

2025 WORK TIME INSIGHTS REPORT

Redesign Work. Reclaim Time.

**Lessons from teams who've
reduced hours – and gained more.**

Presented by Debbie Bailey

A NOTE FROM THE CEOs



Redesigning working time

This Work Time Insight Report is our first published piece in several years – and a meaningful one for us. It marks the start of a broader commitment to sharing what we’re learning as more organizations rethink how time is structured and valued at work.

You’ll find real-world examples, common patterns, and evidence-based takeaways from organizations that have taken the leap to redesign working time. We’ve aimed to keep this paper practical, data-informed, and grounded in what works. If something here sparks ideas, questions, or pushback – we’d love to hear from you.

This is a conversation we’re building in partnership with others who believe in redesigning work to reclaim time.

NOTE: This Work Time Insights Report draws on a combination of internal 4 Day Week Global research, publicly available information, and desktop analysis of company-reported outcomes. Every effort has been made to ensure accuracy, but some data points may not reflect the most recent available public information.

Redesigning work doesn't start with a stopwatch.

What if time wasn't just a constraint, but a tool? A resource you could reallocate to spark better focus, stronger teams, sharper delivery – and even better margins?

Across industries, organizations are redesigning the shape of their work week. Some are reducing hours to reduce burnout. Some are redesigning roles to get ahead of retention. Others are making space for the kind of thinking that busy work drowns out.

This insight report shares lessons from those who've tried. There's no silver bullet and there's no single blueprint. But across vastly different sectors, the same patterns – and possibilities – keep emerging. Along with a growing sense that time – reclaimed – might just be the strategy your team is ready for.

**The 5-day week wasn't inevitable.
It was invented – and can be reinvented.**





The shape of the work week is changing.

Not just in Silicon Valley, but in police departments, aged care centers, and in workshops. Organizations are redesigning working time – not to do less, but to work smarter.



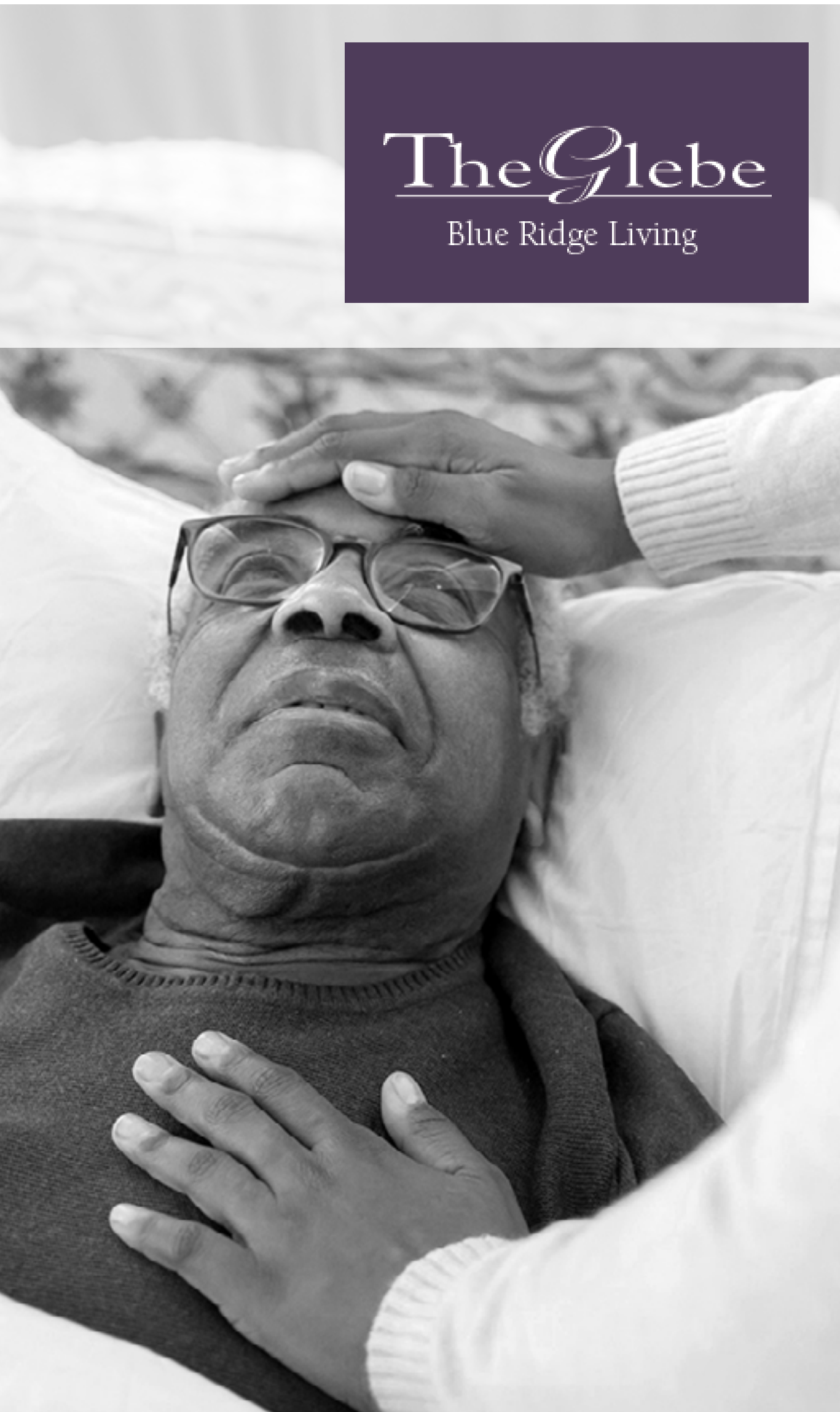
- The 100:80:100™ model is one of the most widely applied principles: 100% pay, 80% time, 100% output.
- Its variations are many: four-day weeks, five six-hour days, or nine-day fortnights.

