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THE CASE FOR FLEXIBLE WORKING TO FUEL PRODUCTIVITY IN THE AGILE WORKPLACE

A NEW WORKPLACE HAS DAWNED

For many, the traditional model of the workplace is changing. Today, with over 50% of workers stating that they work less than two and a half days in the office, organisations are developing strategies that focus on their people and property to find new ways of managing costs, productivity and sustainability that will benefit their business, employees and customers.

In doing so, new work cultures are developing that remove the artificial measures of success, such as time in the office (attendance or 'presenteeism'), focusing instead on results and performance. The concept of flexitime is increasingly popular, where staff work core hours and are able to adjust start, finish and break times to suit their lifestyle or other commitments. Technology has become the facilitator to create this new workforce and empower people to work within new boundaries of trust and responsibility.

According to a CIPD report[1]: 'HR getting smart about agile working'

"Companies characterised by a culture of flexibility and external focus were more likely to respond to changes more quickly and more effectively.

"There is strong evidence that organisations see value in proactive workforce planning as a way of improving the match between the availability and the current and future demand for resources.

This new paradigm, where output matters more than presenteeism, has resulted in organisations achieving more with less, being able to adapt swiftly to change when required and have happier, more productive employees.

HFX is a long-time advocate of such flexible working and the benefits it can bring to businesses. For over forty years our Flextime® solution has been used by private and public sector organisations alike to manage working hours transparently and equitably, in the workplace or remotely, improving productivity and employee wellbeing.

In this report we discuss this new paradigm of work and present case studies where organisations are already realising the benefits of flexible working, supported by the right technology to make it happen. We also explore the main barriers to this new agile working, which for many revolve around culture, mindset and the employee experience.

"We like to give people the freedom to work where they want, safe in the knowledge that they have the drive and expertise to perform excellently, whether they [are] at their desk or in their kitchen. Yours truly has never worked out of an office, and never will."

Richard Branson, Founder & Chairman, Virgin[2]

[1]CIPD : (in association with The Agile Future Forum) – "HR getting smart about agile working" Research report November 2014
[2]Richard Branson's blog on Virgin.com - "Give people the freedom of where to work"

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DEFINING THE EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE AND WHY IT IS IMPORTANT

Foreword by Nick Whiteley, Managing Director, HFX

The new world of work

Today the world of work has changed in the public and private sectors. Traditional work practices have been turned on their head - technology has enabled this paradigm shift, bringing with it the flexible benefits of anytime, anywhere working and changing the work culture away from one of presenteeism to a more productive approach based on individual contributions.

Attracting and keeping staff does not just mean providing great pay and perks, the employee experience is also about having the right culture that embraces innovation and individual contribution.

Money is no longer the only motivator in the workplace. Individuals are placing value on time, which means that flexible working is high on their list of job perks.

Today, people expect to work their own hours, choose where they work and do so without the restrictions of formal direct supervision in a traditional office setting. Increasingly, companies that offer this trust-based flexibility as a standard part of their benefits package can attract the best candidates.

> " *Happiness lies in the joy of achievement and the thrill of creative effort...*
> **Franklin D Roosevelt** "

The importance of a work culture

The companies that will continue to succeed are those that have the right culture to adapt – which means a loyal and motivated workforce able and willing to embrace the necessary changes.

A positive culture ensures that when a company faces tough times or needs to adapt, its employees will happily consider options to get through the worst. Whether salary sacrifice, reduced hours or moving to cheaper premises, a loyal staff will be one that goes with the flow.

The essence of loyalty lies in the treatment of people, whether they are staff on the payroll, or contractors, not simply in the legal framework within which they work. Fostering a flexible, no-blame culture also helps to build trust and engagement within the workforce, which means staff are far more likely to stay with the business through thick and thin.

Three steps to manage your employee experience

So where does this leave us with the employee experience? It's not quantifiable or measurable, so how can you create a positive one? We all spend a lot of time at work, probably more than we spend with our families, so it's important that it is a place where we feel comfortable, where our ideas are listened to and where we feel we can make a difference.

The following three key steps are a good place to start;

1 Pay and perks are important and not to be ignored. The goal should be that staff enjoy coming to work, rather than dread the routine of a 9-5 regime. Flexible working, adaptability and commitment should be a two-way street.

