



Carbon Design 2020 Workday Study

Version 1.0



Overview

- About the Study
- The New Workday
- How it Varies

From our Founder



“We have to shift our mental models on what we think of as office hours and family time.”

As a manager and a parent, I’m conscience and protective of people’s time with family. So when I noticed a significant increase in late-night emails, I became concerned.

After a few weeks, I mentioned something to one of our team members about their late-night email habits.

As a mother of young children, she said it was her only quiet time. A chance for her to catch up on the day. What I hadn’t processed yet was that mornings were her family time. With two small children, it wasn’t until they went to bed that she was able to fully focus on work.

Stay-at-home parents used to be the exception, now they are the rule. Our idea of a standard workday has become anything but standard.

Just as I had to shift my paradigm around day-time family time/late-night work hours, we now have to shift our mental models on what we think of as “office hours” and “family time.” And perhaps, our expectation on how work gets done.

We hope this survey helps shed some light on this new reality.

About the Study

We started with a hypothesis and now we have the facts

When we founded Carbon Design three years ago we did it with the idea that how we work had changed...but companies hadn't.

People wanted to, and in some cases, had to, work differently. The M-F, 9 to 5 workweek was an antiquated industrial revolution legacy.

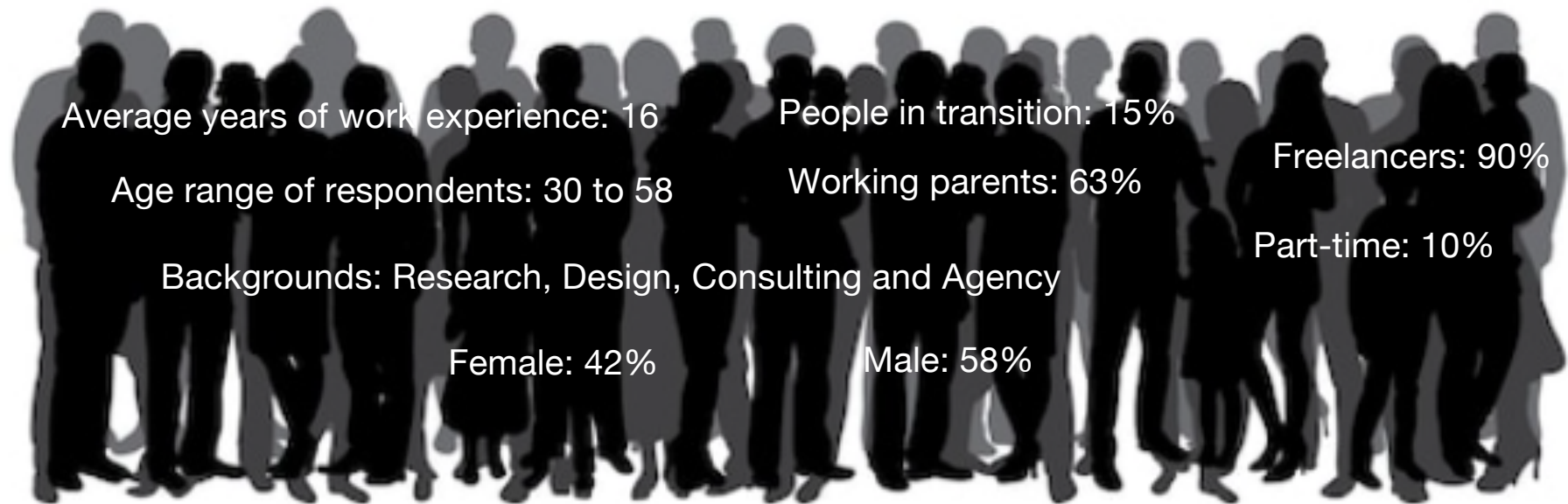
With the impact of COVID, a "work day" has changed even more dramatically and we were curious. We wanted to better understand how it was impacting our talent, and their lives.

The cool part, Carbon is probably only one of few organizations that could gain the insight into a real work day because of our business model.

Our talent own their time, we don't. They have the autonomy to make their own hours and focus their energy on work or life, when and how they choose.

They could be honest and transparent with us, partly because they don't have to report to us. They make their day, we're just a part of it.

