

## SURVEY SAYS SUMMER HOURS ARE NOT AS BENEFICIAL AS THEY SEEM



It is a known fact come summer, worker output and efficiency spirals downwards. The higher the temperatures soar the lower it plummets. To ensure that their worker enthusiasm does not continue to wilt, many companies offer summer hour policies to the workers. Summer hours, means that you work a little extra on other days, and either take an early out on Friday, for an extended and relaxed weekend, or report for a late start on Monday. However, new findings by a survey show that these summer hours are bad for both the businesses and employees alike and hence, following the revelations, bosses may be less inclined to give summer hours from next year onwards. Captivate Network, the digital media company sponsored a study of more than 600 white-collar workers across North America and studied the impact of many methods that employers put into practice to help workers overcome heat-induced lethargy. The survey looked into telecommuting or work from home via computers, expanding working hours on other days of the week, to allow for an extended weekend, via a shortened Friday or a late Monday and allowing workers to arrive and leave early. Practically all the policies had a negative impact. Summertime, by itself negatively impacts the workplace. The workers get easily distracted, the survey says that almost 45 percent of them cannot focus and concentrate on their work. Workers are more prone to taking leave and absenteeism increases, with the attendance dipping by 19 percent. The absenteeism, the distraction and heat-induced sluggishness causes productivity to drop by as much as 20 percent. Completion of projects, take 13 percent more time to complete. The study found that instead of easing the problems the summer hours only aggravates and intensifies the problems. Employees who took early Fridays reported a 53 percent drop in their personal productivity. On the hand the extra-hours that the workers put in between Monday and Thursday, were actually detrimental as they increased the stress levels of the workers by 23 percent. However, the survey showed that the drop in productivity saw an increase in socializing. Co-workers tended to bond more with one another and their mingling together increased by 63 percent. 51 percent took extended lunch breaks spending more time with friends over food "Summertime is a tough time in the workplace;" said Mike DiFranza, president of Captivate Network "and too many businesses are decreasing productivity and increasing stress in an attempt to be flexible. Summer hours programs are put in place with the very best of intentions, and I'm sure with some adjustments they can meet the needs of companies and employees alike." Telecommuting is a very popular alternative to working from the office. Telecommuting allowed its users to work from locations, other than the office. But the survey found that it had its limitations. For one thing it could be limited to only the white-collar workers and those who had access to computers. Moreover, not all jobs can be done from home, the workers find it hard to stay focused and most workers found it tough to separate office life from home life. In spite of its shortcomings telecommuting was the only option that did not have a negative impact. 57 percent of respondents who were offered this option reporting that it increased their productivity. However, this does not have far reaching consequences, either way, negative or positive as, according to the survey, only 4 percent of companies make this option available to their employees. "These are surprising – and perhaps unwelcome – findings," said DiFranza, "On the face of it, summer hours probably seem like a terrific idea and are welcome by all. Unfortunately, the impact is almost uniformly negative. Given the state of the economy and the unease felt by many workers, perhaps it's time to reconsider these types of policies."