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Issue 4

9-TO-5 CAREER



*All information and weblinks
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9-to-5 Career: Outdated, or Here to Stay?



// 9-to-5 Career

The 9-to-5 working model has existed for decades. However, recent changes in society and technological advancements have questioned its relevance. The COVID-19 pandemic particularly has challenged our perspectives on work, leading both employers and employees to adopt a new era of hybrid work.

Workers were known to work gruelling long hours during the Industrial Revolution. In 1926, Henry Ford, founder of Ford Motor Company, introduced a revolutionary five-day, 40-hour workweek. Now widely adopted, this work model is commonly referred to as the 9-to-5.

Today, the traditional 9-to-5 employment model is increasingly viewed as demanding, rigid and outdated. Alternative career paths are gaining popularity. Employees favour flexible work schedules for better work-life balance, even with lower salaries. This shift is especially prevalent among younger generations, including Millennials and Gen Z, due to multiple factors, such as their different perspectives on work-life balance and success. Technological advancements such as artificial intelligence, communication, and data analytics are also driving the change.

New career paths that have emerged in the past few years include freelancing and gig work, which offer workers flexibility and independence. Individuals are also embracing entrepreneurship or pursuing side hustles to explore their passions. The COVID-19 pandemic has also forced the workforce

to adapt to remote and hybrid work. Companies are increasingly hiring remote workers, broadening their talent pools beyond geographical constraints.

These shifting norms are evident in Singapore too:

- ▶ 49% of the workforce are more inclined to leave a job that requires them to return to the office more often.
- ▶ 95% of the workforce prioritises work-life balance over salary.
- ▶ 59% would decline a job that negatively affects their work-life balance.
- ▶ 63% of Gen Zers consider working from home as non-negotiable.

So, what is the future of the 9-to-5? Let's hear what people think:



So, is the 9-to-5 career outdated, or here to stay?

The 9-to-5 era is over.

The 9-to-5 is not strictly a 9-to-5 work schedule and does not guarantee productivity.

It often stretches beyond those hours, which may lead to burnout.

In Singapore, almost a quarter of employees work extra hours, and two-thirds feel at least one sign of burnout. This can negatively impact on their mental and physical well-being, and may lead to clinical depression and anxiety disorders. Prolonged burnout may also reduce workplace productivity, lower engagement and increase absenteeism.

Long working hours may not translate to higher productivity and the 9-to-5 model also does not consider employees' individual optimum productivity windows. Factors such as employee engagement, work environment, work-life balance, and technological integration are essential in shaping effective productivity outcomes. Asynchronous work, enabled by technology, is increasingly important for staying competitive and building a globally distributed workforce.

The 9-to-5 career lacks flexibility.

It often involves fixed work schedules and locations. However, flexibility is becoming increasingly important, especially as more Singaporeans take on caregiving roles.

On the contrary, the gig economy offers greater flexibility. Workers can work from anywhere and at any time and decide how much to take on. This freedom promotes innovation and creativity, but can also lead to challenges in communication, collaboration, longer work hours and increased workload.

The 9-to-5 work is still going strong.

The 9-to-5 provides a structured workday and routine.

The fixed working hours create a predictable routine, which helps employees to manage their time effectively during work hours. They can also set clear boundaries and allocate their time for family, hobbies and social activities accordingly.

Meanwhile, with gig employment, the boundaries between work and personal time may become blurred, leading to longer work hours and increased stress.

The 9-to-5 also fosters team bonding, creating a sense of belonging for employees and fosters collaboration. Additionally, activities like planning, brainstorming, and creative work are most effective when conducted in person.

Working remotely, however, hinders collaboration, reduces the opportunities to learn from peers and can lead to disengagement and isolation.

The 9-to-5 career offers stability.

It provides job security, regular income, and access to employee benefits such as health and wellness, financial benefits and retirement, and paid leave.

On the other hand, gig workers often face job instability and lack of benefits. Their income may be fluctuating and unpredictable, which might lead to greater anxiety. For some, the unstructured nature of the work may also mean disruption to their work-life balance, sleep patterns, or daily routines.

So, is the 9-to-5 career outdated, or here to stay?

The 9-to-5 era is over.