About the Participants



A random sampling of the Carbon talent pool

About the Process

Step 1: active time was recorded in 30-minute increments.

5:00 am - 5:30 am
5:30 am - 6:00 am
6:00 am - 6:30 am
6:30 am - 7:00 am
7:00 am - 7:30 am
7:30 am - 8:00 am
8:00 am - 8:30 am
8:30 am - 9:00 am
9:00 am - 9:30 am
9:30 am - 10:00 am
10:00 am - 10:30 am
10:30 am - 11:00 am
11:00 am - 11:30 am
11:30 am - 12:00 pm
12:00 pm - 12:30 pm

Step 2: colors were used to indicate how time was spent.

Work

Red indicating
dedicated time to work

Work/Life

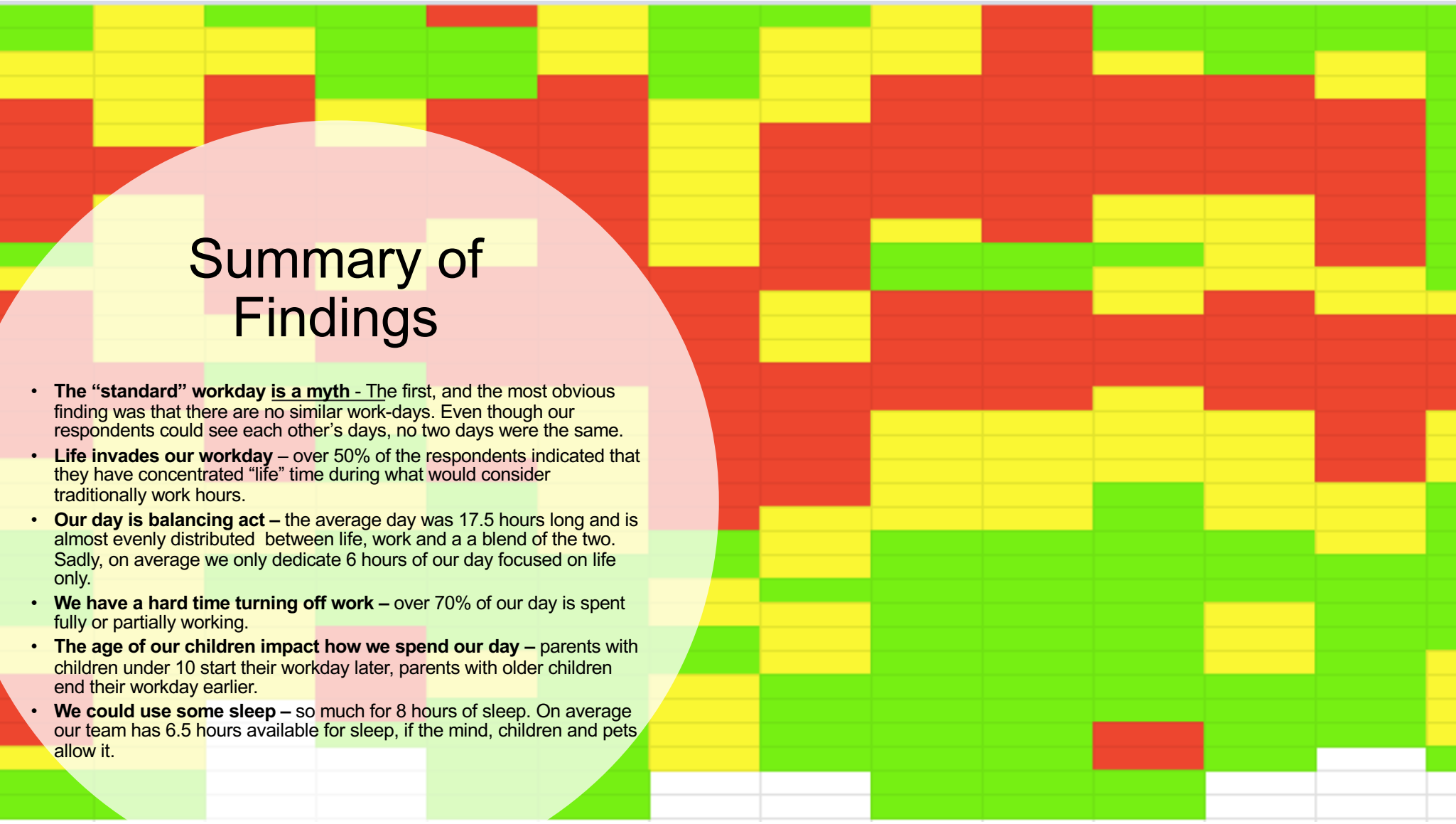
Yellow highlighted a
mix of life and work
activities