2 Creating a positive experience relies upon employing the right blend of people that are motivated, happy and, as a result, productive. It's not about the posters and messages that you have on the wall.

3 It's important to foster a culture where employee contribution is valued 'in the family', where innovation and ideas are welcomed and considered. A positive work culture supports security and that breeds loyalty.

FLEXIBLE WORKING SURVEY – FINDINGS

Our 2018 survey on flexible working engaged a wide range of organisations from public and private sector, SME to enterprise, in order to gain a broad understanding of how different organisations respond to the question of flexible working.
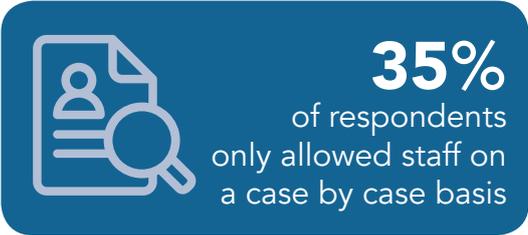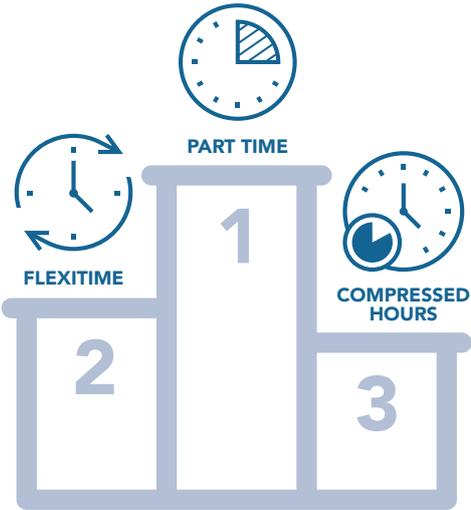
Flexible Working **Policy**

89%

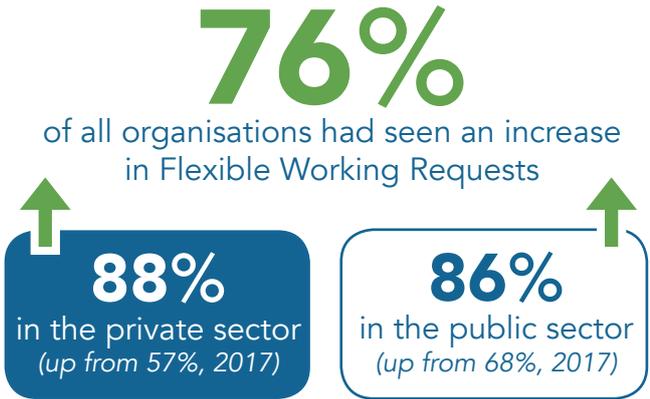of organisations polled had a flexible working policy, compared to 85% in 2017
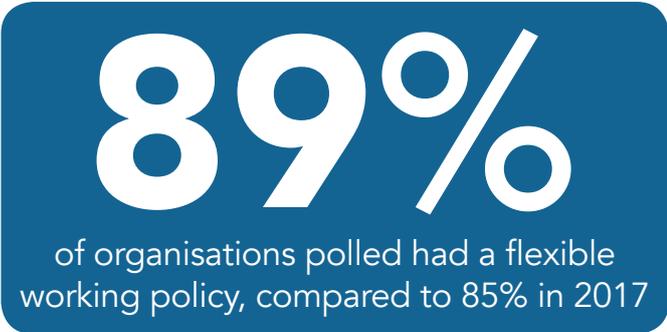
The disparity between the private and public sector is reducing with 93% of the public sector vs 81% of the private sector implementing a flexible working policy. There was, however, a significant difference between large organisations (100%) vs smaller organisations (82%) which suggest that smaller organisations are lagging behind. However, two thirds of this group are reviewing this over the next six months which suggests it is impacting on recruitment/retention of staff.

Top 3 Types of Flexible Working

PART TIME

FLEXITIME

COMPRESSED HOURS

1

2

3

Flexible Working **Requests**

76%

of all organisations had seen an increase in Flexible Working Requests

88%
in the private sector
(up from 57%, 2017)

86%
in the public sector
(up from 68%, 2017)

Not only have all organisations seen requests increase significantly this year, but, more importantly, the change is much more pronounced in the private sector which now overtakes the public sector in terms of demand for flexible working. In part the explanation is that the private sector is playing catch-up with the public sector who have been long advocates of flexible working.

