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Optimal Working Week

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The search for the most rational way to use limited resources has always stood before humanity, and in our century the greatest minds of our time continue to struggle over its solution. However, if in ancient times the issue concerned only material resources, now they are trying to solve it financially as well. One of the battlefields in this issue is the sphere of wages for workers, both in the public and private sectors. The relevance of this issue lies also in the fact that about 40% of the cost estimates of the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Belarus are labor costs. In the absence of the opportunity to allocate more money for wages, the search for ways to increase its efficiency becomes relevant.

According to a study published in the journal *Social Science & Medicine* in November 2019, you need to work 36 to 40 hours a week to maintain mental health while maintaining levels of well-being. At the same time, a decrease in the length of working hours does not affect the level of satisfaction with life in any way, up to a decrease in the number of working hours per week to 16 for men, as for female representatives, a decrease in the level of satisfaction with life with a decrease in working hours is not observed. The authors attribute this to the fact that women are more likely to take care of children [1]. The authors also conclude that the "normal" working week can be shortened without harm to the well-being and mental health of workers, which at the same time will help create new jobs and partially solve the problem of unemployment [1]. Based on

the information presented in the monograph “Productivity and days of the week”, we can conclude that during the week productivity grows from Monday to Wednesday and, having reached the peak on Wednesday, begins to fall. At the same time, work on Saturday and Sunday has extremely low performance indicators. Along with this, the monograph also provides information on what percentage of workers actually work 6 or more hours during the working day. Most of all, people work on Tuesday and Thursday, where the figures for Thursday and Friday differ by 7%, and Fridays and Saturdays by 19% [2]. These facts are confirmed by two experiments, one of which was carried out in Iceland, and the second - in the Japanese branch of Microsoft Corporation.

The first was carried out from 2015 to 2019, according to its results, the reduction in the length of the working week has a positive effect on the health of workers, their satisfaction with the standard of living and labor efficiency.

According to the data of the second experiment, in addition to the previously mentioned advantages, it was found that the reduction of the working week allows, while maintaining, and in some cases increasing labor productivity, to save money that was spent on paying for electricity, water, paper and other working capital.

Canon also recently announced that the UK division will be piloting a four-day work week. The company wants to test whether employees can complete their usual workload in four days.

Adecco emphasizes that a shorter workweek is not possible in all areas and could stress workers as they have to cram more work into fewer days.

I would also like to note that if we compare the GDP of countries with a 40-hour work week and countries with a shorter work week, we will find a very interesting relationship reflected in the graph. As we can see, a decrease in the length

of the working day does not lead to a fall in GDP. By comparing the two studies and the graph presented, we can conclude that shortening the work week is likely to have a positive impact on people's mental health, while at the same time maintaining the proper level of prosperity. In addition, this will create new jobs and partially solve the problem of unemployment, increase the GDP of the state. At the same time, the ratio of productivity to time spent at work will shift upwards.

Considering the prospects for applying this experience in the public sector, it should be noted that this innovation will create a competitive advantage, as a result, attract more personnel, which will lead to an increase in the level of competition and, as a result, the level of professionalism of employees. But, it is necessary to understand that the application of this experience in the Armed Forces of the Republic of Belarus and other military formations has its own specifics, and before switching to this mode of operation, it is necessary to check the positions and formations for suitability for the use of this experience, since the specifics of some formations and positions are not allows you to reduce the length of the working day or week. At the same time, in the absence of an excess of funds for hiring new staff, the relevance of improving labor efficiency in relation to the cost of paying for it becomes very high.

References:

1. Social Science and Medicine [Electronic resource]. – Mode of access: <https://www.sciencedirect.com> – Date of access: 01.02.2022.
2. Productivity and days of the week [Electronic resource]. – Mode of access: <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/4963/>. – Date of access: 01.02.2022.