Life

Green showed time spent
on primary life activities

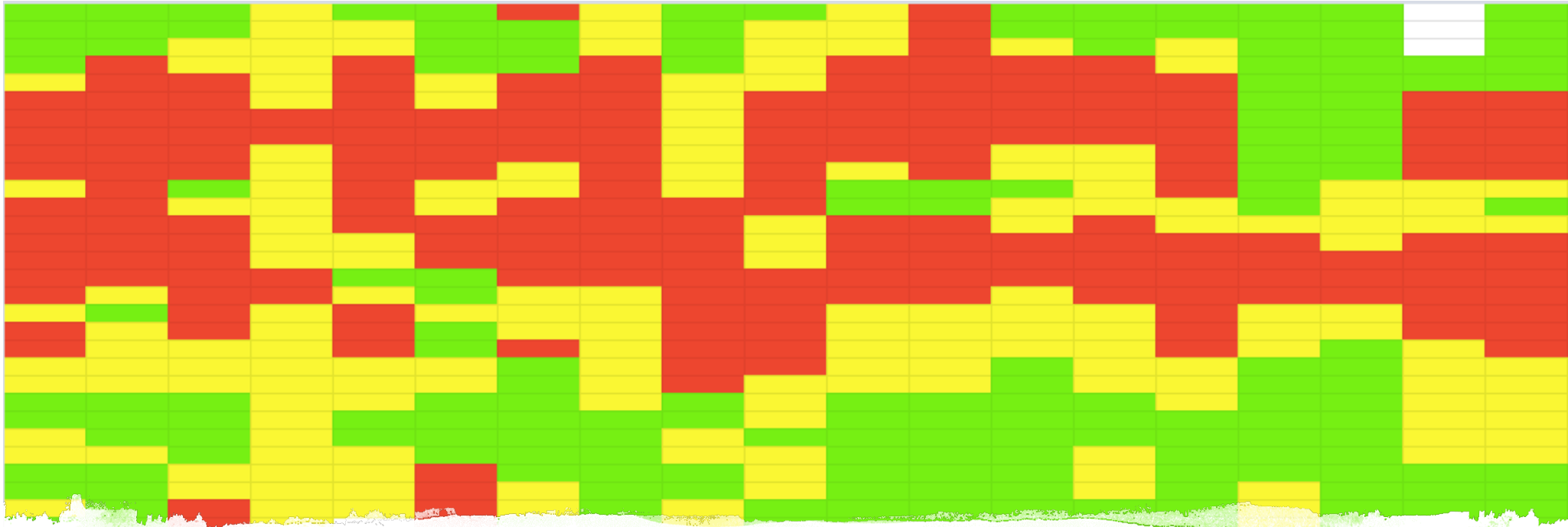
Step 3: the day was shaded from
awakening to slumbering .





Summary of Findings

- **The “standard” workday is a myth** - The first, and the most obvious finding was that there are no similar work-days. Even though our respondents could see each other’s days, no two days were the same.
- **Life invades our workday** – over 50% of the respondents indicated that they have concentrated “life” time during what would consider traditionally work hours.
- **Our day is balancing act** – the average day was 17.5 hours long and is almost evenly distributed between life, work and a blend of the two. Sadly, on average we only dedicate 6 hours of our day focused on life only.
- **We have a hard time turning off work** – over 70% of our day is spent fully or partially working.
- **The age of our children impact how we spend our day** – parents with children under 10 start their workday later, parents with older children end their workday earlier.
- **We could use some sleep** – so much for 8 hours of sleep. On average our team has 6.5 hours available for sleep, if the mind, children and pets allow it.



