

**Welcome  
to the Jungle**

**4**

**DAY  
WEEK**



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How we tested and approved  
the four-day work week

# Summary

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4 DAY WEEK

## Summary

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# Abstract

I.

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4 DAY WEEK

Welcome to the Jungle is a media company for life at work that was founded in 2015 in Paris. Today (as of early 2020), the company employs more than 150 people, with offices in Paris, Barcelona, Bratislava, and Prague.

Experimenting with new work practices is a subject of interest for all Welcome to the Jungle employees. The company decided to adopt the four-day work week for five months, from June to October 2019. At the end of the test, Welcome to the Jungle adopted the four-day work week schedule.

The questions this experiment raised for us, and for our partners at Fabernovel, were numerous: How will the company adapt to the new schedule? How will the change impact the company's financial performance? How will it impact the company's non-financial assets (including brand image, employer brand, etc.)? How will the four-day week affect employees' work-life balance? How will it influence the way people work together and interact? What effect will it have on the work's quality and creativity?<sup>1</sup>

This document aims to provide insights on our experiment. It includes an analysis of its impact on performance, people, work practices, and processes, as well as an explanation of our key takeaways as a company.

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, "Message from Fabernovel," page 76

# Recap

II.

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4 DAY WEEK

## The four-day week at Welcome to the Jungle

Welcome to the Jungle tried out the four-day working week in 2019 for five months, between June and October. After the trial ended, the company decided to implement the four-day week, without impacting salaries.

### Time Management

Scheduling and organizing meetings was a challenge initially. So days off were limited to Wednesdays or Fridays, which were the most popular choices. This helped with workflow, communication and scheduling of activities.

Days got more intense and breaks got shorter, with many staff taking half as long as before. By the end, staff were working an average of 90 minutes on their day off, but declared being happy about this. Work habits did not really change and those who used to work on their days off continued to do so.

The staff asked for a manual to guide them on how to make the change.

Some tasks were deemed unsuitable for a four-day week, such as events management. It was also decided that newcomers should not take part initially.

### Quality of life

One of the biggest results of the four-day week was the positive impact on wellbeing and work-life balance. Staff felt positive about the trial, and saw no impact on fatigue, mood or their relationships with others. There was no significant change in anxiety levels. There was more stress but employees felt better able to cope with it, in a context where they felt more in control. Work satisfaction stayed stable, but family satisfaction increased, which could point to a better work-life balance, known to be crucial for employees' wellbeing.

### Performance

Reducing the working week by 20% did not cause a 20% drop in performance, although the business continued to be operational five days a week. Changes were introduced to boost productivity: only essential meetings were held; communication processes were rethought; automation tools were brought in and performance indicators were updated to monitor long-term and qualitative success.

**The sales teams reached the same business performance as before** by working only on projects with a high added value. However, they had less time to identify prospects. So the sales and marketing division was restructured. A new team of sales development representatives was set up to focus on identifying and qualifying business opportunities for sales teams. In addition, marketing tools used when acquiring new leads were strengthened, so that sales teams could concentrate on converting prospects into clients.



## Recap

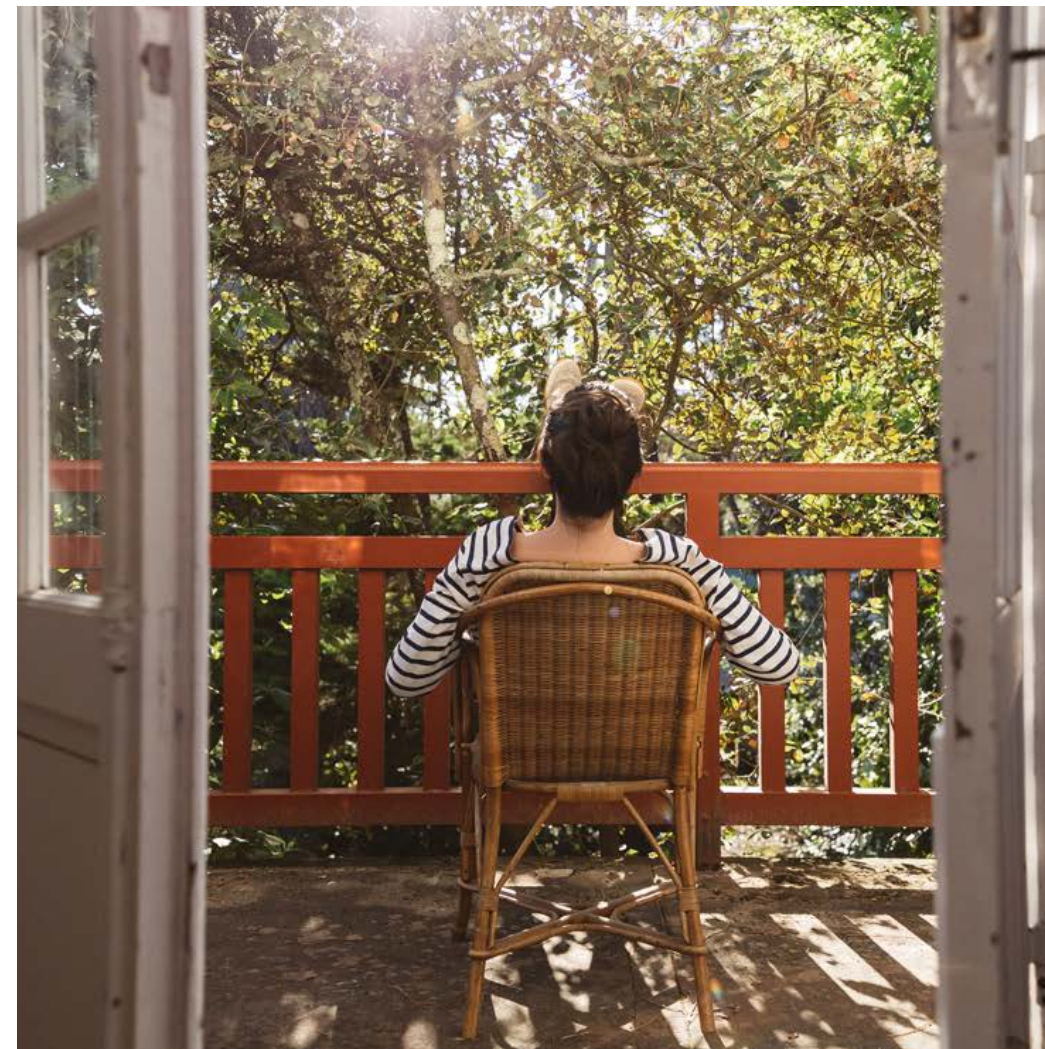
### Productivity

Staff found it difficult to adapt initially, but they were motivated and made the effort to be more productive. Sales was the first business team affected by the change to the four-day week. Some team members focused on smaller accounts. The number of deals created and won tended to decrease, although the level of conversion was stable. The average closing and onboarding times tended to increase for the customer success management team.

The trial highlighted the importance of monitoring areas of performance that are difficult to measure, such as published content quality. **With the same workload in a shorter week, weaknesses become visible sooner.**

### Strategy

In the first weeks, short-term thinking was evident. Staff tended to focus on operational tasks and urgent ones. Prospecting, editorial watch or monitoring the quality of product development seemed to be neglected. Cutting out time for “inspirational moments” for those in creative positions appeared to have an impact on company performance, because the quality of production is directly linked to inspirational, deep-thinking oriented work. The sales staff were less convinced than others that they could reach their objectives with less time, though they got there in the end. **People needed time to adjust.**



# Manifesto

III.

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4 DAY WEEK

## When launching a new project, we have a tendency to dream of the way the company will evolve:

How are we going to create, develop, and sell a product? How will we name it, how will we brand it, and how will we position on the market? How will we earn money and create a sustainable company? We are convinced that work must be conceived in a way that better respects everyone's balance, and that this will allow us to be more fulfilled in our work. This is what motivated the launch of Welcome to the Jungle, and it is what motivates the move to **the four-day week**.

Working four days instead of five days is a concrete way of moving towards this success. It is an opportunity to have additional time for family life, for existing passions (and discovering new ones), for being more creative, for being more rested... There is no doubt that eventually all this will have a positive impact on our work! In our daily work, the four-day schedule leads to questioning time management and meetings' efficiency; it makes us meet for more important reasons and define objectives that matter.