85%
within smaller companies

90%
within larger companies

61%
of respondents allowed all staff to participate

35%
of respondents only allowed staff on a case by case basis

The results also show that smaller companies receive fewer requests than larger organisations which might reflect the employee's perception that smaller companies are less able to manage with flexible working.

Reasons for Flexible Working

93% Family Commitments	**75%** Travel/Commute	**40%** External Study	**31%** Lifestyle

The overwhelming reason given for flexible working is family commitments with travel/commuting coming a close second. External study comes third. However, in at fourth place is lifestyle/hobby/sport which indicates the changing attitude to what was traditionally viewed as "working life". A substantive number of employees want to actively balance their work with their own (non-work) ambitions throughout their life. These results were across the board no matter type or size of organisation.

Flexible Working **in the Recruitment Process**

83%

of the time, Flexible Working was raised by the candidate during recruitment

100% in the private sector & small organisations	**80%** in large organisations

& the impact on Recruitment

50%

of respondents reported that Flexible Working played a key factor in whether or not the candidate accepted the position

55% in the private sector	**53%** in the public sector

Whilst the private sector normally has more flexibility with financial incentives it appears this did not influence 55% (private sector) vs 53% (public sector) from basing their decision on flexibility rather than financial imperatives.

Flexible Working **by Age**

The most requests for Flexible Working came from the age range

25 - 44

the least from **18 - 24**	followed by those **65+**

It is unsurprising that those starting their career – who often haven't started families – want to maximise their time working. Later on with families the need to balance their time and later on when their children have grown up have less ties on their time.

65+ making fewer requests may be explained by the final sprint. In a long working life, it is important to pace yourself, but with the end of your working life in sight there is less need to pace and with pensions less generous, perhaps a greater desire to sprint.

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Improving service delivery and staff wellbeing for remote workers

Flintshire County Council is the unitary local authority for the present-day Welsh administrative county of Flintshire. It has invested in HFX's solution to manage staff working hours for its 350 front line waste management and recycling staff. Since implementing the solution the Council is able to better manage working hours for its remote teams, and with the efficiency gains the system is on track to deliver substantial savings and improved staff availability in the first year.

Cloud solution provides flexibility for remote workers

The Council decided that a cloud based solution would deliver the control needed to drive efficiency with remote working teams, but which also had as little an impact as possible on users who have minimal access to systems and little technology experience.

The HFX solution has a clear, modern interface that is straightforward to use, with no training required and empowers staff to access their information securely from anywhere with an internet connection.

Efficiency gains translate into improved end user services

The Council now uses HFX's system to record hours for the staff working across seven locations, covering all the areas of Flintshire. Each site has the new HexOne dedicated touchscreen clocking terminal developed and built by HFX in the UK. Staff members are also able to access the portal remotely from home or smartphone to access and amend personal details, add notes or book leave.

Reports ensure optimal working patterns and staff wellbeing

As well as providing improved management on a daily basis of recording staff hours, the new solution has provided additional benefits with the built in reporting functionality. The reports help managers to monitor working hours, ensuring that they meet European Working Directives while still delivering the key front line services.

HFX's flexitime solution is helping Flintshire Council to shape its service and highlight issues and trends through powerful and accurate information.

DARTMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

Managing flexitime for the office based and mobile workforce

Dartmoor National Park Authority is a special purpose local authority created under the Environment Act 1995 employing around 100 staff including ecology and environmental specialists as well as rangers, finance, administration, HR and ICT.

Most staff are based at the head office at Parke, Bovey Tracey, with others working at its Visitor Centres in Princetown, Postbridge and Haytor as well as remote workers including rangers and a Conservation Works Team. The Authority has invested in HFX to facilitate the management of working hours and annual leave allocation, as well as secure access to its premises.

> *"We found that HFX offered a cost effective solution, plus the transition was easier as we were familiar with HFX's previous system. It gave us continuity of service and we knew that it was a proven solution."*

Neil White, Head of Organisational Development, Dartmoor National Park.

Staff are using HFX's proximity card to enter the office locations which has improved security of buildings for staff and property. Staff who work remotely or from home are also able to log in and out remotely from their desktop.