The Real Workday

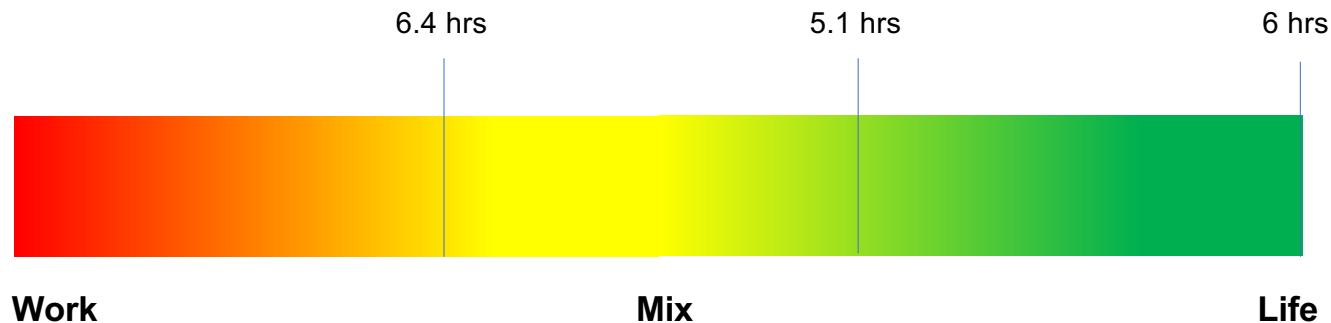
Finding: As you can see from the map above, no two workdays, or for that matter, two days are alike. Like pieces in a game of Tetris, our days often come together randomly. On average, our day is 17.5 hours long with patches of focused time on work, life and a blend of both.

Implication: We need to rethink the idea of work hours. Putting the focus on outputs rather than the process producing them may enable employees to make their own day. This in turn could lead to reducing stress, and result in, a healthier and happier work environment.

Workday Data Key	
Life	Blended Work and Life
Intense Work Time	

Our Day is a Delicate Balancing Act

Finding: We find time to focus primarily on work for 6.4 hours a day. We mix life and work for another 5.1 hours, and fully dedicate 6 hours to life. Keep mind, the hours dedicate to one area or another do not come in consistent blocks of time.



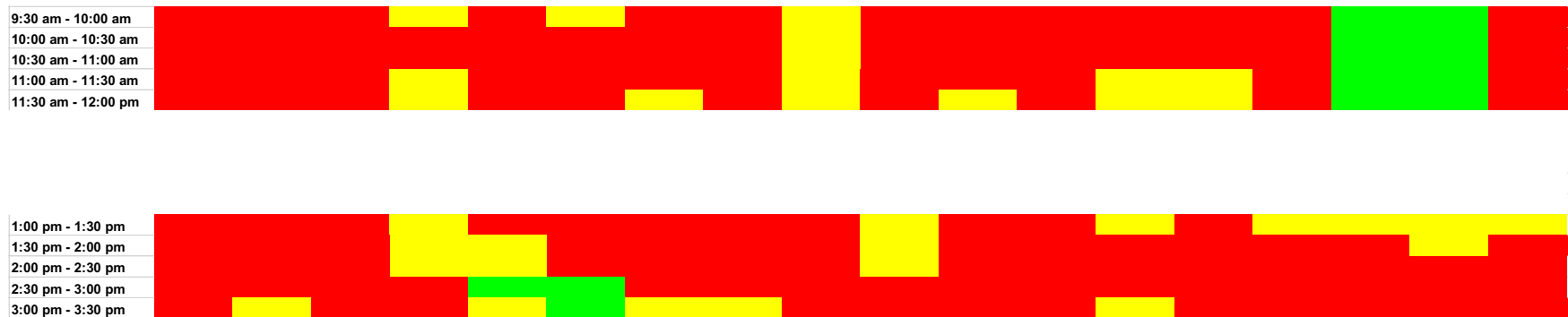
Implication: Over 70% of our day is spend working or partially working. Perhaps most challenging are the hours where we are mixing work and life. All of this activity leaves us short on sleep, on average 6.5 hours. These are stressful times, managers please check in on your teams, be mindful of their mental wellness. Be empathetic to their situation and schedule.