The 9-to-5 career path is linear and lacks agility.

The rigid structure stifles personal growth and adaptability, and often lacks the flexibility needed to seize new opportunities, making it difficult for workers to explore diverse career paths.

Conversely, alternative career models offer agility and autonomy, empowering individuals to adapt and evolve, and perform jobs beyond formal job boundaries. These workers engage in a wide variety of tasks and roles, allowing for the acquisition of a diverse skill set. There is also a growing trend of portfolio careers, where professionals engage in multiple part-time, freelance, or contract roles instead of a single full-time job. This shift has been accelerated by economic uncertainty, technological advancements, and growing desire for work-life balance.

The 9-to-5 work is still going strong.

The 9-to-5 offers a well-defined career path and ladder.

The clear career progression provides employees with a sense of direction and purpose in their career. Additionally, many organisations invest in training and professional development programmes, empowering employees to enhance their skills and facilitate career growth. Employees also have the opportunity to specialise and develop expertise in specific fields.

In contrast, whilst alternative career models provide autonomy and diverse experiences, they lack structured progression and present uncertainties regarding career advancement.

What will the future of work look like?

The rise of remote work and freelancing demonstrates that productivity can thrive outside the traditional 9-to-5 structure. Many employees prefer flexible work arrangements that allow for hybrid work and varied working hours, reflecting a cultural shift towards prioritising work-life balance over mere presence in the office. For employers, flexible work arrangements may have the potential for greater staff retention and talent attraction, as well as increased productivity and employee satisfaction.

At the same time, having a consistent office presence is also necessary for building and maintaining positive workplace relationships, knowledge sharing among colleagues and building company culture. Combining both traditional and flexible schedules, hybrid work arrangements could cater to a diverse workforce while maintaining productivity and personal well-being.

However, it is not just about the hours. Traditional 9-to-5 jobs provides clear paths and structured career advancement opportunities. In contrast, gig

work and freelancing offer non-linear career paths that enable individuals to tailor their careers based on personal interests, skills, and life priorities such as family care commitments. This flexibility also allows them to pursue multiple roles or projects simultaneously, aligning their careers with their passions and values, and often leading to greater job satisfaction.

Let's hear our guest speakers weigh in on this issue:



Recommended Resources

Explore the resources below to learn more about 9-to-5 careers, remote work and the gig economy.

Video

CNA, "[The Appeal of Temporary Work for Some in Singapore](#)", YouTube, August 27, 2024, video, 03:09.



Websites

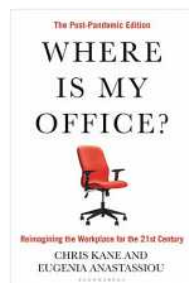
Jack Kelly. "[The Gig Economy Is Here to Stay — Here's How to Embrace It](#)" *Forbes*, 20 June 2024.

Thomas Strider. "[Knowledge Based 9-5 Jobs Will Slowly Become Obsolete. This Is How to Prepare](#)". *Entrepreneur*, 6 June 2024.

Podcast

"[Is Entrepreneurship Right for Me?](#)". *Harvard Business Review*, 15 November 2023. Podcast, 38:37

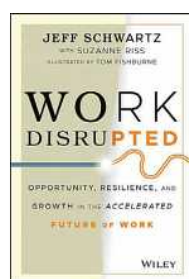
NLB eBooks



[Where Is My Office?](#)

Chris Kane & Eugenia Anastassiou. *Where Is My Office?*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2023.

Retrieved from OverDrive. ([myLibrary ID](#) is required to access the eBook).



[Work Disrupted: Opportunity, Resilience, and Growth in the Accelerated Future of Work](#)

Jeff Schwartz & Suzanne Riss. *Work Disrupted: Opportunity, Resilience, and Growth in the Accelerated Future of Work*. Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, 2021.

Retrieved from OverDrive. ([myLibrary ID](#) is required to access the eBook).



[Ultimate Gig: Flexibility, Freedom, Rewards](#)

John T. Fleming & Lauren Lawley Head. *Ultimate Gig: Flexibility, Freedom, Rewards*. Bingley, UK: Emerald Publishing Limited, 2021.

Retrieved from OverDrive. ([myLibrary ID](#) is required to access the eBook).