might say the ‘hot end of flexible working’ and companies that are consciously implementing Agile Working Environments are more likely to make this part of the job description and they will verify their employees’ skills through their contracts and competency testing, so there is less room for candidate and employee dichotomies here.

It would be great to get your thoughts, does your employer offer you flexible working? Is it defined in your employment contract? Or has it just evolved over time? We would love to hear from you.

***Oliver Lewsley, Recruitment Director.***

T: +44 (0)1403 248 448

E: [oliver@beselect.co.uk](mailto:oliver@beselect.co.uk)



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