
THE GRIND:

Striving for Scheduling Fairness at Starbucks

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Data in this paper is drawn from a survey administered by **Coworker.org**, a platform for people to advocate for change in the workplace.



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A 2015 nationwide survey of Starbucks workers reveals that the company is not living up to its commitment to provide predictable, sustainable schedules to its workforce. Starbucks' frontline employees bear the brunt of the management imperative to minimize store labor costs, which takes precedence over attempts to stabilize work hours, provide healthy schedules, and to ensure employees have real input into their working conditions.

In 2014, a New York Times investigation into Starbucks' scheduling practices revealed a troubling disconnect between a company whose mission is "to inspire and nurture the human spirit"¹ and work schedules that left its employees exhausted, stressed, and struggling to care for their families and get ahead. Starbucks responded quickly, committing to honor employee availability, deliver weekly schedules with greater notice, and ensure adequate rest between shifts. One year later, Starbucks employees across the country report that little has changed for them. Many Starbucks scheduling policies fail to reflect the company's human-focused values, while other policies designed to promote sustainable schedules have been implemented inconsistently.

FINDINGS

Starbucks call its employees "partners," yet this report reveals scheduling issues that call into question the effectiveness of its partnership between corporate leaders, managers, and employees.

UNPREDICTABLE WORKWEEKS

Nearly half of all surveyed partners reported receiving their schedule one week or less in advance, despite Starbucks' stated policy to provide schedules at least ten days in advance. This practice prevents workers from being able to plan their lives, particularly when the timing of shifts and number of hours varies from week to week as surveyed employees reported.

INCONSISTENCY IN DAYS, TIMES, AND AMOUNT OF WORK

Employees reported that schedules that largely tracked their previous weeks' schedules would allow them to make tentative future plans, but drastic changes week to week left them unable to budget or plan.

INSUFFICIENT REST – CLOPENS CONTINUE

One in four surveyed partners still had to work clopens (when they are scheduled to close one night and open the store early the next morning) or had coworkers in their stores who were assigned clopens. These Starbucks workers are at risk of sleep deprivation and exhaustion.

OBSTACLES TO TAKING SICK LEAVE

Starbucks partners do not earn paid sick leave in their first year. Forty percent of partners reported facing barriers to taking sick days when they were ill. Several partners reported that they face pressure from managers to work while sick.

UNDERSTAFFING AND INSUFFICIENT HOURS

Skeletal staffing stretches employees too thin to deliver the consistent customer-focused service on which the company prides itself. Many employees surveyed stated that they wanted to work more hours, but were denied by managers.

FAILURE TO HONOR EMPLOYEES' AVAILABILITY

Starbucks, unlike some companies, has committed to honoring employees' limitations on their available work hours. But many employees said that their managers regularly disregard their availability.

These survey results show that while some Starbucks partners do experience schedules that work for them and their families, far too many Starbucks employees across the country still struggle with unpredictable schedules, unstable, inadequate hours, and retaliation and insufficient access to earned sick time. Starbucks should establish basic protections to ensure stability, adequacy and predictability of employees' schedules. The company should work with their employees and incorporate their input to provide work schedules that are as reliable as Starbucks' dedicated customer base.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A schedule that works is one that meets both the needs of employers and the employees. A lasting solution can be achieved if Starbucks adopts a real partnership with employees in the process of developing and implementing robust scheduling principles.

Starbucks can help achieve a future of work in which employees have a base of stable hours and real input into how much and when they work. To do so, Starbucks should follow six clear principles to guarantee a fair workweek and family-sustaining employment for all of its partners:

PREDICTABILITY - Deliver predictable schedules that make it possible for working families to plan ahead to meet their responsibilities on and off the job.

STABILITY - Provide stable work schedules so that hours and days of work are largely consistent week to week.

HEALTHY HOURS - Guarantee workers healthy work hours by ensuring adequate rest between shifts and enough baristas per shift to meet customer needs quickly.

EARNED SICK TIME FOR ALL EMPLOYEES - Enhance partners' ability to earn paid sick leave by making sure they immediately start to accrue paid earned sick time, rather than having to wait a year, and prohibiting managers from placing the burden of finding a replacement for a shift on its sick employees.

