REALITY CHECK DECISIONS

COMPLETE DECISION ANALYSIS

Illustrative example using hypothetical facts.

YOUR DECISION

Should I put my eight-person customer support team on a four-day, 32-hour workweek at the same weekly pay, or keep our current five-day, 40-hour schedule?

YOUR GOAL

Reduce burnout and employee turnover while maintaining our customer response commitments and operating profit. I am open to a shorter workweek, a limited trial, or another approach if the evidence supports it. I do not want to promise a permanent benefit that the business cannot sustain.

REALITY CHECK CONCLUSION

Run an eight-week, metric-gated staggered trial before choosing a permanent schedule.

A trial tests whether burnout falls without sacrificing response commitments or operating profit. It is only defensible if success thresholds, customer feedback, workload measures, and an exit decision are set before launch.

EVIDENCE BEHIND THE ALTERNATIVE

https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-025-02259-6

https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0927537116302445

https://www.who.int/tools/occupational-hazards-in-health-sector/psycho-social-risks-mental-health

KEY DECISION DRIVERS

The proposed schedule removes 64 scheduled team hours weekly, a 20% reduction.

Maintaining 800 requests at current staffing would require 25% more output per paid hour.

The current schedule achieves 92% four-hour response performance but has not prevented burnout-related departures.

STRONGEST COUNTERARGUMENT

A short trial may miss delayed turnover effects or seasonal demand, while implementation problems could make the shorter week look worse than it is.

WHAT COULD CHANGE THE ANSWER

Trial response performance stays below the 92% baseline or customer complaints rise materially.

Measured workload shows the three near-capacity employees cannot absorb reduced hours without

added labor cost.

Burnout, absence, or resignation risk does not improve during or after the trial.

CHOICE: FOUR-DAY, 32-HOUR WORKWEEK AT THE SAME PAY

Reason: This directly supports shorter hours as a credible response to your team's burnout and turnover risk.

Reason: A shorter week is well supported for burnout, but you should not assume it will prevent turnover without measuring retention-related outcomes.

Reason: Preventing even part of the recent turnover could offset a meaningful portion of trial disruption, although the estimate is company-supplied.

Risk: Immediate permanent adoption would skip the preparation and process redesign that accompanied the strongest evidence.

Risk: Keeping five days may protect service quality, while the shorter week could improve focus but cannot be assumed to preserve response performance.

Risk: The trial must recover 64 hours of effective capacity through less avoidable work, better scheduling, or lower demand.

Risk: The manager's productivity belief is the central assumption that the trial must test rather than treat as fact.

CHOICE: KEEP OUR CURRENT FIVE-DAY, 40-HOUR SCHEDULE

Reason: Keeping five days may protect service quality, while the shorter week could improve focus but cannot be assumed to preserve response performance.

Reason: Keeping the current schedule preserves a measured customer commitment while the shorter schedule remains untested.

Reason: That extra time gives the current schedule more protection against peak demand, meetings, repeat work, absence, and uneven workloads.

Risk: The current schedule has already produced a serious retention warning that cannot be ignored.

Risk: Keeping the current schedule without workload changes may leave the underlying burnout conditions in place.

Risk: The status quo carries a recognized workforce risk, especially after two employees already left citing burnout.