

# Musk is wrong. UK business leaders' clock off at 3pm and WFH, says new research

New research commissioned by Samsung, surveying 1,000 UK business executives, reveals that burning the midnight oil is no longer the norm: the average 'clocking off time' for business leaders is now 3.06pm.

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From Twitter to Meta, layoffs abound in big tech. More than 35,000 tech workers from 72 companies having been laid off this month alone. But despite Elon Musk's decision to ban remote working at Twitter and claim that he would be working and sleeping at Twitter's San Francisco headquarters until the "org is fixed", this type of demonstrative dedication to work *isn't* an ideal shared by other business leaders. As well as the 3pm finish, one in five business owners said they only work when they want to, while just 14% stick to a traditional 9-5.

The research shows just how far the modern entrepreneur has evolved from traditional stereotypes. Full time business owners in the UK revealed that nearly half (47%) have no fixed work hours at all, preferring a fluid workday set up. One-third (31%) of business owners also said they commit to less than 7 hours as a typical core working day, preferring to work when optimal to their businesses.

# Work is headspace not a physical space

More than ever, work is about focus not location, with the average business owner not having set foot in an office for 148 days, and one in five never having done so at all. Instead, almost two-fifths (37%) of entrepreneurs have taken a working holiday without telling clients, with the practise far more common amongst those aged 25-34 (48%) compared to just 20% of those over 55. That confidence seems linked to technology, with more than half (51%) upgrading their work phone so they can operate anywhere, on their own terms. There is, however, a continuing sense of dedication, with 43% of small business owners taking less holiday time, preferring to continue to work from wherever they are.

Mental and emotional wellbeing are major considerations, and there is growing sentiment that work should not be all encompassing even among business owners; 71% said they put their family life ahead of their business, with 27% saying the same for friends. In a sign of how much the conversation has shifted, half (49%) said they prioritise their emotional health ahead of their business.

Modern entrepreneurs aren't just trying to improve their own work/life balance though, they're encouraging their staff to do the same. Half (49%) let their employees change their working hours to fit in with their lives, a third (35%) are happy to let their staff choose their working hours so long as they get the job done, and remarkably, almost a quarter (23%) will let staff come in late if they've been out the night before. That duty of care is being taken seriously, with 36% allowing their employees to take "mental health days" if needed.

## Making the most of time spent working

The days of being deskbound are almost over, with 97% of respondents performing non-work activities during the traditional "working day." Self-care is clearly a priority, with three-quarters (74%) taking time out to exercise and, almost half (47%) to develop a new skill, such as learning a language. In a further uplevelling of work/life balance, respondents spend an average of 1 hour and 12 minutes on household chores, and 39% spend up to 2 hours playing with their children. More unusual work-time activities include learning to knit, bathing a pet iguana, attending a football match and 46% admit to getting their hair done during their office hours. Apparently far more normal is the habit of napping, with one in five (22%) taking daily siestas to help them perform better.