ACCESS TO FULL-TIME WORK - Guarantee core minimum hours and full-time work for those who want it, hallmark standards for family-sustaining employment.

FLEXIBILITY - Ensure flexible schedules that are consistently responsive to employees' availability.

In order to implement these changes to company-wide scheduling practices, Starbucks should establish a comprehensive and accountable process that allows its employees to be true partners in determining scheduling policies and practices. Additionally, Starbucks should use its workforce management metrics and tools to further these principles.

Starbucks is at a crossroads. The scheduling issues outlined in this report are not outlier circumstances but rather demonstrate persistent and challenging issues that affect Starbucks' partners and the sustainability of the company's success. Yet, through real employee partnership, comprehensive scheduling principles, and an innovative use of workforce management metrics and tools, Starbucks can create a high-road workweek that can serve as a national and even global model.

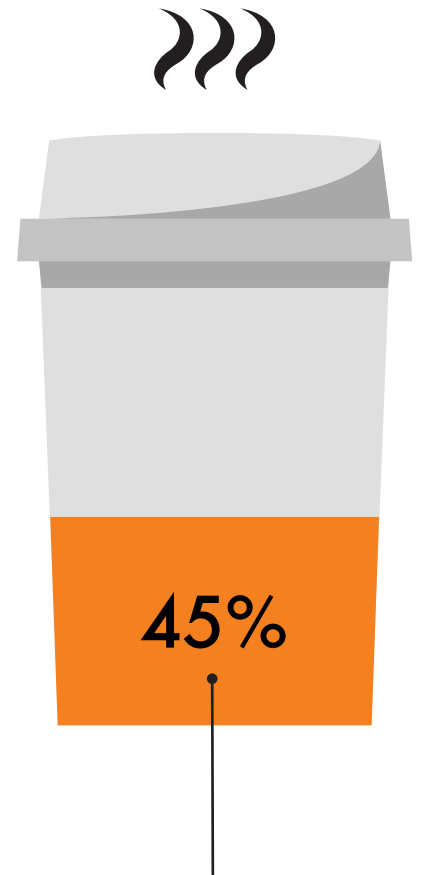
INTRODUCTION

No matter where they might find themselves, coffee drinkers can walk into any of the thousands of Starbucks in the U.S. and receive a cup of coffee of the same quality. And, across the country, Starbucks can predict America's coffee habit: 45 percent of transactions at the chain's stores occur before 11 am.ⁱⁱ

Starbucks baristas should be able to count on stable schedules that reflect their customers' coffee routines. Yet this type of steady demand has not translated into scheduling stability for Starbucks employees. This report reveals surprising uncertainty in the lives of frontline Starbucks workers, with unpredictable schedules that change from week to week, short-notice shift changes, and "clopening" shifts (back-to-back closing and opening shifts with very few hours of rest in between) that endanger workers' health.

The prevailing trend in retail and food service companies is to require store and district managers to maintain smooth business operations within very tight labor budgets. In an effort to minimize labor costs, these managers create work schedules that are built around minor variation in demand. This report finds that Starbucks managers utilize this lean staffing model rather than ensuring staffing meets the consistent business that is the core of its success, an approach that runs counter to Starbucks' stated investment in partners as a key growth strategy.

This report summarizes the experiences reported by frontline Starbucks employees who responded to an original Coworker.org survey. It shows that hourly workers bear the brunt of the management imperative to minimize store labor costs, which continues to take precedence over attempts to stabilize work hours and provide healthy schedules. Store staffing is kept low, and as a result, employees may be called in to work at the last minute or be scheduled to work late and come back in early in the morning. Across the country, managers and employees are stretched thin, left to scramble in a high-volume, fast-paced business. All the while, employees who want and need full-time hours are unable to get enough work to make ends meet. These troubling scheduling practices take an unnecessary toll on Starbucks' employees, their families, and the communities in which they live, affecting not only their health and well-being, but also their income and earning potential. This just-in-time scheduling at Starbucks prevents workers from advancing in the company.



