

Pre-pandemic, flexible work largely meant part-time roles for parents. However, the COVID-19 pandemic shifted perceptions, with widespread adoption of remote work fueling a broader demand for flexible work arrangements across all generations, even prioritized over salary by millennials and Gen Z.

An aging workforce and increased eldercare responsibilities further amplify this need. This evolving landscape necessitates diverse flexible working models, exemplified by Unilever's commitment to providing "everyday flexibility" (adjustable start/finish times, output-based work) to all employees by 2030, and Merck's offering of flextime, remote work, and job sharing. Formal flexible arrangements (part-time work) remain crucial, particularly for those with caregiving responsibilities (disproportionately women), and for older workers seeking phased retirement, as seen in Swiss Re's various retirement options. New employment models, like Unilever's U-Work program (offering retainers and project-based pay with benefits), provide both employee flexibility and employer access to a flexible talent pool. This responsible approach to flexible resourcing enhances agility, reduces fixed costs, and improves employee engagement and retention, ultimately fostering a more inclusive and productive future of work. The focus is on responsible flexibility, contrasting with exploitative zero-hours contracts, to support both .employee well-being and business growth