

These are the obvious perks; the ones that have been indoctrinated into our psyche as business owners. It's what we all learned when we attended **The Institution That Has All The Answers On How to Successfully Run A Business.**

*(Wait, you mean you didn't graduate from TITHATAOHTSRAB? Tsk, tsk. I guess we won't be seeing you at the alumni gathering.)*

It turns out that TITHATAOHTSRAB was wrong all along. The one thing employees want more than anything else—according to *Entrepreneur magazine* and many others—is freedom.

- Freedom over when they work.
- Freedom over how they work.
- Freedom to do what they do best without someone micromanaging them.

Telecommuter!  
2 days a week!



This is a revolution. Gone are the days of everyone in their chairs by 8 a.m., ticking boxes all day and not rocking the boat.

*Freedom is the new pay raise, people.*

## WHY THIS SEISMIC SHIFT? (A FEW IDEAS)

### FIRST, THAT 8-5 BOX-TICKING JOB STRUCTURE IS QUICKLY BECOMING OUTDATED.

That's because jobs that can be automated have been automated. There are exceptions, of course—customer service positions where there really does need to be someone at the front desk or on the other end of the line, answering the same questions during certain hours—but even these jobs are being outsourced and automated.

### SECOND, WORK-LIFE BALANCE.

Second, while traditionally structured gigs were the hallmark of the upwardly mobile power suit generation, those who have followed are increasingly valuing work-life balance and independence over a few extra bucks.

Surfing at 10 a.m. > Sitting in a cubicle at 10 a.m.

### THIRD, CHANGING EVALUATIONS.

Meanwhile, simultaneously, companies are increasingly realizing that **results matter more than chair time.**

## CASE STUDIES:

Today, many big, successful companies demonstrate a commitment to employee autonomy.



Best Buy's erstwhile HR gurus Cali Ressler and Jody Thompson famously pioneered the Results Only Work Environment more than 10 years ago. While their pilot was flawed and was ultimately nixed by CEO Hubert Joly in 2013, the general concept behind ROWE—giving employees more power and worrying more about outcomes than input—caught on elsewhere.



Netflix lets employees take as much vacation as they want and even allows salaried employees to select the percentage of their compensation that comes from salary vs. stock.

Google lets employees work on side projects on company time.



Zappos gives customer service representatives an incredible amount of power over the decisions they make when dealing with customers.

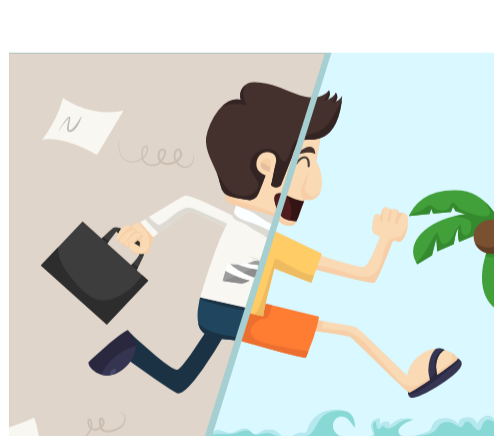
These companies aren't being completely selfless and altruistic by enacting these pro-autonomy policies. All three boast low turnover rates and high loyalty, and we probably don't have to tell you that all three companies are performing very, very well.

### We know—giving your employees autonomy is easier said than done.

After all, a love for control is practically a requirement for admission to our fake school, TITHATAOHTSRAB. (But, seriously, someone should start that school.)

And, yet, relinquishing some control can pay stellar dividends. Why? Because when you start focusing on results instead of who appears to be working the hardest, things start to get done.

And when you demonstrate trust in your employees, they have a tendency to show their true colors. This is incredibly valuable. There is, perhaps, no more efficient method of sorting out the heroes from the resource sieves than telling your entire workforce, "Here is the ultimate deliverable. Use your judgment to figure out how to get there." Then you sit back and watch to see who invents a better mousetrap and who binge-watches Netflix on your dime.



Yes, there might be an initial shock when you discover who among your employees can't handle autonomy, but the best performers are likely to shine when given the opportunity.



A feature in *Inc. magazine* recommends that employers "give parameters, then offer choices." This allows business owners to facilitate autonomy without creating anarchy. The feature also points out that it's important to "reward the grinders." As mentioned, you'll quickly be able to tell who can handle additional responsibility. Make sure those top performers know that you notice, and that you value their initiative.

Once you weed out the non-performers and reward the top performers, evidence shows that you'll have a more efficient and effective—and happier, more loyal—workforce. **Everybody wins.**

**(And we'd be remiss if we didn't mention that if you find yourself a little light on, say, accounting staff when you weed out the non-performers, we'd be happy to help out.)**

OWL BELIEVES TWO THINGS ABOUT SMALL BUSINESS MONEY:  
> It should be stable and secure.  
> There should be more of it.