“My wife wasn't home, and my daughter's mid-day meltdown coincided with her brother deciding to leave remote class to antagonize her. Complete chaos. The joys of remote school and remote work!!! :)”

Email from Carbon Design Solution Architect & Father

The Power Hours

Finding: Across the group, we found a common wedge of hours where people were able to concentrate their energy and focus on work. Parents with small children have a tendency to start their day later. Parents of older children end earlier to get them to practices, games, tutoring, etc.



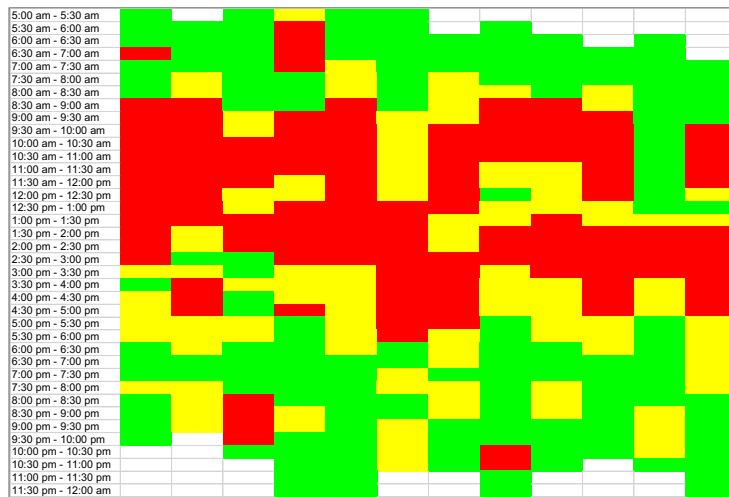
Implication: As organizations think about bringing employees back into the office, they may want to consider offering office hours in two shifts. The first from 9:30 am to 12:30 pm. The second starting from 1 pm to 4 pm. Early morning for parents with children over 10 years old and the later for children under 10.

Workday Data Key	
■	Life
■	Blended Work and Life
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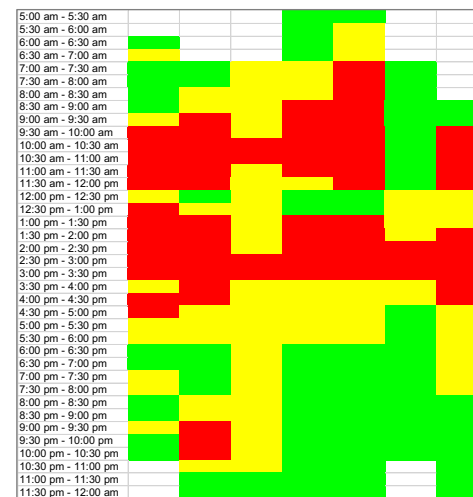
The Working Parent Workday

Finding: Working parents tend to wake up earlier to focus on life. They blend life and work more in the afternoon and have smaller discrete blocks of time for “life” overall. Over 50% of our team had “life” hours show up during what is thought of as traditional work hours.

Working Parents



Workers without children or children at home



Implication: Organizations can enable working parents to perform at their best if they acknowledge that they may need to take care of life during traditional work hours.

Workday Data Key

- Life
- Blended Work and Life
- Intense Work Time

I come from a decade of traditional big-agency experience and now that I have a young kid at home full-time it's amazing to be able to devote time to my family while still being involved in engaging work.

Glassdoor review by Carbon Design Solution Architect & Mother

Workday for Men vs. Women

Finding: Men blend life and work more than women...but maybe not as well. Women start and end their workdays slightly earlier compared to the men at Carbon Design. Note: all but one of the women at Carbon Design are working parents.

