4-day work weeks

Wildbit currently operates on a 4-day, 32-hour work week. Aside from the customer success team's unique schedule, Fridays are treated as an extension to the weekend. Any days taken off Monday - Thursday are PTO.

NATALIE NAGELE, Wildbit Co-founder & CEO

In May 2017, we set out to experiment with 4-day work weeks. Recently, we iterated on the way we do things and I wanted to share some updates.

Why are we doing this?

I believe that we can do the same amount of work, at a higher quality, in four work days instead of five. Why? Because we can spend the four days more focused, and then have three full days of rest.

As a team, we need to continue to strive to be as productive and focused as possible. We have to always ask Why, and make sure that we're working on the right things.

The 5th work day is not a time to work on a side-gig. It's a time of reflection and recuperation. Whether spent with family or organizing a closet, it's important to not take this day for granted.

This will only work if we continue to prove that we can ship our product and support it well. And that we can continue to deliver on our promises to ourselves and our customers. If it starts to fall apart, we will revert back to 5 days and think of other creative ways to work/live better.

How's everyone feeling?

Right now, we have some mixed emotions about 4-day work weeks. On the one side, the team loves having the extra day off to think and regroup. I've heard from almost everyone that they look forward to Monday. These three consecutive days leave us refreshed, recharged and pumped to start back at work.
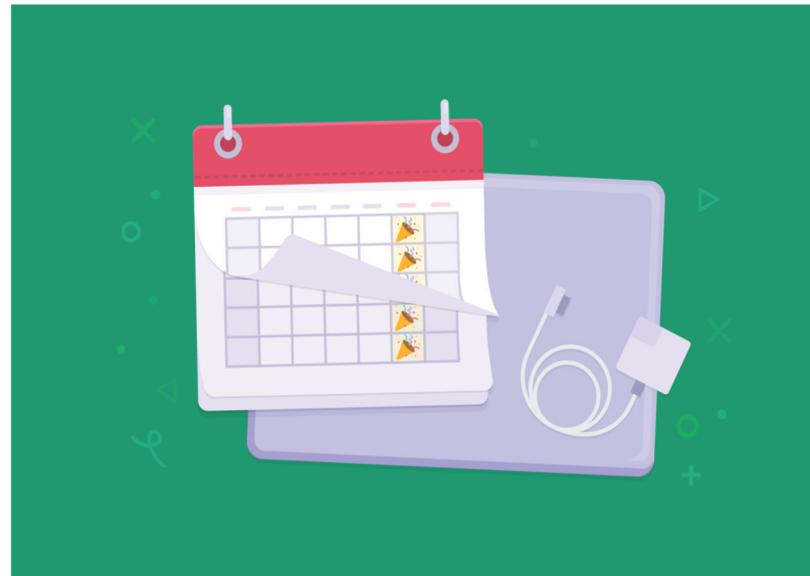
At the same time, a lot of us are feeling more pressure during the four days we are here. The goal is 32-hour weeks. So we have to make sure we're doing the right work. While the pressure is there, it's starting to subside as we're seeing our output maintaining the same as before. But we feel like the work is getting better.

Some policy updates

We have made some explicit updates to policies that we hope will make this experiment more long-term and sustainable.

PTO

Moving to a 4-day work week ends up adding 52 days off each year. Together with 25 PTO days, we end up having over 15 weeks off of work. I think that's equally awesome and super scary. We've agreed to reduce PTO days from 25 to 20. Our

thinking is we would have five full work weeks off with 25 PTO days, but now we don't need to mark the Friday in each week as off. So we still effectively have five full weeks of PTO.

Swap

At first, we were swapping mid-week days off with Fridays. This way, folks didn't have to mark the day as PTO. We're now going to stop doing the PTO swaps. The more I think about it, the more I think it's disruptive to the team. Taking a mid-week day off and then working on Friday does not help us move the products forward. In a swap, you're the only one working that day. If someone does want to work Friday because they want to catch up on your work, that's cool. But really, if you take a mid-week day it will count towards PTO. The other way to look at it: If you take a day off, you wouldn't swap with a Saturday or Sunday. Our goal is to treat Fridays the same. ◉

Our customer success team gets an exception on swapping since they are alternating days to ensure we have full coverage of the week for our customers. It's only relevant if they're moving days where someone has to work double.

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