45% of Starbucks' transactions occur before 11AM

Starbucks partners have already reached corporate leadership by speaking out about the ways that poor scheduling practices harm employees and customers. The company recognizes that sustainable work patterns for its frontline employees are essential if Starbucks is to embody its core values and consistently provide an excellent customer experience. Yet, as demonstrated by the failure of Starbucks' 2014 commitments, a new approach is required to truly deliver improved schedules. Starbucks should adopt the following processes to allow corporate leaders, store managers, and baristas to meaningfully collaborate on scheduling:

Include frontline employees as true stakeholders in developing concrete policies and metrics by allowing employees to form an advisory committee to work with managers and corporate to ensure aligned, sustainable work schedules. In addition, allow employees to bring in advocates or representation of their choosing to navigate individual and company-wide scheduling issues.

Hold managers accountable for delivering sustainable schedules by reviewing fair scheduling metrics when evaluating their performance, and ensuring that pressure to stay within labor budgets does not make providing decent schedules unrealistic.

Collect feedback from frontline employees and managers on an ongoing basis so that Starbucks' leaders will quickly realize when policies or on-the-ground practices are out of sync with company values. And with the employee advisory committee and independent oversight, conduct an annual analysis of the Starbucks scheduling practices to assess adherence to policies, identify solutions to areas needing improvement, and facilitate a process that incorporates employee feedback into company policy.

Lastly, today's workforce technologies provide a valuable tool for companies like Starbucks to maximize the potential for scheduling technologies to balance employee and business needs. As it strives to model high-road employment practices, Starbucks can work with employees and its software vendor to drive technological innovations that elevate the quality of its employment.

Starbucks considers itself a force for positive change and has demonstrated that it can succeed as an employer offering a wide range of employee benefits. As it sets a tone by calling its employees "partners,"ⁱⁱⁱ Starbucks can set a new path for how business is conducted across large chain stores throughout the country. By committing to common sense, enforceable standards, Starbucks can help its partners be healthy and get ahead. Adopting a fair workweek means that parents who are juggling the many aspects of raising a healthy family, adults doing their best to manage the care of their aging parents, and students studying hard to get the most out of their college education can all work hard at Starbucks and continue to invest in their futures.

ONE YEAR AGO: STARBUCKS COMMITTS TO IMPROVING SCHEDULING

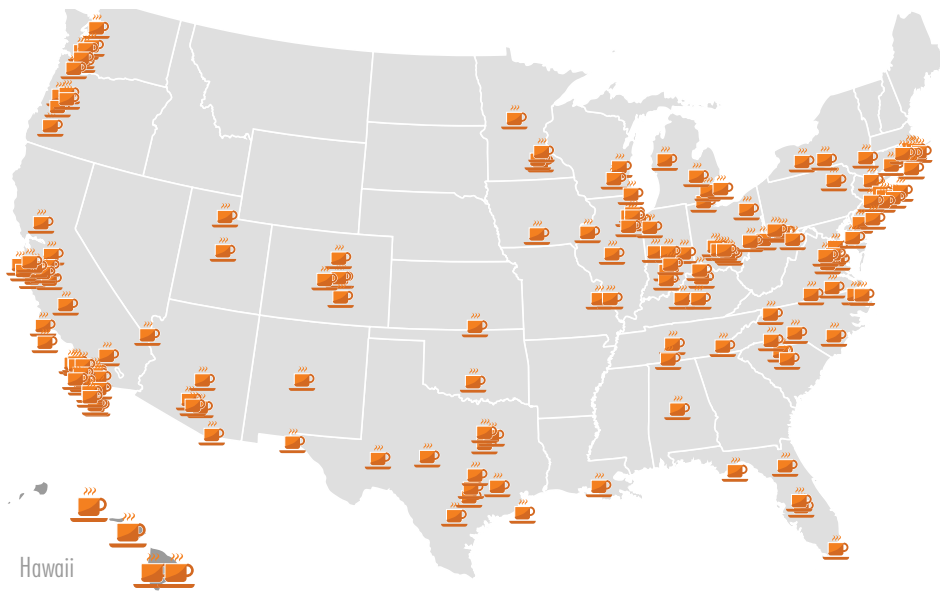
Scheduling practices at Starbucks catapulted to national attention in August 2014, when the New York Times published an article examining the day-to-day experiences of a single mother working as a barista in California.^{iv} Jannette Navarro struggled to find childcare because managers changed her schedule at the last minute; to complete her associates' degree because her manager routinely scheduled her to work during her classes; to get enough rest to maintain her health because she worked Starbucks' "clopening" shifts, consisting of back-to-back closing and opening shifts; and to budget effectively because her fluctuating schedule led to irregular paychecks.