Ensuring a staff work/life balance

The self-service feature has been particularly well received, enabling them to change and update their own personnel records online, check balances for flexitime and hours worked and request holidays and other absence.

A key business benefit for the National Park is the improved software and reporting functionality. Managers are able to refer to the system to check leave and hours balances of their teams and quickly identify any staff working long hours or over their credit limit. The Leadership Team regularly review reports to identify potential workload hotspots or issues which if unaddressed may lead to sickness or absence.

> *"We are definitely more efficient as a result of using HFX – we already had good flexible working practices in place but how we manage this is now greatly improved."*

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF SCOTLAND

Supporting a flexible working culture

The National Library of Scotland is a major European research library, holding collections of world-class importance in over 490 languages, including digital resources and catalogues.

The Library employs over 330 staff to manage the vast collections across its six sites in Edinburgh and Glasgow.

An established employer in the area, it has for many years successfully employed flexible working policies to support the work/life balance of its staff. The Library has implemented HFX's flexible working system to support its policies, reaping efficiencies with reduced administration time spent by staff and the HR team in recording working hours.

HFX supports flexible working policies and reduces administration

"Achieving a good work/life balance is embedded in our culture in the Library and flexible working contributes to this.

"The HFX system provides us with a very flexible solution allowing staff to easily change how they

log in and out and so it's great for those who travel between sites, knowing that their working day is accurately recorded."

Christine Miller, HR Partner, National Library of Scotland.

Employees at the Library clock in and out using terminals in each of the different sites, or from their own PC terminals. The HR team believes that by the recording of all working hours in a transparent and equitable way, both staff and managers are assured that the flexitime policies are adhered to. The HFX solution is integrated with the Library's WorldService HR system, streamlining the monitoring and management of absence data.

"Thanks to the HFX solution, our staff have the flexibility that our policies allow, they can use free days to get things done, which means they tend to make sure they are as productive as they can be, in order to have the time off."

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NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL

Improving productivity and staff morale in one of Scotland's most populous regions

North Lanarkshire Council is the fourth largest council in Scotland, responsible for serving a population in excess of 326,000 people, operating across 44 locations, as well as remotely and in the community.

Following the UK Government's decision to introduce new flexible working legislation, North Lanarkshire had to meet the objective by the 30th June 2014 deadline. HFX's solution has given North Lanarkshire Council flexibility in more ways than one. The solution can manage more than 770 work schedules and rotating shift patterns to suit the organisation's wide variety of workers.

Increased productivity and a sense of ownership

"The benefits of flexible working have been twofold. We have found people work more conscientiously and productively. Employees enjoy the flexibility and are keen to make it work, so they work hard to meet their objectives. People feel a sense of ownership over their working life. They are encouraged to make the

best working choices for them, which can also often mean a better work /home life balance."

John Carlin, Analyst/Programmer,
North Lanarkshire Council.

Productivity has improved thanks to a reduction in paperwork. Staff are now more in control of their own time, submitting holiday requests, clocking in and out and making shift pattern change requests directly into the system.

Centralisation has been a big benefit in terms of joining up the information and giving managers totally visibility of workers who move around.

"At North Lanarkshire we have realised benefits can be achieved through centralised workforce management. It has been an intensive project but the benefits speak for themselves. We have happier employees, are legislatively compliant and are making impressive time savings. From a technology point of view, we have simplified upgrades, maintenance, back-ups and staff training."

ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL

Delivering improved service to the community

Anglesey County Council provides the full range of local authority services - from schools and leisure centres to bin collections - for residents of the County of Anglesey or Ynys Môn.

As part of its Smarter Working initiative, the Council has invested in HFX's latest solution to manage staff hours and secure access to its administration offices.

Anglesey County Council employs over 740 staff across its three office locations and depot, for which it now uses the HFX proximity access solution. It has also enabled the Council to manage flexible working for staff, allowing them to work from one of the offices, home or hot desk at any other Council location, including schools and libraries.

Smarter working delivers improved services

"As a project manager for our Smarter Working initiative, I could see the benefits of the latest version of HFX in supporting our drive to find more efficient ways of working to deliver our core services to the community.

"Being able to log in remotely means that our

staff can move around and are more agile – our community workers and case workers can get more done in a day. It has made them much more productive and flexible, which in turn means that we can provide a better service to citizens."

Chris Staddon, Corporate Assets Transformation Manager, Anglesey County Council.

