

Ford Motor Company spent  
12 years studying productivity.

**Their results found that...**



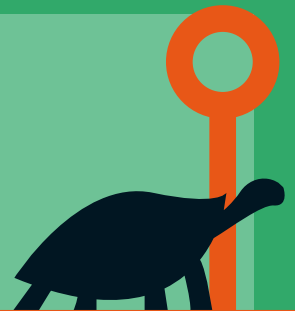
**...workers on a 60 hour week...**

...were more productive for the first  
three to four weeks, compared to  
workers on a steady 40 hour week,

**BUT...**

**AFTER  
FOUR WEEKS...**

...they were only as  
productive as someone  
working a 40 hour week.



**AND AFTER  
EIGHT WEEKS...**

...they had actually become  
less productive than workers  
on a 40 hour week!

**OVER THE COURSE  
OF EIGHT WEEKS...**

...someone working a 60 hour  
week had produced no more  
than someone working 40 hours.



**#eyeshalfshut**



# Long hours = less product

## Long hours create a 'productivity trap' – they are a false economy

- They're bad for business productivity
- They drive talent out of the industry
- They deter talented people from entering the industry.

## Long hours working damages the quality of creative work

- Most film and TV industry workers are 'creative problem solvers'
- Creativity and problem solving work suffers more than manual work from 'the productivity trap'
- Sleeping properly substantially improves problem-solving abilities.

## Workers are often their own worst enemies

Studies show that workers often overestimate their own resilience and productivity when working patterns of long hours.

In tests, workers have been shown to underestimate...

- The cost of defective work that they do when tired
- The cost of bad design decisions that they make when tired
- The cost of fixing those mistakes and bad decisions
- The cost of missed opportunities that arise because of tired working.

Studies show that most workers fail to understand that productivity gains from short periods of long-hour working are not sustained. So much of this misunderstanding fuels a 'macho' work culture that is bad for business.

## "Working full tilt"

Teams that plan to work at 100% capacity achieve less than teams that plan to work at 80% capacity:

- Less ability to deal with mistakes
- More opportunity to think about efficiency and cost-savings
- Fewer opportunities for applying creativity
- More ability to distribute work that plays to people's strengths
- More opportunity to experiment and to learn from mistakes.

The failure to schedule in 'slack' is bad for business. It's a regular feature of poorly-managed businesses. Many UK film and TV crews report 'working at full capacity' to be the norm in their day-to-day work.

## Freelancers are given perverse incentives:

*"Not prepared to work 60 hours a week for months on end? Not prepared to work to full capacity? **We can always find someone who will.**"*

Freelancers often arrive on the first day with a new employer in a state of exhaustion having been worked at full capacity for a long period immediately beforehand.

*"We have an industry that uses 'pass the exhausted parcel' as its main recruitment policy!"*

**- BECTU member, Anon.**

### Further reading:

Sydney Chapman's theory of the hours of labour (Economic Journal, 1909)

British Economic Growth, 1856-1973 - R. C. O. Matthews, C. H. Feinstein, J. C. Odling-Smee (Oxford, 1973)

Working Long Hours: a Review of the Evidence (Institute for Employment Studies, 2003)

The effects of working time on productivity and firm performance: a research synthesis paper - Lonnie Golden (ILO, 2012)



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