But the common thread is this: fewer hours, same expectations, better results.

In **Gothenburg, the Toyota Service Centre** introduced a roster of 6-hour shifts with some staff working 6am – 12 pm and a second team working 12pm – 6pm.

This extended the service center opening hours from 40 hours to 60 hours leading to increased business and customer demand.

The goal of this shift? Sharper focus from staff, better outcomes for the business. And the result? Performance held steady, efficiency increased and due to increased operating hours, the bottom line improved.



At **The Glebe, a US aged care provider**, the shift to 5 x 6 hour days offered more sustainable rosters, reduced stress, and supported staff wellbeing.

They incentivized their staff that if they were on time and didn't call in sick, they could work 30 hours and be paid for 40 hours.

Their model aligned with better care outcomes while reducing burnout and improving attendance.

Buffer, a global tech company, introduced a 4-day work week across its remote-first team to combat burnout and support mental health during the pandemic.



They trialed the 100:80:100™ model – 100% pay, 80% time, 100% output – with a focus on high-impact work. Internal meetings were reduced, task prioritization became sharper, and teams leveraged asynchronous communication to collaborate across time zones.

Productivity held steady, employee wellbeing improved, and deep work became protected time, not wishful thinking.

And in the **City of Golden, Colorado, the local police department** restructured its shifts into a 32-hour work week to address chronic staffing shortages and officer burnout.

With new rostering models, “power shifts” were introduced to ensure peak-time coverage, and reporting systems were streamlined. Response times improved, overtime costs dropped by nearly 80%, and resignations halved. For a department that hadn’t been fully staffed since 2015, the results were more than operational – they were cultural.



These organizations didn't just shorten time.

They reimagined it – each in a way that reflected their sector, constraints, and purpose.



At Buffer, reduced hours protected deep work. In Golden, they helped frontline workers deliver faster emergency responses. And in aged care and servicing, smarter scheduling meant higher-quality service.

What unites them? A shared belief that time can be better spent – and better structured – to serve both people and performance.

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UNLOCKING OUTCOMES: WHY THEY DID IT

Across these case studies, different motivations led to similar gains.

Whether driven by performance, people, or purpose – the organizations that succeeded treated time not as a perk, but as a performance lever. So what did they do differently?