The Council can now manage different working schedules and rotating shift patterns, part time patterns, including term-time working and, when required, complex overtime calculation.

HFX also provides sickness absence management and handles time off in lieu calculations.

"The investment in HFX has really paid off. As part of our refurbishment and IT upgrade programme it demonstrates that we are a modern, forward looking authority. It is a great message that Senior Managers and Elected Members use to underline our commitment to investing in our facilities and staff, enabling us to do more, be more efficient and provide better public services."

Councillor Alwyn Rowlands, Anglesey County Council.

EDEN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Flexible working and increasing business visibility

Eden District Council employs 180 members of staff to deliver vital public services across the region. Addressing the needs of a diverse community requires dedicated staff to often work outside of normal office hours. The council has always placed an emphasis on work/life balance and offers flexible working to its employees.

The Council wanted a system that could unify the processes for time recording across the organisation, deliver greater visibility and improved accuracy while also being easier to manage.

It is using HFX for time recording, flexitime management and holiday management. Each employee has their own smart card, which enables them to access the building and record their working hours via clocking in and out.

Putting employees in the driving seat with self-service HR

Since implementing HFX, the feedback from staff has been overwhelmingly positive. The solution accurately records all working hours including accrued flexitime in a transparent and equitable way, providing both employees and managers with the required assurance that the flexitime policies are adhered to.

> *"Employees really like the self-service element of the solution, at a glance they can check their holiday and flexitime balance and submit requests. The HFX system is quick to access and easy to update, it has encouraged a culture of tracking and monitoring things in real-time."*

Linzi Gate, Senior Human Resources Adviser, Eden District Council.

HFX has enhanced business planning through increased visibility into working patterns. The access to real-time data has removed the guesswork in supporting personnel administration and broader HR strategy.

> *"HFX has been in place for a few months and already the benefits are being recognised across the Council. The scope of the reports we can produce and the speed in which we are able to produce them has been one of many positives."*

Bibian McRoy, Assistant Director Organisational Development, Eden District Council.

DELIVERING FLEXITIME SOLUTIONS TO ORGANISATIONS THROUGHOUT THE UK

At HFX we help organisations of all sizes, across all sectors, to implement their flexible working policies with accuracy, consistency and transparency. Our 40 years' experience and knowledge are a testament to our extensive customer base.

Ministerial Departments

Ministry of Defence

Home Office

Ministry of Justice

Agencies & other public bodies

Legal Aid Agency

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY OFFICE

Driver & Vehicle Standards Agency

Office of the Public Guardian

NHS Business Services Authority

HM PRISON SERVICE
Public Sector Prisons

HM Courts & Tribunals Service

Vehicle Certification Agency

Science & Technology Facilities Council

The Pensions Regulator

Office for National Statistics

BRITISH WIRELESS FOR THE BLIND FUND
KEEPING BLIND PEOPLE IN TOUCH WITH THE WORLD
REGISTERED CHARITY NO. 1078287 IN ENGLAND. SCOTTISH CHARITY NO. SC041582

COSLA

Non Ministerial Departments

HM Land Registry

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Local Government

CYNGOR SIR YNYS MÔN ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL

Angus Council

Cherwell DISTRICT COUNCIL NORTH OXFORDSHIRE

The Highland Council Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd

CYNGOR Sir y Fflint Flintshire COUNTY COUNCIL

Eden District Council

HERTSMERE

East Renfrewshire COUNCIL

Isle of Man Government Reiltys Ellan Vannin

Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk

Mid Devon DISTRICT COUNCIL

Midlothian

nls National Library of Scotland Leabharlann Nàiseanta na h-Alba

North Lanarkshire Council

Renfrewshire Council

Shrewsbury Town Council

SOUTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL

south AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

South Gloucestershire Council

STRATA

Private Sector Organisations

Partners

Interserve

Thorogoods

MHR

CAPITA

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HFX INTRODUCES IMPERAGO RapíD
A PARADIGM SHIFT IN INTEGRATION

Rapid API Development

Einstein stated that *"Everything should be made as simple as possible, but no simpler."* and for HFX this has become a mantra and even our core values are expressed by one word: simplify.

Simplify results in huge time reductions which means direct cost savings: 80% reduction in integration time and implementation time reduced from nine months to one month.