Work and the way of working have changed radically in the last 50 years, but the pace of work has never changed. To build a long-term relationship with work and to be fulfilled in our workplace, it is necessary to achieve a more harmonious balance between professional and personal life, work and entrepreneurship, work and passion, work and family... We found the four-day week a particularly interesting choice to achieve this.

I am proud that the experiment was built through collective decisions by the whole team. This was only possible through mutual trust, time spent understanding what really matters, and adapting the notion of success to what it really is. Overall, after five months, we were pleased with the results and the satisfaction within all teams.

We really wanted to test the four-day work week because it seems to us to be the most interesting option in the long term for everyone, and the one most in line with our vision of the world of work. And it is of great satisfaction to see that, as a team, we can be pioneers on this subject and share our experience with others!



Jérémy Clédât, founder, Welcome to the Jungle

# About the four-day work week

IV.

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4 DAY WEEK

## **For the past several years, the idea of the four-day work week has been growing in popularity.**

Organisations around the world are experimenting and sharing their results. Many have reported improvements in time management, employee retention, and work-life balance. Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev is backing a parliamentary proposal to shift to a four-day week, for example; politicians in Britain and Finland are considering something similar. Recently, the prime minister of New Zealand even mentioned the concept as a potential strategy for economic recovery post COVID-19.<sup>2</sup>

When experimenting with new work habits, it is essential to adapt to the specific needs of an organisation, and to properly understand their structure, their process, and their value chain.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix, page 69, “Lessons from Four-Day Work Week Experiments Around the World.”

# About Welcome to the Jungle

v.

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4 DAY WEEK

**Welcome to the Jungle has two distinct offers, which each come with different activities and human resources needs.**

**We are:**

- The European media for work, with high-value, multiple-platform content created to help every individual to thrive in their professional lives. Since September 2020, we also offer premium content (documentaries, podcasts...) via Welcome Originals.
- A recruitment platform for clients, which works through a B2B membership package. The annual subscription to the platform includes a photo shoot, videos, and access to the application management platform—the ATS Welcome Kit. In addition, we also developed Welcome Home, an intranet tool that aims to help companies improve employees' experience.



## Welcome to the Jungle has three main teams within the organisation: tech, business, and media :

- **The Tech Team** (16 people at the time of the experiment) develops tools: the Welcome to the Jungle website, the ATS Welcome Kit, as well as all our new and upcoming products. In addition to the developers, the team includes designers, product managers, and data specialists.
- **The Business Team** (26 people at the time of the experiment) sells the Welcome to the Jungle subscription. This team includes sales representatives and a range of account managers who oversee membership acquisition and onboarding, customer relationship management, and membership renewal. They manage customer relationships, from sales to loyalty and support.
- **The Media Team** (29 people at the time of the experiment) oversees the creation of inspirational content (articles, ebooks, videos, print magazines, etc.) for both candidates and recruiters on themes related to employment, recruitment, employer branding, and more.

# Me thods

VI.

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4 DAY WEEK

The four-day work week experiment was carefully prepared with important concerns in mind:

**how** to measure impact, **how** to monitor the experiment (and record data related both to people and to the business), and **how** to define the protocol and frequency of reporting.

Eighty-six employees took part in the experiment, including the whole French office, where the average age is 30 years old and where the employee turnover is less than 5 percent. From the beginning, all members of the team took part in the test. While ideally we would have wanted a control group to which to compare our results, that was not possible. Therefore we only performed in-group analyses.

Welcome to the Jungle selected two key partners for this experiment: **Fabernovel**, known to be foremost experts in organisational change, brought a solid methodology and a much-needed outside perspective to the experiment. A research group led by the neuroscientist Albert Moukheiber, co-founder of Chiasma, who has contributed insight to several Welcome to the Jungle articles and videos, popularizing concepts such as mental flexibility and critical reasoning. Along with the neuroscientist Emma Vilarem, co-founder of Cog'X, and their team, they brought a scientific methodology to study the psychological impact of the four-day work week on employees.

The experiment was carefully structured; it lasted around five months, with important milestones.<sup>3</sup> Every month, quantitative questionnaires were sent to all employees. In parallel, individual interviews were organized with a focus group of 30 people (selected to represent all positions, gender, age, seniority) during the whole experiment (interviews were not conducted in August because of the Summer holidays).

<sup>3</sup> For more information, please see METHODOLOGY, page 71.

# Time line

VII.

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4 DAY WEEK

## Timeline

Kick-off meeting  
with the whole  
company

Official test  
launch

Limit the days-off  
available

Official  
test end

Struggling to adapt to the new rhythm

Positive impact on employees

Questionnaire & interviews to monitor the test

May 19

June 19

July 19

August 19

Sept 19

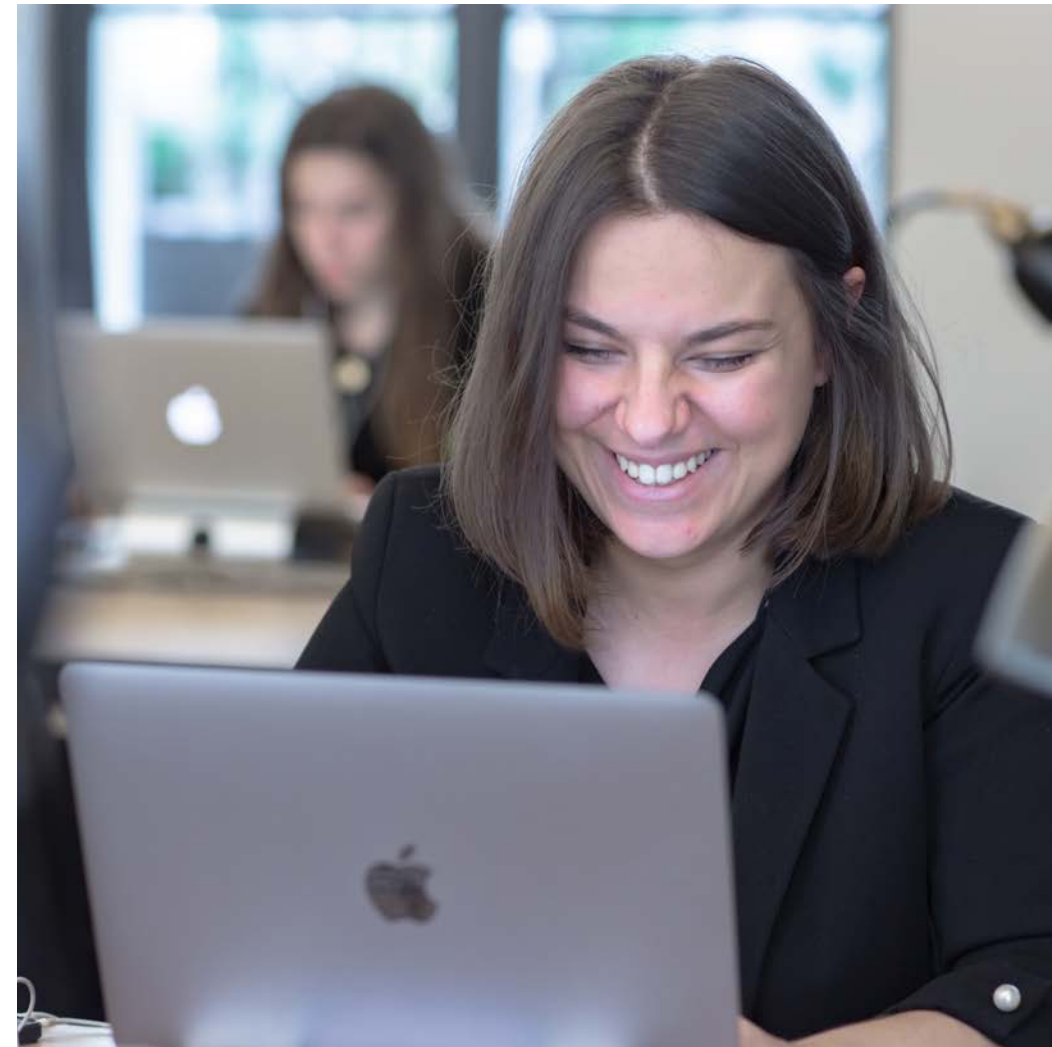
Oct 19

Nov 19

## May 2019: PREPARATION

At an initial kick-off meeting on 20 May 2019, all employees were gathered, and Welcome to the Jungle's CEO, Jérémy Clédât, explained the whole project, including its vision (why we are conducting the project) and methods (how the test would be implemented).<sup>4</sup>

Employees could choose their day off from among four days (Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday); the most common choices were Wednesdays (25 percent) and Fridays (50 percent). The selection was handled within each team, with the sole requirement that at least one person was available in case of emergency. All team meetings were organized on Mondays.