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PRODUCTIVITY: GETTING MORE FROM LESS

Organizations that identify productivity as their motivation to change can often have a culture of meeting overload, unprioritized work, unclear handovers, and slow (legacy) systems and processes.

• • • • • • The **Toyota Service Centre** in Gothenburg cut its daily shifts to six hours to drive focus. They didn't compress hours – they reduced them. The result? Productivity held steady, and staff energy improved.

Workers felt like they got more done with less drag and delays due to the increased focus. It also meant that the workshop and equipment was now in full use 12 hours a day instead of the former 8–9 hours.

• • • • • • **Buffer**, by reducing meetings and creating space for deep work, reported that their teams had clearer focus and higher output. They realized a lot of the day had been spent in context switching and by reducing hours, they were clearer on the essential tasks needed to deliver outcomes.

• • • • • • **City of Golden** used their trial to examine service coverage models. With fewer hours, they explored tighter handovers and smarter shift allocation – leading to better staff focus and uninterrupted community coverage. This also led to savings with a nearly 80% reduction in overtime hours saving over \$155,000 in comparison to the previous year.

• • • • • • **The Glebe**, by reducing their daily shift length, improved their care outcomes with call bell response times reducing by 57% and the rate of acquired infections dropping by 65%.

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PEOPLE: PROTECTING WELLBEING, LIFTING CULTURE

Organizations that are focused on improvements for their people can be motivated by a variety of factors including: a competitive employment market, skills shortages, rising turnover, stress leave, and culture disconnection.

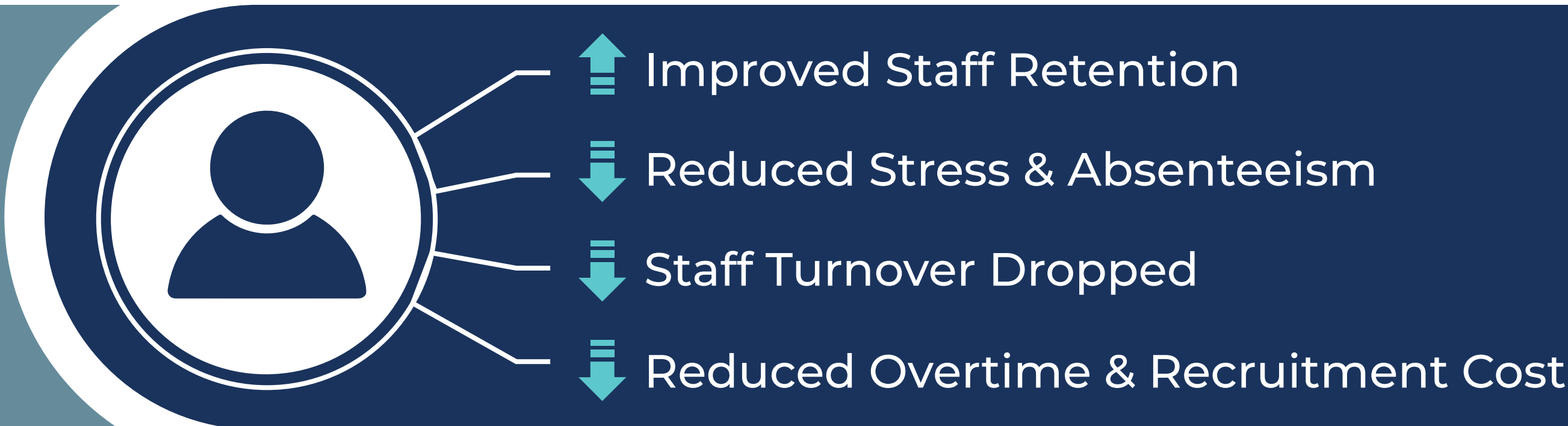
• • • • • **Buffer** reinforced its culture of trust and autonomy by supporting reduced hours from the top down.

Staff were empowered to manage their own schedules based on customer needs, and held monthly check-ins to gather employee feedback and adjust the program to meet the needs of both the business and the employees.

Surveys during the trial indicated employees experienced significance reduction in stress levels and improved mental health.