Starbucks' precarious schedules have had this kind of devastating impact on tens of thousands in its workforce. Hourly workers across the country attested that Navarro's experience was not an isolated case at Starbucks or throughout the growing service sector. In response, Starbucks quickly clarified its company policies around scheduling. In a memo to all frontline staff, Starbucks restated its policy to provide eight hours between shifts, post schedules at least one week in advance and honor workers' stated availability when scheduling.^v Employees pressed for reforms that went further than these existing policies, and Starbucks responded by instructing managers to post schedules at least ten days in advance.^{vi}

Since the immediate response to the article, several thousand supporters signed Starbucks partners' petition for one-month advance notice of schedules, stable hours, and access to full-time work for existing employees. The company had just started to allow stores to forecast their labor needs three weeks in advance instead of just two weeks. The new ability to predict labor demand coupled with growing public pressure to provide more advance notice spurred managers in at least 12 states to post the schedule three weeks in advance. Such changes are feasible for the company to implement across the country.

STARBUCKS HAS NOT KEPT ITS PROMISES TO EMPLOYEES

More than six months after Starbucks publicly recommitted to scheduling policies and mandated ten days' notice, the scheduling issues they sought to address still persist in their frontline stores. Coworker.org conducted an online survey of hundreds of partners at Starbucks stores across North America and Northern Europe in March of 2015.¹ Over 200 of the survey respondents were employed at Starbucks locations across the United States, representing stores in 37 different states.



Starbucks
workers across
37 STATES
spoke out
about their
workweeks

Our findings reveal that Starbucks is not living up to its commitment to improve its partners' schedules. The imperative to minimize store labor costs appears to drive day-to-day scheduling practices, thwarting implementation of policies designed to stabilize work hours and provide healthy schedules:

Nearly half of all surveyed partners reported that they received their schedule one week or less in advance, which makes it nearly impossible for workers to plan their lives, particularly when the timing of shifts and amount of hours varies from week to week.

One in four surveyed partners still had to work clopening shifts or had coworkers in their stores that were assigned clopens, meaning that thousands of Starbucks workers are at risk of sleep deprivation and exhaustion.

Partners across the country reported a host of additional and interrelated challenges related to their work hours, including widespread involuntary part-time employment and contending with managers that disregard their availability.

Partners cannot earn sick days in the first year of employment. Forty percent reported facing barriers to taking sick days when they need them, and several reported that they face pressure from some managers to work while sick.

¹ The survey, administered by Coworker.org, was sent to individuals who had signed a Coworker.org petition over the course of March 3-5 and had identified themselves as Starbucks employees. Employees completed the survey, including the comments quoted throughout the report, online.

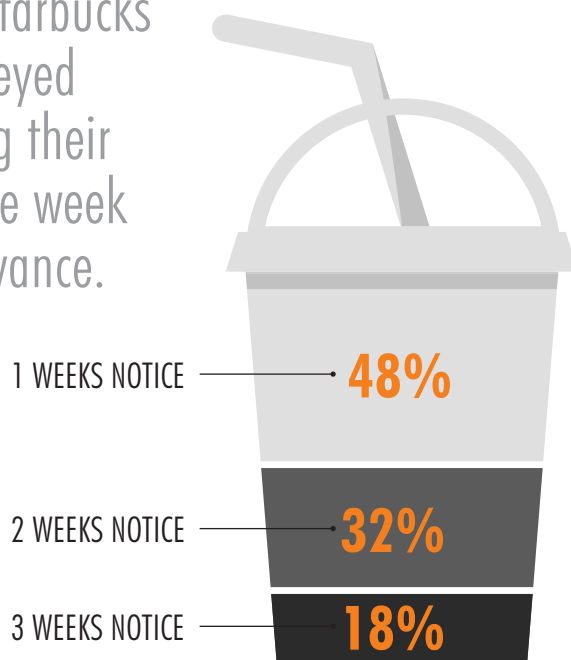
HOW STARBUCKS' OUTDATED SCHEDULING PRACTICES HOLD EMPLOYEES BACK

UNPREDICTABLE WORK SCHEDULES

Starbucks states that managers provide workers with ten days advanced notice of their work schedule, but in many locations across the country, partners receive far less notice. Partners need more predictable schedules that allow them to plan ahead and meet their responsibilities on and off the job.