<sup>4</sup> For more information, please see MANIFESTO, page 10.

## June–August 2019: KICKOFF

The test was officially launched on 3 June 2019. During the first three months, employees experimented with the four-day week at their own rhythm, choosing which day they were taking off between Tuesday and Friday and experiencing the change in a reactive mode rather than a proactive one.

Interviews demonstrate a difficult start for the experiment, with teams not yet used to the new rhythm having to manage the heavy workload that is usual at this time of the year. However, despite these challenges, teams were motivated, trying to be more productive, because they were conscious of an important reward: having a full day off if they managed to complete their weekly tasks.





## September-October 2019: ADDITION OF A CONSTRAINT

Interviews from the first months of implementation suggested that the shift was difficult for employees. The flexibility in the choice of the day off meant that everyone had a different schedule; organizing meetings was a challenge. It was thus decided in September to limit the available days off to either Wednesday or Friday, as those were most frequently chosen by employees.

This decision facilitated the workflow, communication, and scheduling of activities. Client meetings, for example, which usually need two people available, were much easier to organise with fewer days off. During the monthly interviews conducted in September and October, employees expressed more positive feedback: September is usually a tricky month because clients are not as dynamic as they usually are and account managers tend to activate less profiles, however, in terms of workflow, the experimentation did not affect project delivery.

This period also included an internal reorganisation for the business team. Although we knew this change might have altered the experiment's results, it seemed to be the right time to implement the four-day work week, as the experiment tends to highlight organizational defaults (problems can become more apparent in four days than they do in five).

The test ended on 31 October 2019.

# Results

VIII.

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4 DAY WEEK

Testing out the four-day week was a successful experience at Welcome to the Jungle, not only in terms of economic results but also in terms of well-being. What follows is an analysis of our findings.

These results led to key learnings for the company, not only about our ability to adopt a major organisational change but also to identify opportunities for performance optimization.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> For more information, please see MANIFESTO, page 10.

## A. Time Management

Experimenting with the four-day week shifted the team's conception of time: Days became longer, and breaks became shorter. Schedules were organically adapted to ensure the transition to four days of work, as collaborators questioned usual practices.

*“We learned a lot on time management, prioritizing. We learned about ourselves and our work habits. With less time, we naturally prioritize which subjects are key, we anticipate needs well in advance, we are less overwhelmed and learn to better plan everything. Time becomes even more precious and we learn how to make better choices.”*

Camille Fauran, Head of Operations

For example, when looking at the time spent at the office, before the test, halfway through (Week 11), and on the last week of the test (Week 20), data show constant figures for all divisions. People avoided working longer hours, which could have been a potential risk of the experimentation:

## Average time spent at the office per day (in hours)

Before	Week 11	Week 20
Global : 8.86	Global : 8.5	Global : 9.14
Manager : 9.18	Manager : 9	Manager : 9.75
Content : 9.42	Content : 8.8	Content : 9.13
Business : 8.85	Business : 8.83	Business : 9.22
CMS : 8.63	CMS : 7.67	CMS : 9.57
Tech : 9.07	Tech : 8.89	Tech : 9
Marketing B2B & B2C : 8	Marketing B2B & B2C : 8,5	Marketing B2B & B2C : 9
Others : 8.11	Others : 8.83	Others : 8.83

However, during the experiment, employees increased the time spent working on their day off. In the beginning, they worked less than one hour, and they ended up working around 90 minutes. Still, many employees considered this amount of time working on a day off as a good substitute for working on weekends when needed.

While people were working more intensely, they were not necessarily working longer hours. Break time, in addition to lunch time, considerably dropped during the experiment (on average it has become half as long). For example, operations teams reduced their 12.6-minute break to a 5.4-minute break. Similarly, managers shifted from a 13.2-minute break to a 3.6-minute break.

The experiment also seemed to amplify pre-existing ways of working. People who used to work on weekends also worked on their day off. Those who already condensed their work on five days also succeeded in doing so over four days. Employees were responsible and flexible enough to remain available during their day off for emergencies, or they were willing to work a little to ensure the continuity of the week.

Some tasks are not compatible with a four-day week, and teams had to be aware that there could be exceptions. This was particularly relevant for events management teams:

*« I did not fully take advantage of my day off because we have one of our biggest events of the year in September. The team was fully aware of deadlines and took their responsibilities. Given the many rush periods in events management, it was raised by the team from the beginning that we would not be able to benefit from a day off in months. It is incompressible, even if we have the most efficient processes in the world. Some logistical tasks have to be taken care of from the office. This was not considered unfair. We know that the job we have chosen comes with constraints! »*

Aurélia Le Bescond, Events Manager

## B. Performance

The hardest part of working only four days is that teams have to be operational throughout the value chain for the whole five days:

*« If two people have a unique value, they cannot be off on the same day. If 50 percent of the team is essential, this means that their day off is imposed. We usually made a draw between their first and second choice. »*

Diva Fumery, Sales Operations

Reducing work time by 20 percent clearly did not result in a similar 20 percent drop in the performance of the different teams. A lot of adjustments were implemented quite rapidly to enable the productivity to stay afloat. All the meetings were challenged to only keep the essential ones, communication processes were rethought, automation tools were brought in and performance indicators were updated to monitor long-term and qualitative success.



## Results

We also saw just how difficult it was for sales and production teams to compress their time. Success in sales relies on a certain number of meetings per month; it is a condition sine qua non for reaching their goals.

At the end of the experiment, sales teams were able to deliver the same number of meetings per month (in person or by phone). They found a way, after five months, to reach the same business performance by working four days a week. This was possible because they worked only on projects where they have a high added value. However, if sales teams were able to have the same number of meetings, they had less time for prospecting and identifying new business opportunities.



**The experiment led to a restructuring of the whole sales and marketing division to make sure that the workload of each employee was dedicated to the right task. The following measures were taken:**

- Creating a new team with Sales Development Representatives to focus on identifying and qualifying business opportunities for sales teams.
- Strengthening marketing tools when acquiring new leads, so that sales teams whose core business is converting prospects into new clients can concentrate on what they do best.

Some teams found it easier to adapt to the new rhythm: Tech teams, for example, took about two months to adjust, while sales teams had not completely adjusted within the four months of the test.

