

#WORKSCHOOLHOURS



Case Study Interview with Vanessa Ogle. Founder of Enseo

Vanessa is a serial entrepreneur. She founded Enseo in 2000 and it became one of the fastest growing technology companies in the digital entertainment market. "If you've ever watched Netflix in a hotel room by pushing Netflix on the remote", that's Enseo. The business was on the Inc 500, and on the Inc 5000 list five times. Forbes gave Enseo an award for the most innovative place to work in the world. They have been on the Entrepreneur magazine and Entrepreneur 360 as well as the Financial Times, and the Financial Times Fast 100. Vanessa is an incredible woman and I have become a huge fan!

What led you to adopt a #workschoolhours type approach at Enseo?

So, what we started doing was I started shifting my schedule so that I didn't start work until the kids were at school. I shifted my schedule by about an hour and a half in the mornings. I took the kids to school, then I went on my run, and then I cleaned up, and then I came to the office. *I found that I was clearheaded. I was more efficient. I was effective. I was happier, which meant I was a better manager and a better thinker and a more strategic thinker. I handled challenges better at the office because I was in a better frame of mind.* Then I would pack up, go home. Then I would feed them and put them to bed, and then I would go back to work again.

How did you onboard other Mums?

So it worked so well for me, being able to shift my schedule to take care of my children. If I could do it, anybody could do it. For sure. I was leaving my children's elementary school one day, and there was a woman who was a mom, and she was in the front of the school. She was ridiculously overqualified for a job she was applying for, but the recruiter wouldn't even take her as a client [because she had been out of the workforce, as a Mum]. I hired her. That was 10, 12 years ago and she still works for Enseo today. She runs all of our installations, all of our operations. While being a mom, while working a mom's schedule, she has installed over a quarter million hotel rooms with the most leading-edge technology that is ever put in hotel rooms anywhere in the world. *She's one of our highest performing employees that we have ever had.* And we let her run it on her schedule. She came in. She did her job. She left in time to pick the kids up and to take them to basketball or volleyball.

But there was not a single time where she did not get her job done. And in fact, when we first hired her, she was a program manager. And she was one of several program managers all doing the same job. And what we found was, was that *even though she worked school hours, mom hours, she outperformed the guys 10:1. 10:1.* It didn't surprise me, because who can spin plates better than a mom? Nobody. No one can multitask like a mom. So it was just case in point of what an opportunity it was for us.



I have a team of executives that have school-age children or have had school-aged children. And the reason that they are all on my team was because I gave them an opportunity to be their whole authentic self, be the mom they wanted to be and to be the professional that they wanted to be. In fact, *these women are outstanding, and they could work at the biggest law firms, the best IT companies, the biggest banks in the world. But instead, I got them on our budget, because of the ability to be flexible and to be their whole authentic selves.*

How did this help your business?

It's real. I mean, we were able to lever up talent and to get tremendous talent on board. As a smaller organisation, *that helped us grow the business phenomenally. That's one of the reasons why we grew so fast* and we had so many people that felt comfortable bringing their ideas forward, because they felt received. And if you feel received, you're willing to give new ideas a shot. *We hired the best person for the job and allowed them to work at their schedule, their way. And we got a better result.* If you have a culture that is about results and an environment and excitement, of wanting to work and wanting to have joint results as a team, you will get those results as a team no matter what hours someone works. And cross-culturally, if you hire someone and you chain them to their desk, and they're miserable and they don't want to be there, they're not going to be effective and you're not going to get the results for your business. You're certainly not going to get innovation and you're not going to have anybody do anything other than the five things they were told to do that would make your business grow better or faster. That's my opinion.

For the employer, you get access to a workforce who is eager, they are grateful, and they work hard and they also work smart. And that is *a fantastic workforce to be able to tap into.* That's a huge benefit.

So staff wellbeing, as we've all seen, it's so important. It's important to retention, it's important to innovation, it's important to the corporate performance. If we focus, as employers, on staff wellbeing, we get better outlays and better performance metrics for the business. *So we don't have to sacrifice business performance and business financials for staff wellbeing. Helping and focusing on staff wellbeing improves business metrics and performance.*

To any manager out there who's looking at this is an option, I would urge you to consider: if you could have a workforce that you had never tapped into, who wanted to do your job, who was smart, who was talented, who could multitask, who could communicate with five people at the same time, wouldn't that be your ideal workforce? I'm pretty sure that would be your ideal workforce. If so, *all you have to do is consider using #workschoolhours, as a combination, and you will have the opportunity to reap some tremendous benefits.*