• • • • • **The Glebe** introduced shorter days and incentivized staff to be punctual and not miss shifts. This was successful in improving staff retention, particularly in direct care roles.

Staff reported reduced stress and absenteeism. As an organization, this meant they were able to take their annual staff turnover rate from 128% and reduced it to 44% during the trial period. This led to a reduction of \$120k in overtime, recruitment and agency staffing costs.



- • • • • The **Toyota Service Centre** in Gothenburg sought to create a better work environment that could reduce errors caused by fatigue, improve customer satisfaction and boost employee wellbeing. Mechanics at the service center reported that the shorter workday significantly improved their quality of life. They had more time for personal pursuits and family and many employees cited this as a key factor in their decision to stay with the company long-term.



- • • • • **City of Golden** noticed morale shifts among officers during the trial. With wellbeing as a driver, the changes were framed not as a perk, but as a structural reset making the City of Golden Police roles an attractive opportunity and helping to address chronic vacancy challenges.

7 PURPOSE: ALIGNMENT WITH MISSION & IDENTITY

Purpose can be a powerful motivator. Generation Z make up more than 20% of our workforce and they are voting with their feet – leaving jobs and organizations, not because of poor salary but because of values misalignment, a lack of strategic commitment to well-being, or sustainability.



The Glebe was driven by sector leadership – not just retention. They wanted to model best-practice care, including for their staff. The team were able to do just that. With increased staff retention and attendance, they could keep their standards, provide better continuity of care and improve the lives of both their staff and those in their care.



For **Buffer**, the 4-day work week wasn't a detour – it was the direction. As a company built on remote-first principles, transparency, and employee trust, reducing hours during the pandemic was a deliberate step toward living their values and showing that wellbeing and performance aren't opposites – they're interconnected. Their approach became a recruitment and retention asset.



The **City of Golden Police Department** trialed a 32-hour week to boost retention and become an employer of choice. With strong leadership support, they redesigned shifts, cut overtime by nearly 80%, and improved response times. The trial showed even frontline services can reduce hours without reducing impact.



The **Toyota Service Centre** maintained its high service standards aligned with the Toyota brand but it was their commitment in demonstrating that improving employee wellbeing can also be aligned with improving productivity and profitability that helped uphold this standard and staff retention.

**These were not perks.
They were performance enablers.**

While motivations varied, a deeper throughline connects them: each organization saw time as a strategic lever.

Whether it was to keep good people, drive sharper focus, or elevate care standards, the decision to redesign working time wasn't just reactive – it was purpose-aligned.

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WHAT MADE IT WORK? 6 COMMON SUCCESS FACTORS

Across these organizations, success didn't happen by luck – it was built deliberately. Patterns emerged. Leaders stayed visible. Teams were engaged in the redesign. And data, not assumptions, shaped decision-making.



Here are six of the most consistent success factors that helped the shift to reduced working time stick.



Leadership Alignment: Across all four cases, leadership played a defining role. This wasn't an HR initiative – it was a strategic one. Leaders had to model the change and stay engaged through trial and error.



Clear Data & Metrics: City of Golden tracked coverage, public feedback, and officer health. Buffer reviewed productivity trends. The Glebe monitored retention and absenteeism. Data kept the redesign grounded.



Role Clarity: At Buffer and The Glebe, clarity around who did what helped ensure tasks weren't just squeezed – they were redesigned or removed.



Co-Design: In every case, teams were involved in building the new model. At City of Golden, officers shaped shift trials. At The Glebe, teams helped determine realistic handovers.



Guardrails: Service-level expectations didn't change. What changed was how the teams met them. Each organization was clear about non-negotiables.



Iteration: Golden adapted shift models. Buffer adjusted meeting-free days. The Glebe refined scheduling and rostering approaches to balance staff wellbeing and attendance with care quality. Each made room for feedback, iteration, and learning – without abandoning delivery.

