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MAKING WORK "WORK"

New Ideas from the Winners of the  
Alfred P. Sloan Awards for Business  
Excellence in Workplace Flexibility



**BAILEY LAW GROUP, PC**  
**Legal Firm**  
**Washington, DC (16 employees)**

Kathy Bailey said flexibility isn't something she ever thought about when she founded the Bailey Law Group eight years ago, but when two of her employees decided to move with their husbands to distant states, Bailey retained them both. "They knew our main clients and understood their businesses inside and out," she said. Her focus is on client retention and growth, she explained. She believes flexibility is key to her company's revenues, which have tripled over the last eight years. For one thing, she said one of her relocated lawyers has brought in a whole new portfolio of clients in her new region.

If Bailey is indifferent as to where her people work, she's equally unconcerned about how they schedule their hours. Her Washington, DC firm specializes in environmental law, commercial real estate leasing and civil litigation. Staff members are trusted to "work when they need to work," as Bailey put it. While the administrative staff stay close to a regular schedule, others set their own time. "Our hours are 8:30 a.m. to 6 p.m., but no one looks askance if someone comes in at 10 a.m.," she said. If people want to work at home, it's not a problem. "People just communicate with each other to schedule meetings at convenient times, or we e-mail each other back and forth."

Big city law firms are famous for killer hours stretching well into the night. At Bailey Law, however, it's not unusual for parents to leave at two in the afternoon to pick up their children. One person moved to a part-time schedule so she could be home every day with her kids after school. Her compensation has been pro-rated, but her prospects with the firm have not been diminished.

As for the costs of flexibility, Bailey sees none. "Oh, we've put some equipment in people's homes," she said, "but equipment is cheap. It's replacing people that's expensive."

