

Is a 4-day working week the opportunity to broaden your skills?

In huge news for students and workers across the UK, a four-day week is being trialled by a number of leading companies. Should it be successful, we may see many other businesses adopt it and it could eventually become the standard working week.

Naturally, we're all daydreaming about the social activities, downtime, and hobbies we can fit into an extra day a week. But is that the only thing we could and should be using it for?

For those at the start of their career, as well as people who are ready to progress up the corporate ladder, it presents an opportunity for additional training and continued professional development that you may not have had time for alongside full-time hours and a busy life.

Here, we cover the ways you could use the four-day week to advance your career.

Take an MBA

An MBA is one of the best things you can do to progress your career, especially if you're looking to move into higher management positions. These prestigious

qualifications will give you the skills you need to be a business leader. Demand for MBA graduates is growing, with 54% of businesses in Europe seeing a higher demand in 2021 than in 2020.

Many people juggle part-time higher education courses with a full-time job, which can be tiring. After a long day of work, coming home and completing coursework can feel overwhelming. Spending your weekends studying can also leave you with little opportunity to reset and recalibrate between work weeks.

A four-day week could give you the opportunity to focus on a part-time online MBA course for a full day every week without burning yourself out. You can catch up on lectures and complete your required work – even spending the same amount of time on it as you would do at work on that fifth day. It can give you some much-needed evening and weekend downtime and ensure you can further your career without burning out.

Volunteering

Another way you could put your extra day a week to good use is to volunteer for a charity or social cause. Many of us have causes close to our hearts that we'd like to support, but we don't necessarily have the time to dedicate.

Depending on the cause you choose, there are many volunteering opportunities available that could broaden your skillset and improve your career – it's not all charity shop work. You could work with animals in shelters or vulnerable people such as schoolchildren or the elderly in after-school clubs and care homes.

There are many skills you can learn or improve on through volunteering work. Communication is a skill that can be improved in almost any volunteering role because you'll likely be working with a new set of people. If you're looking to move up the ladder at work, you could request to be involved in management duties – something many charities would be grateful for.

Take part in microlearning

If you're not ready to take on an entire higher education course but you want to put your extra time into education, why not consider microlearning? It's the perfect solution if you can only afford to dedicate a short amount of time to a topic by giving you bite-sized information.

The great thing about microlearning is all the possibilities it offers. You could choose a course that delivers its training via microlearning, or you could collate your own resources and learn on your own time informally.

Established businesses such as Thomson Reuters offer microlearning courses, while many universities are incorporating it into their offerings too. Google has recommended microlearning to universities and colleges as a way to engage students and provide them with the tools for success.

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Why UK employees need a four-day work week more than we think

The possibility of a four-day work week opens the door to so many opportunities for us. Parents could spend more time with young children, others can see friends more frequently, and some of us can have a much-needed day on the sofa. But for those who are looking for ways to advance your careers but are too time-poor, it offers the chance to carry out additional training and learning that could help you nail your next promotion.

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