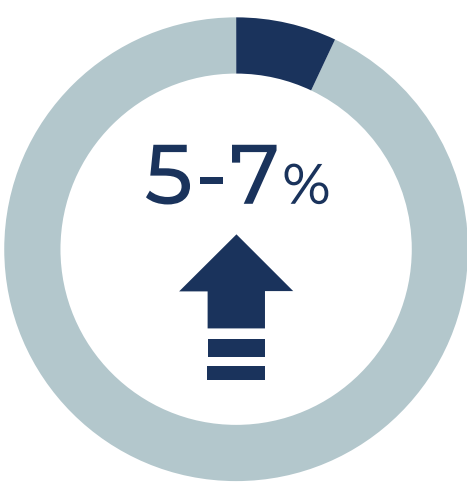
Common success factors are one side of the story.

But redesigning time also brings trade-offs – tensions that each team had to navigate to make their new model work.

CITY OF GOLDEN POLICE DEPARTMENT



-  **Staff Size:** 72 full-time staff
-  **Location:** Golden, Colorado, USA
-  **Work Model:** 4 x 8-hour days (32-hour week)
-  **Primary Goal:** Improve retention, reduce burnout, maintain service quality



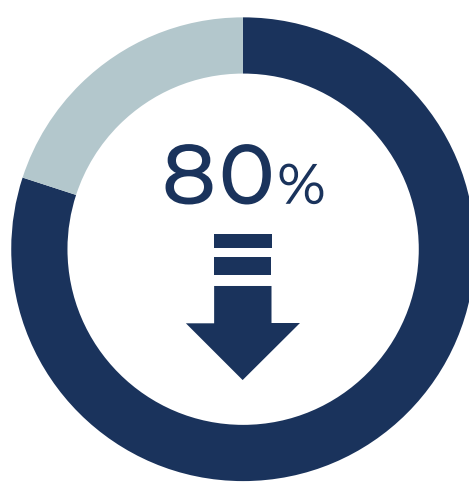
Improved
Response
Time



Resignation
Drop







Staff
Satisfaction
Sustained

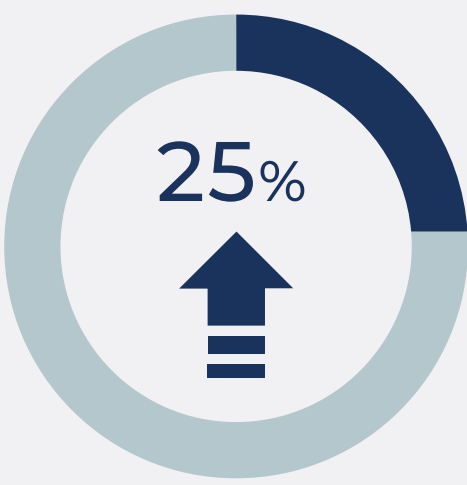


Reduced
Overtime Cost
\$115k savings

TOYOTA SERVICE CENTRE



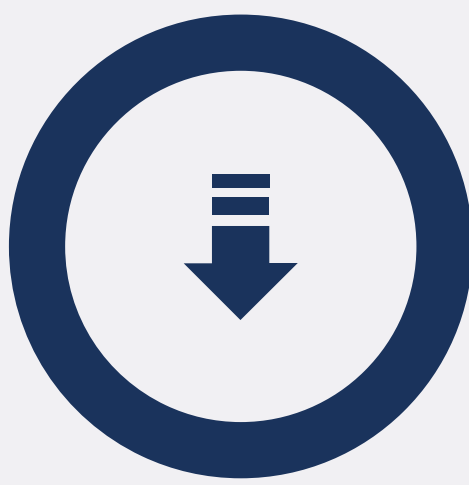
-  **Staff Size:** 36 Mechanics
-  **Location:** Gothenburg, Sweden
-  **Work Model:** 2 x 6-hour shifts (12-hour service coverage)
-  **Primary Goal:** Reduce errors, improve wellbeing, extend service hours.



