



Humans Are Not Robots: Why We All Need Work Flexibility and How Companies Can Do It Right

Robert Hawkins

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Rigid, in-office, nine-to-five jobs may be regarded as the standard, but Robert Hawkins's *Humans Are Not Robots* argues that the traditional workday causes serious damage to employees while also preventing them from working as productively and efficiently as they otherwise could. With a conversational tone, myriad case-study examples, and stories from his own life, Hawkins makes a convincing case that a more flexible approach to work would benefit everyone, if companies are open to it.

Covering various extant approaches to workplace flexibility, including condensing the same hours into fewer days or establishing policies like time off in lieu of unlimited vacation, the book weighs the pros and cons of each. Its diagnosis is that these approaches still force employees to work longer than they need to; create deficits in other parts of employees' lives, including health and family time; and build inefficiencies into the system.

As an alternative, he argues for a new approach in which workers have the flexibility to design their workdays in the ways that work best for them, provided they get their work done. It predicts that employees will finish the same tasks in shorter amounts of time if they don't need to fill forty hours, and that options like working from home or at different hours of the day allow workers to be their most productive. Hawkins also explores some of the side benefits of a new approach to work, including reduced traffic and pollution.

The case made by *Humans Are Not Robots* is convincing in terms of developing a work-life balance, and Hawkins's real-life examples support his notions of a more flexible workday, too, providing new ways forward in a changing work world.

JEFF FLEISCHER (November / December 2020)

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