We follow this simplify principle both in terms of our processes, methodology and vigorously within our cloud solution design and development. The first challenge we tackled with Time and Attendance was the complexity of reflecting real world work rules within a simple and easy configuration that end users could quickly master and enable them to take complete ownership of the solution. The result was amazing; implementation time reduced from nine months to one month enabling the customer to achieve accelerated ROI and significantly reduced costs of configuration and implementation.

This success gave us confidence to tackle the next challenge which was more nuanced but no less radical; solving the thorny issue of integration using Application Programming Interfaces (APIs). As a group of seasoned developers with over 30 years' experience of integration (and a combined list of over 250 interfaces developed under our belt) we looked at the fundamental issues with integration. We recognised that the issue had little to do with coding ability, language but everything to with mindset.

At a high level we recognise three key mindsets that pervaded all interface development characterised *"The Solicitor's Mindset"*, *"Pedantic Officialdom"* and *"S.E.P or Someone Else's Problem"* – Our analysis revealed all three mindsets in all third party integrations we had ever seen and worked with historically. Each requires a little explanation to see how they manifest;

The Solicitor's Mindset:

If you have ever had dealings with a solicitor (whether when buying/selling a house, Non-Disclosure Agreement etc) you will instantly recognise the legalise, Latin and jargon that seems to confuse rather than clearly communicate its purpose. Any attempt to simplify the text is met with a firm response by the solicitor that *"It's not meant for you but for another solicitor"*. This is a lazy excuse to avoid clarity and simplicity by relying on someone else with seven years legal training to decipher text that could and should have been presented in a way that a lay person could understand. This same mindset influences the development of APIs with the argument being that the P stands for programming so there is no need to simplify the API as its not meant for anyone other than another programmer.

Pedantic Officialdom:

We've all experienced this when asked to fill out a form to change some information. Often you are asked to enter the very same information already held only to be told later that you've used the wrong form (often they have different forms to register new information versus amending existing information). When you finally receive the correct form you are then told you must use black ink rather than blue or that your signature isn't fully in the box provided (which is often too small) – I could go on, but you get the point. This very same approach is often applied to Application Interfaces. As with Pedantic Officialdom the whole purpose isn't to make life easy for the consumer (or third party) but a lazy approach to make it easier for the recipient.

Someone Else's Problem:

Encapsulating and extending on both the previous mindsets is the overarching view that it is someone else's problem to decipher and to comply with these pedantic and overly cumbersome rules. This approach to integration enables APIs to be created very quickly but the consequence is that they are dumb, brittle and difficult to work with and significantly increases the effort by the third party.

A New Paradigm and the 3 Guiding Principles:

Overcoming these issues isn't a question of technology, coding skills or even language, it's harder than that because it requires a paradigm shift in thinking about the whole approach to integration.

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However, as with all challenges we were confident with the right approach we could completely turn integration on its head to simplify work for third parties and especially to our customers.

The first design principle we applied was that the API shouldn't be developed for another developer, it should be developed so that a competent IT professional or implementer could consume the interface. This principle ensures that we don't make assumptions about who will be consuming the interface and a good test to ensure that the interface is a simple as possible (but no simpler).

The second design principle is that the API should be intelligent and not pedantic in terms of the calls into the API (for instance demanding a different call to add information versus amending information or refusing data based on lazy or pedantic rules). If the new data requires the creation of associated or dependent information the API can automatically create this on the fly rather than simply failing. This simplifies the work for third parties whilst reducing both manual entry and lazy rejection of data.

The third design principle was that the API should be easy to configure, so that if requirements change (e.g. some information previously sent is no longer required) the API can ignore the data without the need for changes by the third party. This ensures that the interface is flexible, and our solution can adapt to changes in data without the need for either the third party or the interface to change. It builds in flexibility.

In a Nutshell…

These 3 guiding principles enable a paradigm shift and focus all the intelligent development work within our solution making it simple to integrate from a third party perspective. It turns integration on its head by making integration *"our problem"* rather than *"Someone Else's Problem"* and this changes the mindset with the result that issues are tackled and eliminated from the get go.

This approach rapidly decreases integration time by around 80%, reduces the need for testing and third party development work. It also means that with a simplified approach to web services we can easily integrate legacy/on-premise third party products even if they are .wcsv based using our rapid scripts that convert these into web service calls.

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