Increased
Provitability



Improved Job
Satisfaction



Reduced
Fatigue

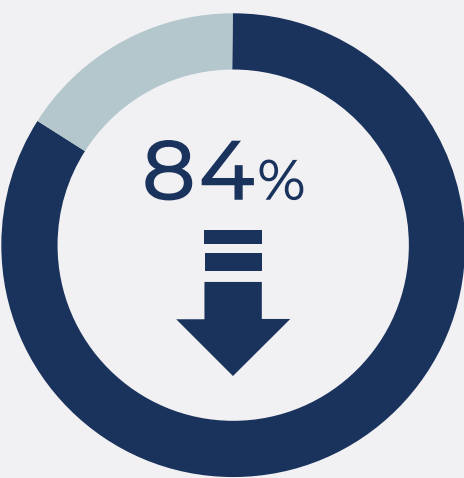


Improved
Service Quality

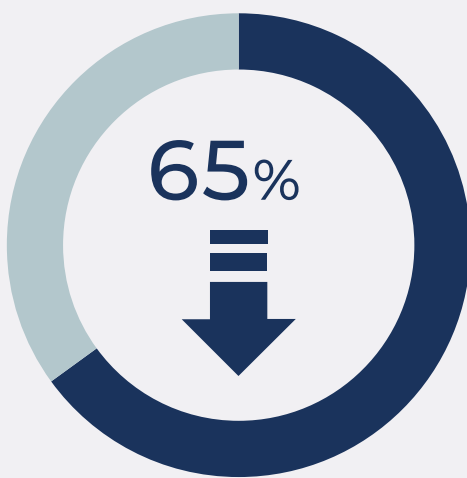
THE GLEBE RETIREMENT COMMUNITY



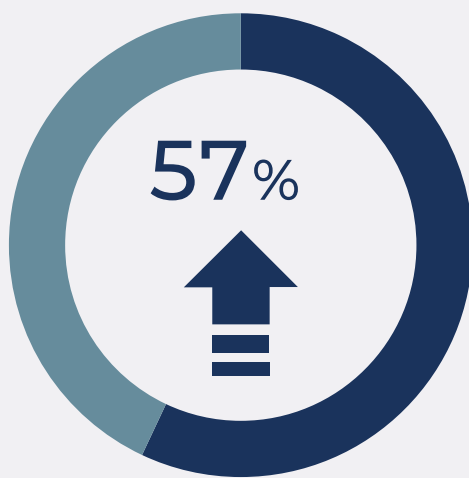
- Staff Size:** 27 Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs)
- Location:** Roanoke, Virginia, USA
- Work Model:** 5 x 6-hour days (30/40 model: 30 hours work for 40 hours pay)
- Primary Goal:** Address Staff Shortages, Improve Care Standards