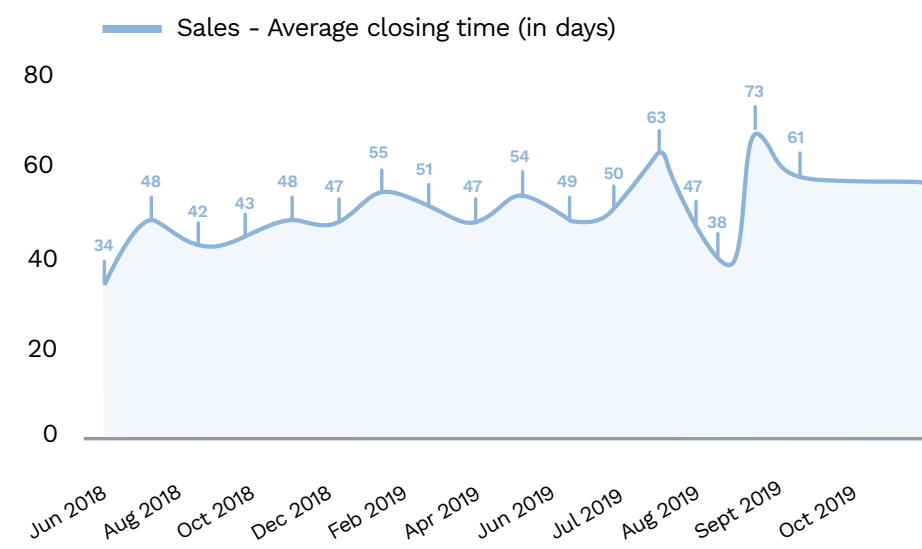
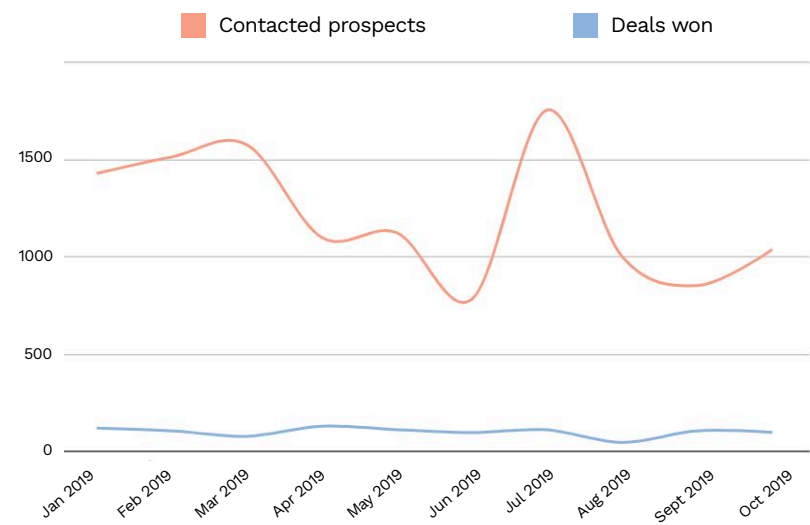
## C. Productivity (Sales)

At the beginning of the experiment, we planned to monitor all teams: Business, Media, and Tech. While the Business team KPIs were numerous and regularly reported—as this is essential to the functioning of their activity—the other teams lacked quantitative performance reporting support.

It also quickly became obvious that focusing our quantitative monitoring on the business team was the best way to have a sense of the health of the company. Sales was, quite evidently, the first Business team impacted by the change to the four-day work week, as their missions were directly correlated with their work time.

- Both deals created and won tended to decrease, although their level of conversion was stable.
- Likewise, the average closing and onboarding times tended to increase for the customer success management team.

Results



Although those numbers were not encouraging, they had to be put into perspective, as the teams were still adjusting to the new work organisation.

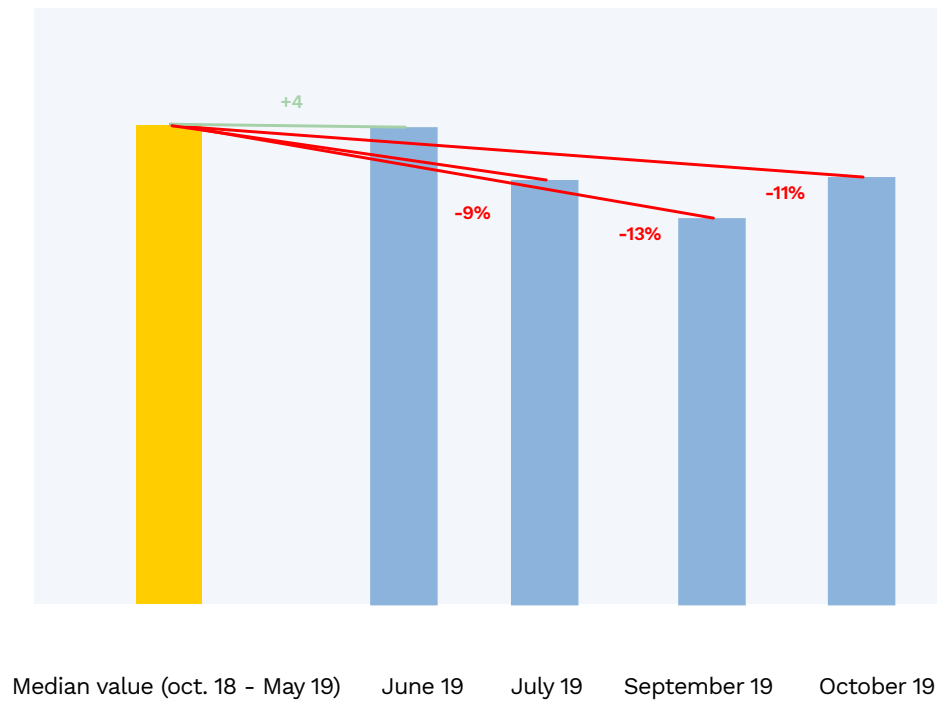
After two months of testing, we were able to better highlight the reasons for the drop in sales performance. In addition to the 20% reduction in working time, changes in our organization appeared necessary.

In order to meet their objectives, the team members naturally switched their sales strategy towards closing small accounts more rapidly. It allowed the sales team to reach their objectives but it was not aligned with our corporate strategy of diversifying our customers by increasing the number of large accounts.

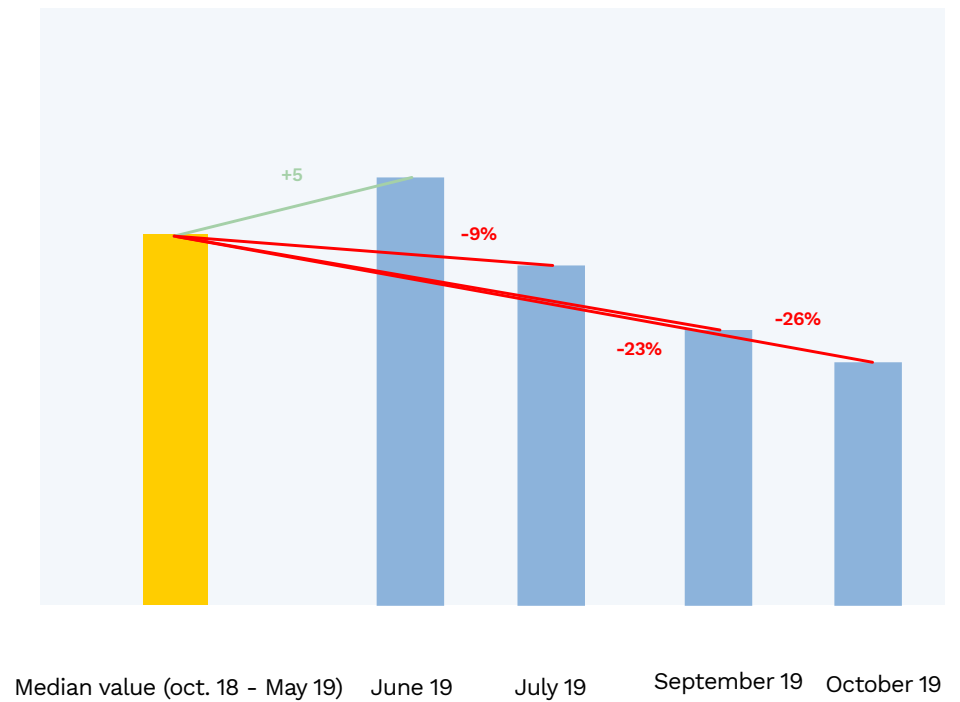
To overcome this, we reorganized the team with "small account" specialists and "large account" specialists; these 2 teams had different structures of incentives taking into account the differences in how fast they could close their sales. This change in structure was necessary to meet our challenge of diversification towards large accounts.

## Results

Sales - Monthly value of won deals, by salesperson



Sales - Monthly number of won deals, by salesperson



## Results

In July, while our salespeople maintained their performance in terms of deals signed, we noticed a drop in the number of new prospects contacted. We concluded that our salespeople were concentrating on signing deals but were no longer taking time to look for new prospects.

To address this and allow our salespeople to focus on sales appointments and conversion, we created a dedicated team focused on sourcing new prospective companies and booking meetings for our salespeople.

In short, the four-day work week pushed us to make better use of our time, transform our key metrics and make the right structural decisions to push our company forward.

Moreover, it raised awareness on the importance of having relevant metrics to assess performance. Our tech and media teams started working on the implementation of more relevant metrics.

## D. Strategy

After a few weeks of the experiment, we observed the appearance of a more short-term and operational behavior in the processing of tasks. Tasks such as prospecting, editorial watch, or monitoring the quality of product development, however related to business, were apparently neglected.

