

The structural evolution of working time models

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An inevitable transformation that demands operating model redesign with vision and leadership

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The shift toward shorter working hours is no longer a fringe concept—it has become a **structural trend, reinforced by international data and evolving societal expectations**. Leading economies across Europe have already adopted working time models of 37 hours or fewer per week, and several Latin American countries are beginning to follow suit. The evidence is clear: we are witnessing an irreversible transformation in how work, productivity, and organizational well-being are defined.

Organizations that fail to treat this as a strategic priority **will risk reacting with fragmented, short-term responses**

This change must not be reduced to regulatory compliance, staffing adjustments, or isolated HR initiatives. It calls for a fundamental **rethinking of the operating model**—its foundations, its value creation logic, and its ability to compete in a world that demands speed, focus, and purpose. Organizations that fail to treat this as a strategic priority will risk reacting with fragmented, short-term responses that undermine their competitiveness, talent engagement, and long-term viability.





The opportunity lies not in simply adapting to fewer hours. The real advantage is **leveraging this inflection point to redesign processes, structures, decision-making, talent capabilities, and technologies.** Doing so with clarity, intention, and ambition will allow companies not just to adapt—but to **lead.**

01.

Redefine value creation with a focus on business impact, not time spent

Five strategic decisions to redesign the operating model

The redesign of the operating model must begin with a shift from measuring work by effort to measuring it by results. This involves rethinking workflows, identifying which activities drive strategic outcomes, and automating those that do not require human intervention. Organizations must move away from legacy evaluation methods and instead design performance models that prioritize contribution to business impact over time logged. In the future of work, relevance will come not from presence, but from purpose-driven execution.

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02.

Digitize and automate processes to enhance efficiency and free strategic resources

Digitization and automation should be understood as tools to transform operations, not merely to speed up tasks. This involves identifying repetitive, manual, or error-prone processes and migrating them to digital platforms that enable faster, more consistent execution with greater visibility. By automating these activities, organizations reduce operational costs and minimize risks associated with human error, while generating accurate data for analysis and continuous improvement. Additionally, digitization enhances integration across departments by breaking down information silos and facilitating real-

time decision-making. In this way, critical capacity is freed up and can be redirected toward strategic activities where talent adds greater value and contributes to innovation and sustainable growth.



03.

Build future-ready talent through new skills and mindsets

Shorter working time models are only sustainable if organizations equip their people with the capabilities to thrive within them. This requires investing in both technical skills—such as digital tools and AI fluency—and strategic behaviors, like autonomous decision-making, cross-functional collaboration, and business ownership. More than reskilling, it's about embedding a mindset where individuals understand their value, act with intent, and take responsibility for outcomes. It is through this evolution in talent that organizations will unlock real adaptability and resilience.



04. Integrate Artificial Intelligence as a core operating lever

AI must be embedded into the heart of the operating model—not treated as a side project. This includes identifying high-impact use cases, ensuring ethical and secure deployment, and designing hybrid workflows where human intelligence and AI complement

each other. Done right, AI can drastically increase productivity, free up capacity for higher-value work, and support faster, data-driven decisions. The key is to treat AI not as a tool, but as a structural enabler of operational excellence.




05. Align workforce structure and evolve culture to support the new operating model

As the shift toward shorter workweeks gains momentum, organizations must rigorously assess both their workforce structure and workplace culture. This involves not only adjusting headcount, but ensuring the right talent mix is in place to meet evolving strategic and operational needs. Just as critical is fostering a culture rooted in efficiency, collaboration, self-management, and outcome orientation. Sustaining productivity under reduced hours requires more than incremental adjustments—it demands a cultural and structural evolution that empowers teams, streamline operations,

and reinforces accountability. Legacy organizational models are no longer fit for purpose; success now hinges on aligning people, capabilities, and behaviors with a more agile, high-performing, and human-centered way of working.

06



Conclusion **Lead the** **transformation** **- or be led by it**

This is not about shift adjustments or headcount changes. What's truly at stake is the ability to rebuild the systems that support long-term competitiveness: the structures, processes, technologies, and human capital that drive value.

Failing to act puts organizations at risk of falling behind—of losing talent, relevance, and efficiency. But those who lead with vision and intent will redefine the benchmark for performance in the era of modern working time models. The future of work will not be measured in hours. It will be shaped by organizations bold enough to reimagine how work truly creates value.





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