



FMYI (For My Innovation) is a small software company that creates a private online social networking tool to facilitate collaborative work. They have 10 employees, 6 of whom live and work outside of Oregon.

*"Flexibility is how the market is evolving. It's how you keep the best people on your team."* – Katrina Yuen, the Director of Human Resources and Operations

### What is really unique about the way FMYI does business?

FMYI's product itself is all about workplace flexibility: a web-based private networking tool that allows people to work collaboratively from anywhere. It has a social networking site interface, built in workflow tools for things like managing projects and posting files, and free technical support. In other words, they create an online tool that helps people create successful virtual offices – so it only seems fitting that they would foster flexibility and telecommuting in their own business operations.

FMYI's goal is to build a business with minimum environmental impact and maximum societal value. They are a certified B Corporation with a strong commitment to the environment, community, sustainability and corporate responsibility.

### What family-friendly work/life policies does FMYI provide?

There are two key components to flexibility at FMYI: flexibility of location and flexibility of timing. **Telecommuting** allows FMYI's local employees to work from home instead of at the office when they choose. It also allows them to retain employees who have relocated away from the home office in Portland. Over half of their staff live outside Oregon. Some of the Portland staff have moved away temporarily for family reasons and later moved back – and kept their job at FMYI throughout, which is good for FMYI and good for employees' economic security and career advancement. Importantly, staff at all levels of the organization are able to telecommute.

How do they make it work, with half their staff living in other states? For one thing, they use their own product – an online collaboration tool — to stay on top of software development work, client progress and support, marketing campaigns, operational tasks, etc. They also use iChat (or instant messaging) frequently to go through quick questions. Calls, of course, also happen frequently especially within groups that work together. One way or another, team members speak with each other almost every day. If they don't, they are probably texting or instant messaging. They also hold quarterly all-team meetings using *Go To Meetings* with video functionality. In the end, they use many tools to stay connected virtually everyday – and they say that it works the majority of the time.

## Spotlight on Flexibility | FMYI

In terms of **flexible timing**, FMYI recently adopted an unlimited paid time off policy. As long as people are getting their work done, they can take as much paid sick and vacation time as they want to. Employees at FMYI don't report hours, and they don't feel pressure to work extra hours.

### How do these Policies Benefit FMYI?

Employees say that the unlimited PTO policy makes them feel trusted and loyal. The owners believe that most people want to be productive, and that unlimited PTO seems to help decrease presenteeism – a situation in which employees are physically present at work, but distracted and unfocused.

The owners note as well that it eliminates the administrative burden of tracking hours, and helps make FMYI an attractive employer. They have very little turnover, which enables them to keep their strong employees. In today's world, in which talented people are often wooed to other jobs or are forced to relocate for family reasons, retaining employees can be extremely challenging. Yet it is crucial to overall success — especially for small companies.

### How are the Flexible Policies Implemented?

Telecommuting has been part of who FMYI is from the beginning. When they started the company, one of their key people lived in Florida. Since then, as people on their staff have relocated, they've always said "yes" to keeping them on and having them work remotely. Now, they see telecommuting as part of their "DNA," and staff at all levels of the organization are accommodated this way.

A few things help build a culture of flexibility at FMYI. One thing is practice. Over time, they all get better at the mechanics of it. Another is communication – they keep communicating to their managers why flexibility is important, and encouraging people to work with their team members to manage the workload so that everyone can get time off. It helps that they know each other well, and they play together outside work. They refer to their team as a family – and once a year, when all the employees from around the country come together for a summit, their families are all invited.

### In an Employee's Words...

*"Knowing that people trust you to get your job done makes a huge difference."*

-- Sarah White, employee of 4 years