Through the administration of qualitative questionnaires, Fabernovel observed that, when teams were limited in time, they tended to focus on what needs to be done right away—the operational tasks. This was even more true for the teams with quantitative objectives.

*“Some subjects go “by the wayside” to the extent that we are thinking of creating a position dedicated to content curation.”*

Editorial manager, July 2019.



## Results

When it comes to creative occupations, cutting out a team member's inspirational moments can be damaging to his or her interest in the job. We observed that this behavior also can have a serious impact on the company performance, because the quality of the production is directly linked with inspirational, deep-thinking oriented work.

*“On the product development roadmap, we don't really see a lag because of the four-day week. But we tend to make the designs of the functionalities simpler. So it can definitely affect the richness of the product in the long term.”*

Product manager, July 2019.

*“I often work on my day off to compensate for the delay on my objectives. Particularly on prospecting emails that we don't have the time to do during the week.”*

Sales manager, September 2019.

## Results

*“What I tell my team is that this day-off is perceived as a day of inspiration. We are not journalists only from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.”*

Media manager, September 2019.

Though predictable enough, this kind of short-sighted long-term damaging behavior can easily be mitigated by leveraging the right solutions.



## E. Quality of Life

Welcome To The Jungle hired a research team led by Albert Moukheiber and Emma Vilarem, neuroscientists and respective co-founders of Chiasma and Cog’X, to use a range of qualitative and quantitative methods to evaluate the four-day week’s impact on the mental health and quality of life of their employees. Below is a recap of the observations from these studies:

### 1. Cautious Progress Toward a New Norm

#### **Week 1:** A positive outlook on the future

Conducted before the implementation of the four-day work week, this interview gauged the hopes and fears that people had before kick-off. Most expressed attachment to Welcome to the Jungle and saw the project in a positive light. They hoped the change would help them better handle their schedules outside of work and be less tired.

Some fears were expressed—mainly around inter-team cohesion, the need to work on the day off, and the potential encroachment of nonessential work activities, such as media monitoring. In general, people felt that they were winning an extra rest day instead of losing a work day.

#### **Week 4:** A limited experience

Interviews reflected a relatively positive feeling in the teams but no felt impact on fatigue or mood, nor on relationships with others. Many team members noticed that there were fewer meetings as well as less email on Fridays. However, some initial difficulties were expressed around the need to ensure that everyone attended inter-team meetings. Also, a few employees were still working on their days off.

#### **Week 7:** Positive feelings with some fears

In these interviews, conducted during summer break, most participants still expressed a positive outlook on the four-day work week, although some uncertainty started to emerge. This uncertainty was mainly around the right attitude to adopt: Some team members wondered whether it was more important to maintain the integrity of the experiment and not work on the day off, or whether they should prioritize getting their work done, even if it means some working. Others worried about the impact of the change on social ties at work: After-work events, which typically happened on Fridays, were no longer happening, as so many people chose that as a day off.

### Week 16: A changing experiment

After summer break, one change was made: Instead of choosing among three possible days off, participants could choose between two. Interviews show that this seemed to have had a positive impact: organizing meetings was much easier, working rhythms were established, and the four-day work week was setting in as “the norm.”

However, some stress points remained: Team members struggled to keep up with what was happening during the day off, and there was increased worry about the experiment’s impact on business. There was a unanimous request for a “best practices workbook,” which could consolidate everyone’s various experiences into one practical manual to enable the team to make the most out of the efforts.

### Week 20: A new norm

The last interview session was right before the end of the experiment. People did not know whether the new schedule was going to be maintained or if they would revert to the five-day work week.

Almost everyone wanted the four-day work week to become the standard way of working. New habits had formed, the flexibility of the day off was appreciated, and people who used to work on weekends were no longer doing so. The four-day work week was now considered the norm, and the idea of a return to a five-day work week seemed worrisome to most. While most people worked about two hours on their day off, they still overwhelmingly preferred to have it.

## 2. More Control, Better Stress-Management

The number of participants completing the questionnaires varied from T0 to T5 as reported in the table below:

Timepoint	Date	Participants
T0	03/06/2019	72
T1	25/06/2019	64
T2	19/07/2019	52
T3	16/09/2019	47
T4	16/10/2019	40
T5	31/10/2019	54

We performed two types of analyses to assess the influence of the four-day work week on participants' self-reported questionnaires, using statistical tests that consider each participant's responses at different timepoints:

- 1. How did the responses change from the starting point T0 to the final point T5? (using a student T-test)
- 2. How did the responses evolve through time:
  - a) From T0 to T1 to T2
  - b) From T3 to T4 to T5

We considered these two time point groups independently from one another for several reasons:

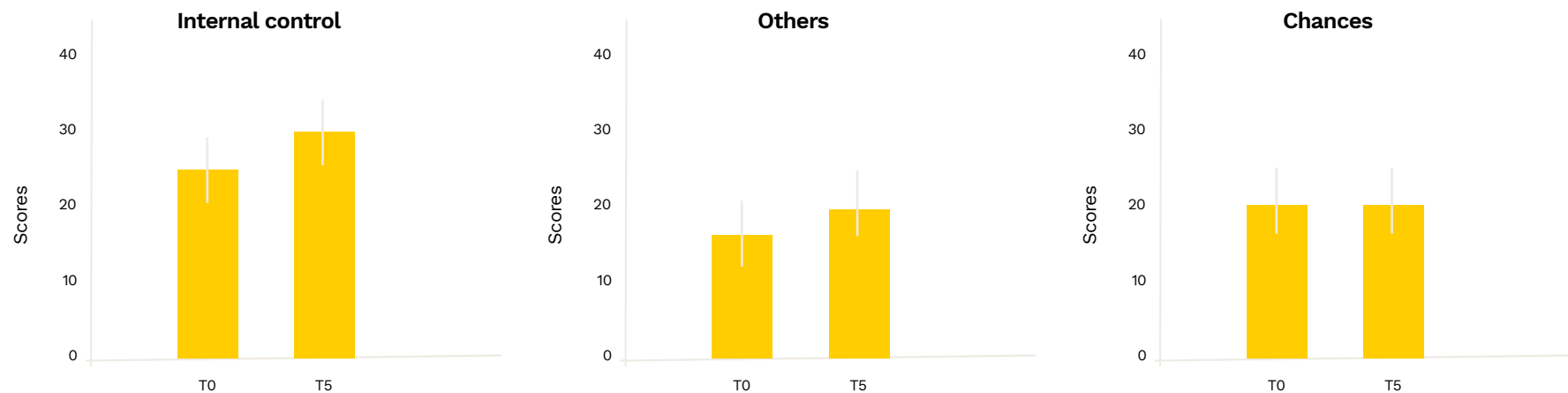
- 1. After T3, a change was made in how the day off was allocated, and the choice of day was reduced from three options to two.
- 2. There was a summer break which led to an extra one-month delay between T2 and T3.
- 3. T3 corresponded to the month of September, which is a stressful time because of the summer break.

This means that the analyses were done on a different set of participants in a and b.

### 3. Locus of Control: Levenson Questionnaire

#### Results

The internal locus of control, or the degree to which participants feel events depend on their own actions, significantly increased, suggesting that they feel more in control of their life. The external locus of control, “others,” also increased, while the external locus of control, “chance,” remained stable (see Figure 1). Similar results were observed when looking at how the locus control changed through time from T0 to T3, showing that both the internal locus and the external ‘others’ linearly increased from T0 to T3. This was however not the case when considering T4 to T6.