Turnover Dropped



Acquired Infections Down



Bell Response Time Improved

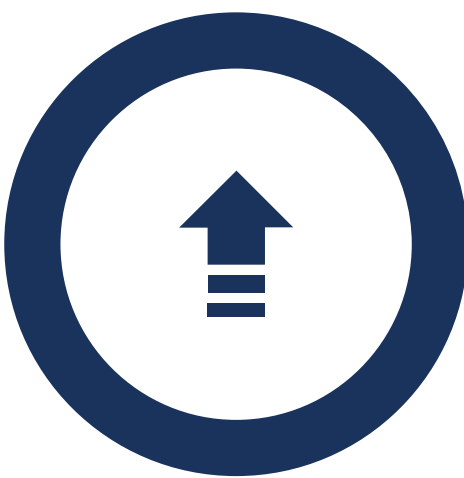


Cost Savings
\$122k savings from reduced overtime & agency staff costs

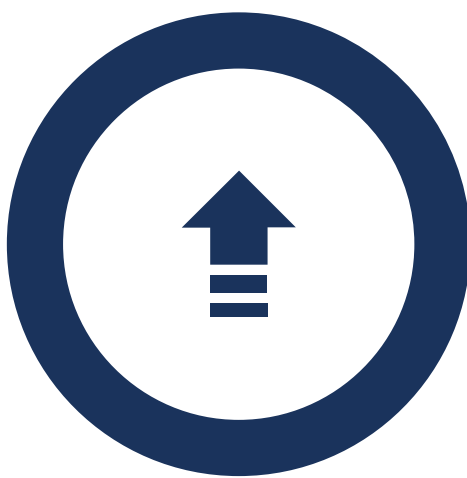
BUFFER



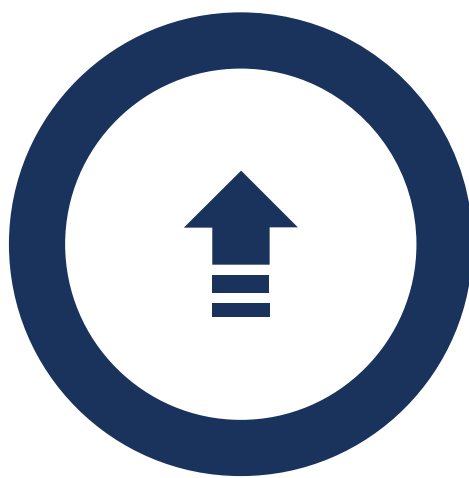
- Staff Size:** 85 Employees
- Location:** Remote First, Global
- Work Model:** 4-day week (100:80:100™ model)
- Primary Goal:** Prevent burnout, protect deep work, maintain support



Improved Wellbeing



Maintained Productivity



Maintained Customer Service



Emphasis on Flexibility & Asynchronous Work

Redesigning work comes with trade-offs and tensions.
These four organizations faced similar forks in the road:

DESIGN QUESTION	REAL TENSION	EXAMPLES
Can we reduce hours without reducing impact?	Coverage vs Compression	City of Golden balanced 24/7 policing with officer wellbeing
Should all roles be moved at once?	Equity vs Equality	Toyota introduced 2x 6-hour shifts per day with staff choosing AM/PM.
How much flexibility is too much?	Autonomy vs Consistency	Buffer used principles over rules to guide remote teams.
Are we redesigning, or just squeezing more in?	Sustainability vs Stretch	Buffer and City of Golden cut tasks, not just time.



The best teams didn’t avoid these tensions.
They worked through them.

So what did success really look like? Beyond stats and savings, these organizations saw something deeper: mindset shifts, cultural changes, and performance redefined.

Redesigning working time didn't just improve metrics – it shifted mindsets, processes, and possibilities.

Across four diverse organizations, these changes showed up in both numbers and culture:



Retention soared. The Glebe halved staff turnover. Golden saw resignations drop by 50%. Employees stayed because the model worked for their lives.



Productivity held or improved. Toyota increased profitability by 25%, Buffer maintained high output, and Golden improved response times across critical calls.



Wellbeing was prioritized — and protected. From aged care to tech to frontline officers, workers reported better sleep, lower stress, and more energy to do the job well.



Service standards didn't drop — they strengthened. Whether it was care quality, customer response, or community safety, every case saw performance either maintained or enhanced.



Trust and autonomy became strategic levers. Redesigning hours meant redesigning how people worked — with greater ownership, clearer priorities, and more focused time.

WHERE TO BEGIN: EVEN IF YOU'RE NOT READY FOR A TRIAL



You don't have to start with a full-scale trial.

Many of the organizations featured here began with small steps: audits, team listening, even just posing the question — what would it take to work smarter?

Start with insight. Run a light-touch audit: where is time well spent, and where is it not?

Find your guardrails. What service or coverage levels must be maintained?

Then ask: “If we had to reclaim 8 hours a week, what would we do differently?”

Even that conversation can shift how teams think about time.

Working time is no longer fixed.

Across sectors and industries, organizations are discovering that reducing hours doesn't mean lowering the bar – it means raising the standard for how work gets done.

This insight paper marks a new chapter for us at 4 Day Week Global. After years of supporting trials and transformations, we're sharing what it takes to redesign work — and reclaim time.

We're not here to sell a single solution. We're here to make the case that time, when used with intent, becomes a strategic asset.

Whether you're ready to trial or just ready to rethink, we invite you to take your next step:



8-WEEK DESIGN PROGRAM

Start small: Test smarter ways of working in your team.



GET IN TOUCH

Book a short call to explore what is possible for your workspace.



Redesign Work. Reclaim Time. >>>

The future of work won't be built by accident.
It will be designed – and the design starts here.