Workday for Men



Workday for Women



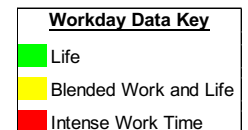
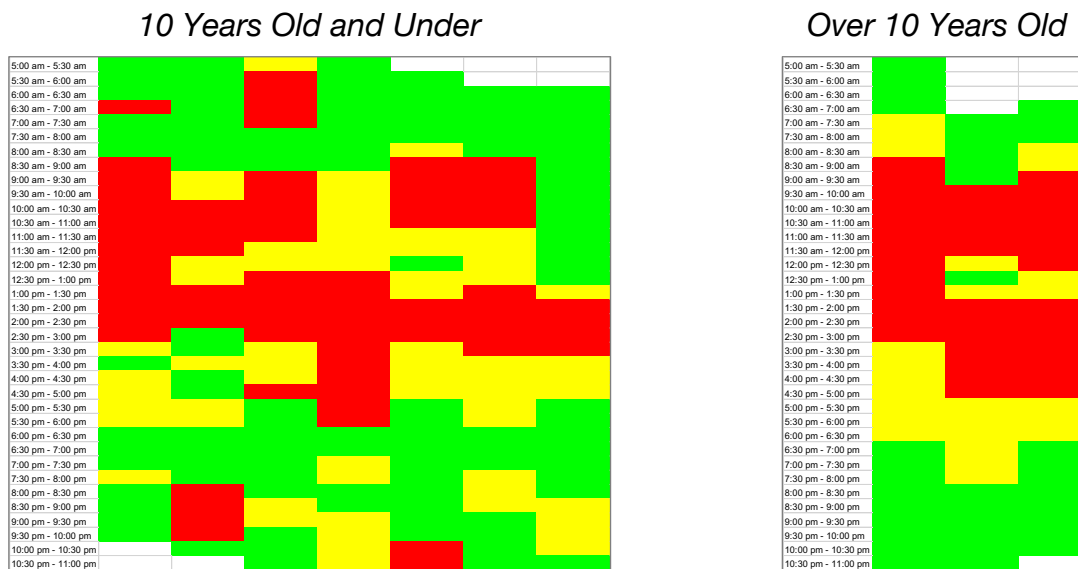
Implication: To get the most out of what female talent can offer, companies should consider defining (and being prepared to honor) “life-work” boundaries for parents of school age or young children.

Workday Data Key

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Parents with School-Age Children

Finding: Parents with children who are 10 years old or younger show the most variability in their workday.



Implication: Organizations who offer a flexible 24-hour workday may be more attractive employers for parents with elementary-aged children or younger and could use it as a selling point to attract the group of talent.

How to Navigate (and survive) the New Workday

From the *American Psychiatric Association* **Center for Workplace Mental Health**

Keep a regular schedule: Create and maintain a routine and schedule. Set up a designated space for you and each family member to work and learn. Don't forget to include periodic breaks for recharging in your schedule. Although everyone's schedule will be different, here is a sample:

7:00 a.m. - Wake up, stretch, take care of kids/animals

7:30 a.m. - Breakfast and family time (technology free!)

8:30 a.m. - Work and check on updates with small breaks every 30 minutes or so

12:00 p.m. - Lunch break, get fresh air, stretch & exercise

1:00 p.m. - Work with breaks every 30 minutes, check in with co-workers

5:00 p.m. - Dinner and screen break! Call a friend, family, or loved one

7:00 p.m. - Self care time

Managing Talent

Finding: We now know that workdays are unique to each person. It's a blend of the predictable and unpredictable. The truth is, we can't control our days. We do our best to adapt to them. Life can, and does interrupt work, work distracts us from life. Our routines are no longer "routine."



Implication: Knowing that workdays are different for everyone we can no longer manage our talent in a consistent "standard" approach. We can't have the same expectation we once had knowing the work environment has changed so dramatically. Managing with empathy is now critical. Flexibility is essential. And consider giving your team a mental health day once a quarter...or whenever they need it.

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About Carbon Design



Carbon Design is an agency that uses the power of audience insight and personality to cut through a noisy marketplace, increasing conversations, engagement, and revenue for our clients.

We started the business having experienced the failure of idea of a “work-life balance. Believing that work shouldn’t come first, we set out to build an organization that allows people to get the order right, which in turn, allows them to get work right.

The Carbon talent platform allows people to choose what they do and when. By providing autonomy, purpose, and the opportunity to expand their horizons or master their craft, we’re banking on happier workers.

Happier people create better outputs and loyal customers. It’s still evolving and we’re learning each day, but the results so far indicate we’re heading in the right direction.

Follow us on LinkedIn, and/or check us out on Glassdoor and www.carbondesign.co

A dark gray background featuring a geometric design of concentric hexagons. The design consists of three hexagons: an outer one, a middle one, and an inner one. At each of the six vertices of the outer hexagon, there is a small gold square. The text is centered within the innermost hexagon.

Thank You

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