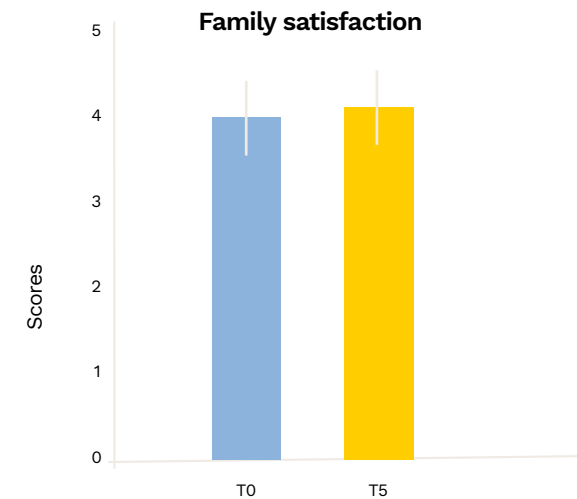
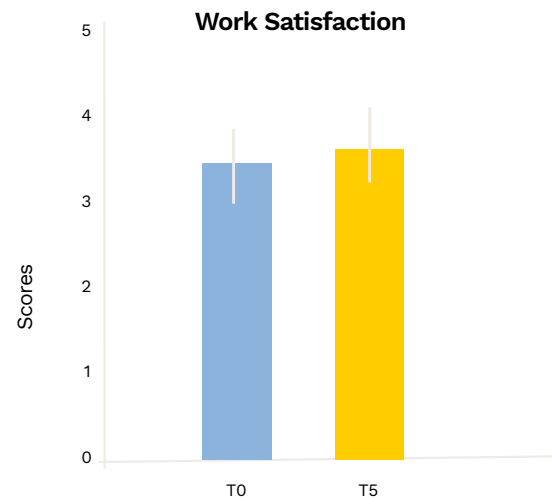
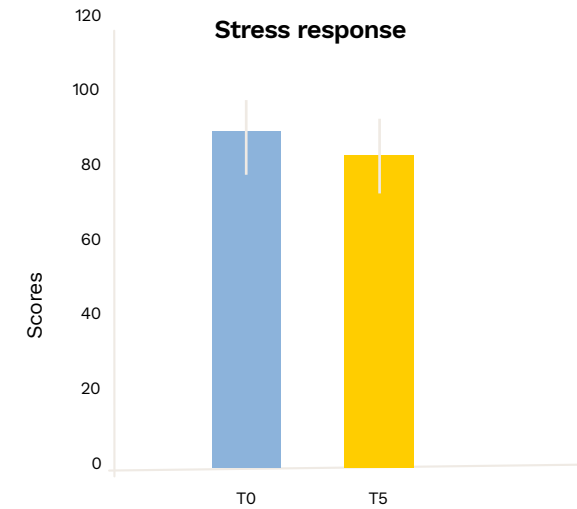
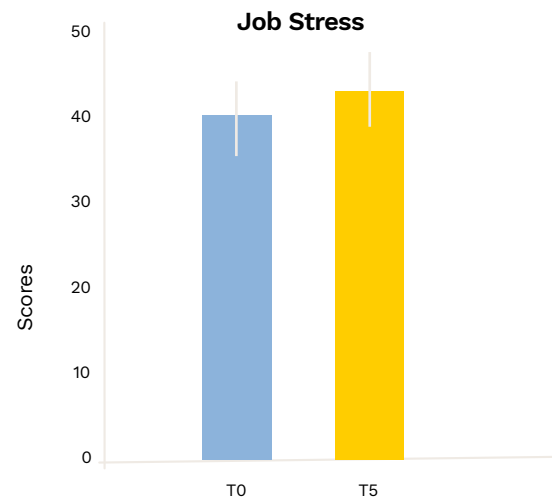
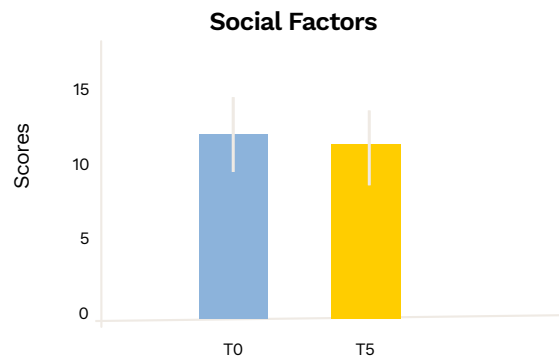
#### 4. Anxiety: STAI Questionnaire Results

No significant changes were observed on both the trait and state anxiety questionnaires, reflecting that the transition did not seem to induce increased anxiety.



## 5. Stress at work: Brief Job Stress Questionnaire Results

The stress at work tended to increase, while stress responses tended to decrease from T0 to T5. This suggests that while the switch to four-day work week might have increased job stress overall, employees were better able to cope with their stress. Stress related to social factors remained stable. In addition, family satisfaction increased, most probably due to the opportunity to spend more time with the family due to the extra day off. Work satisfaction remained stable.



## **6. Quality of Life Questionnaire Results**

No significant changes were observed on the quality of life questionnaire, meaning that the overall perceived quality of life was stable throughout the experimentation.

## **7. Self-Esteem: Rosenberg Questionnaire Results**

No significant changes were observed on the self-esteem questionnaire, suggesting that self-esteem was not impacted by the experimentation.

In summary, the overall qualitative assessment seems to be quite positive. The fact that employees expressed a positive outlook is a great start. The interviews also seemed to indicate that a margin of progress is still possible, and highlight the need to monitor the psychological impact of such work transformations on employees.

The team's reactions underscore the importance of having a support structure during the transition and the importance of identifying best and worst practices in order to make the transition easier, moving forward, especially for potential newcomers.

From a more data-driven point of view, the change seems to significantly affect the internal locus of control of employees. This suggests that employees working four days a week may feel more in control of the work they do. The absence of significant changes on anxiety levels is an interesting finding, as it reflects the transition, yet substantial, did not induce panic or insecurity. While stress at work slightly increased, the stress response seems to have diminished. Employees may learn how to cope with stress better, even if it's increased, in a context where they feel more in control, reflected in higher internal locus of control. Finally, family satisfaction also slightly increased, which could point to a better work-life balance, known to be crucial for employees' wellbeing.

# Key learnings

IX.

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4 DAY WEEK

## 1. IMPROVE MEETINGS PREPARATION

Preparing for meetings seems like an obvious tip, and yet, prepared meetings (context, agenda, and deliverable objectives) saved precious time. It is highly beneficial for guests to know in advance whether their presence is essential.

Likewise, some Welcome to the Jungle teams decided to reduce the number of meetings. For example, the Tech team switched from daily meetings to a Slack virtual meeting management bot called Standuply.

Technically speaking, the number of meetings should have been reduced by one-fifth, but as every meeting was questioned, they were further reduced. Some teams realized that some recurring meetings were of little use, or that better organized meetings are more efficient and shorter. Once weekly meetings were organized every three weeks.

*« It goes down to a mathematical equation: In four weeks, there are four days off, so every weekly meeting needs to be cancelled at least once a month. There is an adaptation time where it is inevitable to be less performing. But with a better sense of organisation, it can work: There are fewer meetings, but they are better prepared. Time management improves. Any intervention becomes more pertinent. Communication is more qualitative. »*

Diva Fumery, Sales Operations

## 2. EXPECT EXCEPTIONS TO THE RULE

When experimenting, teams must be ready for adjustments:

*« During the first months, it was a real mess: it was impossible to know who was off when, impossible to plan a meeting and synchronize agendas, because everyone could choose their day off between Tuesday and Friday. We were less efficient and less reactive. From the second month, the team was limited to Wednesdays and Fridays, and that had an instant impact on efficiency. It was also decided not to offer a day off during the first month that an employee enters the company, because the first 30 days in a company are important for onboarding and for proper training. »*

Camille Fauran, Head of Operations



## Key learnings

Employees also gave themselves their own rules:

*« I wanted to experiment all the possible techniques and processes during my day off: sometimes I accepted meetings, sometimes I was not reachable at all, sometimes I worked one hour a day, sometimes I mixed it with working from home from a distance. »*

Cedric Esposito-Farese, Customer & Product Support Manager





### 3. USE THE RIGHT SUPPORTING TOOLS

When experimenting, you need to be supported and work with a team that will understand your needs. Managers were a great help in the experiment and played a key role in reorganising meetings.

During the experiment, people raised a need for better coordination within each team, to share information and to anticipate. Mistakes become more apparent when a five-day schedule is compressed to four days, and communication and prioritization became a major point of attention for all teams. In the initial phase of the experiment, when everything is still uncertain and shifting, it is highly valuable to seek out automation and tools that can clear out some time.





## Key learnings

*“The operations team worked on an automation of the sales process, especially for steps with a lower added value. The experiment made us question the level of integration of our tools with one another. We worked on centralizing information in order to make information pieces available to everyone: sales teams, account managers, on-borders. With the four-day week, we shifted our mindsets and started thinking about tools not only from the point of view of our own team but from that of the whole company. Now, the company is more data-driven, and two additional operations resources were added to the team.”*

**Diva Fumery, Sales Operations**



Interviews show that the experiment was mainly seen as a positive one, although there could still be some improvements; especially key is support through a transition, by sharing best practices and avoiding counterproductive practices.

