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Flexible Work Arrangements in Hotels

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Abstract

As “work from home” becomes increasingly popular, customer-facing service jobs that cannot be performed remotely have an inherent disadvantage in recruiting and retaining employees. Nevertheless, while hotels cannot offer flexplace for frontline positions, flextime, (e.g., compressed workweek, flexible start/end times), can be an alternative option. This study explores the possibility of Flexible Work Arrangements (FWAs) in hotels and which types are more suitable for different positions. In-depth interviews were conducted with 50 hotel staff and managers across operations and administrative departments. The results indicate that while various types of time and work structure flexibility can be found in hotels, these FWAs are not recognized as official policies. Rather, they are handled as “mutual understandings” between employees and supervisors. The FWAs most preferred by interviewees are compressed workweek and choice of overtime compensation. Lastly, although location flexibility is possible for back-office positions, concerns over fairness prevent employees from requesting such flexibility.