

Regus study on sleep deprivation in Africa

According to a Regus study, sleep-deprived workers struggle to juggle family and work commitments.



Workers across Africa (42%) report that they have to sacrifice sleep to fit in personal and work commitments, either by waking up too early or by burning the midnight oil. Although flexible working is highlighted as a way to reduce commuting, create more hours in the day for sleep or family life and to improve productivity and staff retention, only 58% of firms in Africa are rewarding management for encouraging the creation of a flexible workforce.

Workers have highlighted that a shorter commute (29%) and greater flexibility of location (25%) would give them more time spend with their families as well as to catch some extra shut-eye, but businesses can also benefit from introducing greater flexibility which is reported to improve productivity (72%) and help retain staff (84%).

Long working hours closely linked to heart disease

These are some of the key findings of a global survey by Regus, the world's largest provider of flexible workplaces, based on interviews with more than 24,000 business-people from over 90 countries. The international study includes East, West, North and South Africa.

"Lack of sleep is clearly detrimental to worker health and happiness with long working hours closely linked to heart disease*" says Joanne Bushell, vice president Africa for Regus. "Respondents highlight that a shorter commute and more flexibility over work location would help them spend more time with their families, finally spelling an end to sleepless nights filled with catching up on work or personal tasks that couldn't be squeezed into the day."

Key findings and statistics

- Globally 29% of workers are sleeping less than they wish to fit all their commitments and in Africa 42% of workers are sacrificing sleep to fit in work and personal commitments, while 25% feel they have to overcompensate time taken off for personal matters
- Workers highlight a shorter commute (29%) and location flexibility (25%) as ways of helping them spend more time with their families
- But businesses can benefit too, as flexible work is thought to improve productivity (72%) and help staff retention (84%)
- Yet currently management is being rewarded for encouraging a flexible work environment only in half (48%) of firms

Bushell continues: "This survey shows that allowing employees to work closer to home in professional and fully efficient environments can have an important impact on family life and provide workers with a few more minutes' kip each morning. But the benefits are not just for workers, and firms can also improve productivity and retention by introducing flexible working. Yet, in spite of the win-win benefits that flexible working can bring on both employee and company side, there is evidently still plenty of grounds for improvement as almost half of East African firms do not recognise or reward managers for encouraging the creation of a flexible workforce."

**The Daily Mail, Cut down on overtime! Working more than eight hours a day raises the risk of heart disease by 80%,
11th September 2012*

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