Some administrative and legal concerns were raised about how to manage vacation and working from home, and the impact of the four-day week on payroll. Employees asked for clear directions on these subjects. A knowledge base was developed internally through Notion to start formalizing our process and save time when sharing knowledge.

## 4. IDENTIFY OPPORTUNITIES FOR EFFICIENCY

Overall, the day off is seen as an advantage. Employees adapt to benefit from it, while remaining available if necessary.

To ensure this transition to four days, the schedule adapts and collaborators question established practices: The days get longer and intensify, while the break times are shortened; the number of meetings is reduced, along with their duration. Before the experiment, people declared that they spent less than nine hours a day working, while they declared a bit more than nine hours afterwards. Likewise, their daily breaks (excluding lunch break) evolved from about 22 minutes to less than a minute on average.

The experiment also seems to amplify pre-existing ways of working. Those who used to work on weekends also work on their day off. Those who already condensed their work on five days continue to succeed in doing so over four days.

Employees in all teams must be responsible and flexible enough to remain available during their day off for emergencies, or must be willing to work extra to ensure the continuity of the week. The organisation of emergency meetings, already complex with everyone working five full days, becomes almost impossible on four days—especially when these four days are not the same for everyone.

## 5. PRIORITIZE AND COMMUNICATE

All teams must be able to calculate and anticipate edge effects, their impact on other teams so as not to penalize the collaboration and efficiency of their colleagues.

The first difficulty observed concerns the need for better coordination within each team, to share information and to anticipate. Mistakes happen more rapidly in four days and it is essential to anticipate communication at least two days in advance, since two days off can follow.

Thus, prioritization becomes a major point of attention for all teams. This involves taking the time to think about what you will do, to plan, prioritize, and share the info. Some team members do this naturally, while others need rules, instructions.

There are different ways to let people know exactly who is available each day, and it is important to leverage as many channels as possible to make sure the information is available to everyone. This means, of course, adding the information to your own agenda and Slack status, but also creating a shared board (online and offline), accessible to anyone, with information concerning the day off and the pair collaborator, the person who will be able to replace you on your day off.

## 6. BE PATIENT

In an experiment like this, things tend to be unorganized at first, as people need to adjust to one less day at work, with new processes and practices. At Welcome to the Jungle, it took about two months for the Tech team to feel at ease with the four-day week, while the Sales team was not completely adjusted within four months. Still, the organisation that sets itself up progressively will find that new reflexes replace the former ones.



# Conclusion

X.

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4 DAY WEEK

## Conclusion

Testing out the four-day week led to key learnings for the company, not only about what it takes to adopt a major organisational change but also to identify opportunities for performance optimization. It was a successful experience at Welcome to the Jungle, not only in terms of economic results but also in terms of well-being. Fabernovel's conclusion underscored even more strongly that companies who implement the four-day work week actually have more to gain from it than just slightly more satisfied collaborators.

It was clear that reducing the work time by 20 percent did not result in a similar 20 percent drop in the performance of the different teams. While the experiment was challenging at times, a lot of adjustments were implemented quite rapidly to bolster productivity. All the meetings were challenged to only keep the essential ones, communication processes were rethought, automation tools were brought in, and performance indicators were updated to monitor long-term and qualitative success.

Key to the experiment's success was that the core team responsible for it was able to convey the right vision for this major change. In alignment with the strong convictions on the future of work of the company, the management always explained the reasons why they tested out the four-day week. Early adoption and activation really helped the collaborators at Welcome to the Jungle adapt and be flexible on their day off. Although this change was not easy for everyone, almost all the collaborators were fully engaged, thanks to this well-communicated vision. The very few who did not really understand its meaning were the ones with the hardest time to adapt.

## Conclusion



*« In theory a four-day week is awesome, but it quickly generated a mixed feeling of apprehension. It was important to exchange and discuss the supporting tools and being supported in the experiment by an external team. »*

Diva Fumery, Sales Operations



## Conclusion

The experiment greatly accelerated the need to rethink the organisation of certain teams (especially on the Business team), to question the usefulness of certain meetings, and to create new strategic positions. It was essential to maintain a long-term vision while helping teams to prioritize temporalities.

As a solution, we can imagine that long-term tasks could be incentivised and KPI-monitored similarly to short-term ones today, to rebalance the focus of the teams. The increase in productivity and the record number of monthly shoots due to the hiring of additional staff for this specific activity showed the utility of hiring external resources to tackle labour-intensive tasks.





## Conclusion

*« Hiring one additional staff for video post-production work and more staff for shooting allowed us not only to absorb the seasonal workload but also to break records that we had never reached until then with 230 shoots per month. This can be explained by a better analysis and anticipation of our workload due to the four-day week. »*

Camille Fauran, Head of Operations



## Conclusion

Another example is the sales team's recent recruitment of a Sales Development Representative. This SDR will take on the tasks of client prospecting and exploring new sectors. This new job will free up some time for the other members of the business team to concentrate on converting deals on leads qualified by the SDR.

Since the experiment is directly related to human behavior and with a diverse set of employees, it was important to make rules and directions as flexible as possible. The vision for each team's day off was announced by the team's management, as it differed from one occupation to another.

Some tasks were not compatible with a four-day week and eventually, this new rhythm had to be presented as optional rather than as a general disruption of the whole organisational structure.

One of the biggest results of the four-day week was the positive impact on the well-being and the work-life balance of the teams, while boosting their individual productivity. Surveys revealed a significant decrease in the level of anxiety combined to an increase in internal control. The day off was perceived as an inspirational day for the creative jobs — a breath in the week to help improve the quality of their work during the rest of the week.

*« The four-day week allowed me to harmonize the meaning that I wish to give to work in my life. Having three days off out of seven creates a mental and physical freedom and allows me to redefine my position and my engagement in my life as a citizen, providing more time to build and consolidate my opinions. »*

Cedric Esposito-Farese Customer & Product Support Manager.



# Appendix

XI.

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4 DAY WEEK

## A. LESSONS FROM FOUR-DAY WORK WEEK EXPERIMENTS AROUND THE WORLD

It is particularly interesting to look at which countries have experimented with the four-day week around the world and to notice how countries with very different work habits or work cultures are finding it successful. Here is a comparative analysis of the four-day week experiment or consideration in New Zealand, Japan, and the UK.

The New Zealand company Perpetual Guardian, which manages trusts, wills, and estate planning, was one of the pioneers in innovating its work habits. In 2018, they tested the four-day week with their 250 employees. The experiment successfully ended up in a permanent change for four-fifths of employees and led to big productivity increases (by 30 to 40 percent) with staff more focused on their work (Internet surfing dropped by 35 percent, for example) and more efficient in time management. Staff loyalty increased, and the company was able to attract higher quality recruits.

In Japan, burnout has been common since the 1980s, through the notion of *karōshi* (literally, “dead by excess of work”). While more than 25 percent of employees work more than 49 hours per week on average, the government and many companies have started promoting a better work/life balance. A study published by the Ministry of Labor in Japan shows that in 2018, 6.9 percent of companies with more than 30 employees had introduced some type of four-day week structure. Prime minister Shinzo Abe was one of the supporters of a shift in professional mindset, encouraging a less toxic work culture.

The four-day week can be implemented in various ways: Fast Retailing Co., the retail group that owns Uniqlo (Theory, J Brand, Comptoir des Cotonniers, Princess Tam-Tam) has been since 2015 giving employees the opportunity to take three full days off every week by concentrating their work hours on four days and thus working the same number of hours as before.

Yahoo Japan has since 2017 reduced the weekly amount of working hours, reducing wages accordingly. This opportunity is mainly offered to employees who have young children or are taking care of elderly parents. More flexibility means better talent retention eventually. With a population that is increasingly getting older, it is particularly important to nurture and promote employees' energy and motivation.

The change is slowly happening even in public organisations. During the 2019 election, Britain's Labour Party committed to reduce the average working week to 32 hours within 10 years. This would require important changes in legislation but could be implemented thanks to a Working Time Commission with the power to provide recommendations to the government. The Labour Party is aware that such disruptions in their organisational culture need appropriate support.

## B. METHODOLOGY

Before launching the experiment, the performance analysis team, including Fabernovel, agreed that the following questions should be answered:

*What KPIs should we measure or what phenomenons / aspects of the organisation do we need to look at?*

*What tools, processes and measurement / observation conditions must be set up to measure these KPIs or analyse these phenomenons?*

*What frequency of measurement / observation is necessary?*

*What are the base levels of the KPIs / base state of the phenomenons we want to follow?*

*What are the biases related to the experiment's constraints?*

*How will we be able to extrapolate our observations to draw broader conclusions on how WTTJ could be affected by the 4DW in the long run and at full scale? With what degree of uncertainty?*

With the guidance of the neuroscientists Albert Moukheiber, Emma Vilarem and their team, we agreed that three types of data were to be retrieved to analyze the impact of the experiment on the company's performance.

## 1. Qualitative analysis methodology

We identified 15 employees from Welcome to the Jungle that were pseudo-randomly selected: We picked various departments, ages, and genders and randomly selected from the available pool. We did 15- to 20-minute interviews with each person, once per month, for a total of five sessions per person.

The interviews were semi-structured: Everyone was asked quasi-identical questions (with some liberties to have a natural discussion) to maintain coherence and be able to follow the evolution of the various factors that are of interest. The questions related to their organisation of work and time management, corporate culture, or their productivity. They included:

*Do you think this change is good for the company? For you?*

*Do you think that implementing this change will be easy?*

*How is it impacting your social interactions at work? Outside of work?*

*How is it impacting the quality of your work? Team work?*

*How is it impacting your workload?*

*How is it impacting your fatigue?*

*How is it impacting your well being?*

*Do you have anything else to add that we might not have explored?*



## 2. Quantitative analysis methodology

Various psychological factors were evaluated over the testing period at six time points, corresponding roughly to a frequency of once every three weeks, while skipping August entirely due to the summer vacation. The evaluation dates were: T0) 6 March 2019, T1) 25 June 2019, T2) 19 July 2019, T3) 16 September 2019, T4) 16 October 2019, T5) 31 October 2019.

The data was reported monthly to enable the implementation of a data studio dashboard. This dashboard provided a global vision, week after week, of the evolution of the experiment, through indicators such as the use of tools like the Google suite or Slack, the room occupation, the commercial performance of the company, and the performance of each team.



On each time point, we evaluated employees over five validated scales:

### **1. IPC Levenson (Locus of control)**

Locus of control is the degree to which people believe that they have control over the outcome of events in their lives and, on the contrary, how much they feel like the events of their lives are out of their control. Locus of control is on a continuum that ranges from an internal locus of control (things we do have control over) to an external locus of control (things that we do not have control over). The scale measures three different areas of locus of control: Internal, Others, and Chance. Others and Chance are the external locus of control variables. We used this scale to see if having an extra day would raise the feeling of control on one's life. The literature associates higher locus of control with better resilience and stress coping mechanisms.

### **2. State-Trait Anxiety inventory (STAI; Anxiety)**

The State-Trait Anxiety inventory is a scale that measures two types of anxiety.

The State anxiety, which is a temporary state that we all feel in immediately stressful situations, and Trait anxiety, which is a more constant factor for people who are generally anxious, regardless of their environment or current events in their lives. We used this scale to try and separate anxiety that could be mediated by the change in work rhythm from more structural anxiety that the team might be experiencing.

### **3. Brief Job Stress Questionnaire (BJSQ; Stress)**

The Brief Job Stress Questionnaire measures stress. We used it only at the beginning and the end of the experiment, to get a global variation. Including it at every data point would have made the questionnaire too long and might have impacted response rates.

## 4. Quality of Life

The Quality of Life questionnaire is one of the most-used questionnaires by the World Health Organization. It was important to us to not only focus on mental health but on general life satisfaction and quality. We wanted to know, for example, whether with extra time, people were taking better care of their health, hygiene, and life? Are they doing more sports or taking time to cook? Are they reporting fewer colds or other illnesses? This scale can help answer such questions.

## 5. Rosenberg (Self Esteem)

The final scale we used was the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, to see if self-esteem would vary along with internal locus of control, and whether the extra time available would help people feel more agency and a better sense of self-worth.

All questionnaires were sent at each timepoint except the Trait subtest of the STAI and the BJSQ (Stress), each of which were sent at the onset of the test period (T0) and at the end of the test period (T5).

A quantitative questionnaire, administered every week, was also integrated into this data studio. This one follows the evolution of the feeling of the teams on their working time, the efficiency of their meetings, their satisfaction of the week, and the solicitation on the day off.

## C. MESSAGE FROM FABERNOVEL

When the Welcome to the Jungle team presented us the project of the four-day week experiment, it immediately resonated with our interests and convictions at Fabernovel.

The subject of the “Future of Work” and everything it questions in the work environment is one of our main topics of exploration. It was obvious to us that we needed to take part in the adventure to observe the impact of the transition to four days in the work week of a company.

It was all the more inspiring to us, as our conviction at Fabernovel is that value creation expands beyond short term financial results. Valuation approach in the new economy needs to provide a 360° vision of businesses and take into account key intangible assets (clients, talents, software, ecosystem, environmental, and societal impact) in order to assess a company’s value and growth sustainability for the long term.

## Here is what we learned :

1. Today, the best competitive advantage a company can rely on is its talents—and it proves to be the main pivot in phases of strategic transformation. However, among younger generations, the promise of having a role in the same company throughout one's career is becoming less attractive than the promise to join an inspiring company with work-life balance advantages and infinite onboarding.

For instance, the switch to the four-day week has a great positive externality on gender equality, a significant cause for new generations. Indeed, as both men and women have the same opportunity to save some time for their children, it is not the women who need to make this choice and sacrifice their career.

2. What we observed by reducing the work time by 20 percent is that the performance of the different teams never dropped by 20 percent accordingly. A lot of adjustments were implemented quite rapidly to enable productivity to stay afloat. All the meetings were challenged to only keep the essential ones, communication processes were rethought, automation tools were brought in, and performance indicators were updated to monitor long-term and qualitative success.

Even companies that cannot switch to the four-day week can at least challenge their work organisation to improve their productivity and weed out unnecessary practices.

**3.** The four-day week switch requires a different vision of your ecosystem. Indeed, when a company allows their collaborators to carve out a day in their week to explore activities (photography, cooking, joining professional events) and expand their networks, team members must see the opportunity to learn and grow outside its own boundaries that this shift represents. This allows a certain permeability of company borders and breaks with the traditional reflexes of extreme confidentiality, in favor of a more open model that feeds on dialogue with the outside.



# Four-day work week checklist

Interested in implementing the four-day week in your company? Great to hear. Below, we've listed some basic elements useful for all your departments (HR, technical and office management).

## 1

### Human resources restructuring

- ☐ Managing paid vacation, RTT, working from home
- ☐ Clarifying the legal impact of the four-day week on payroll.
- ☐ Restructure some divisions to make sure that the workload of each employee is dedicated to the right task.
- ☐ Create new positions, if needed, to focus on other tasks.
- ☐ Externalize part of the job when tasks do not have a high added-value.
- ☐ Use temporary contracts for additional teams to deliver during rush periods.
- ☐ Brief managers to facilitate reorganizing meetings

# Four-day work week checklist

Question your usual practices !

## 2

### Rules and rituals

- ☐ Determine if some people are essential and cannot be replaced
- ☐ Use random draw techniques if you need to impose a choice for a day off
- ☐ Have the team collectively organize to avoid a completely empty department on the day off
- ☐ Improve communication by sharing information at least two days in advance, since two days off can follow
- ☐ Identify workload peaks in advance and recruit additional resources accordingly
- ☐ Reduce the number of meetings but improve their organisation
- ☐ Reduce the length of break times and work more intensely



# Four-day work week checklist

## 3

### Rules and rituals

- ☐ Use automation tools to speed up information searching
- ☐ Use automation tools to facilitate quotes generation
- ☐ Use tools that can automatically feed your CRM with data available online
- ☐ Create bridges between tools that were not initially integrated
- ☐ Use digital platforms such as slack to share information
- ☐ Use emails to replace meetings that can be avoided

# **Welcome to the Jungle**

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Illustration: Christopher Delorenzo