Starbucks' corporate policy of providing ten days advanced notice of work schedules has not resulted in increased predictability for all frontline employees.^{vii} In fact, the amount of advance notice appears to depend on the individual store managers' scheduling preferences. Nearly half of all workers surveyed report getting their schedules one week or less in advance; but one in five get three weeks' notice. The fact that so many managers deliver three weeks' notice to their staff demonstrates that this amount of advance notice could easily be adopted as official Starbucks policy and implemented company-wide.

Nearly half (48%) of Starbucks workers surveyed report getting their schedules one week or less in advance.



"District Managers need to be conducting follow-ups to make sure new scheduling practices are maintained. We have not had the schedule three weeks in advance, as promised, since the third week of the year. Despite this, we are still expected to submit our requests [for time off] in advance as if we were receiving it on time. At times we get as little as only six days in advance."
STARBUCKS WORKER | WISCONSIN

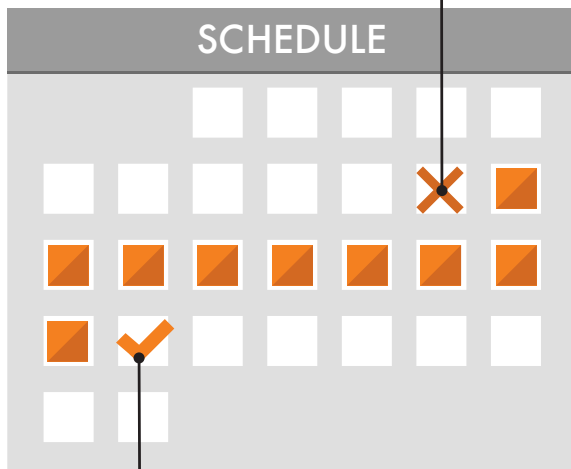
"The schedule is not terrible, it's livable. However, it is already Wednesday and there is no schedule out for next Monday or the following week. With sharing custody of my kids, this makes it incredibly difficult to arrange child care every other week. I was so excited when I heard the new rule of having schedules out three weeks in advance. Many of my co-workers in other stores experience this luxury. I am still hounding my manager for the schedule."
STARBUCKS WORKER | CALIFORNIA

INCONSISTENT, UNSTABLE WORK SCHEDULES

Though Starbucks has consistent business and can predict its staffing needs well in advance, employees report work schedules that change week to week. Fluctuating weekly hours make it difficult for employees earning low wages to budget for basic expenses. And, work schedules that vary in timing make it challenging for employees to meet family responsibilities or make other commitments such as maintaining a second job or attending school.

While few service sector workers enjoy Monday to Friday, 9-to-5 workweeks, Starbucks can deliver increased scheduling stability by creating core shifts for each worker that match consistent customer demand. A barista who knew, for example, that Sunday to Wednesday are stable workdays, Thursdays and Fridays are consistent days off, and work may occasionally be scheduled on Saturdays would be able to plan activities, like medical appointments, that cannot be scheduled within the ten day window currently provided.

COMPANY POLICY: Workers receive schedules by this day . . .



if your schedule starts on this day.

"Schedules at my store vary from week to week. It's hard to plan for doctor's appointments because my manager will post the schedule for the week after next on a Friday. I feel like to improve the scheduling process, there should be a set schedule for everyone, with the same days off. Of course, there will be those special days like Frappuccino happy hour ...but I think it would help if the schedule is consistent week by week.."

STARBUCKS WORKER | TENNESSEE

"I wish we were able to roll schedules over from week to week, instead of having to start from scratch each week. This would give partners a more consistent schedule."

STARBUCKS WORKER | CALIFORNIA

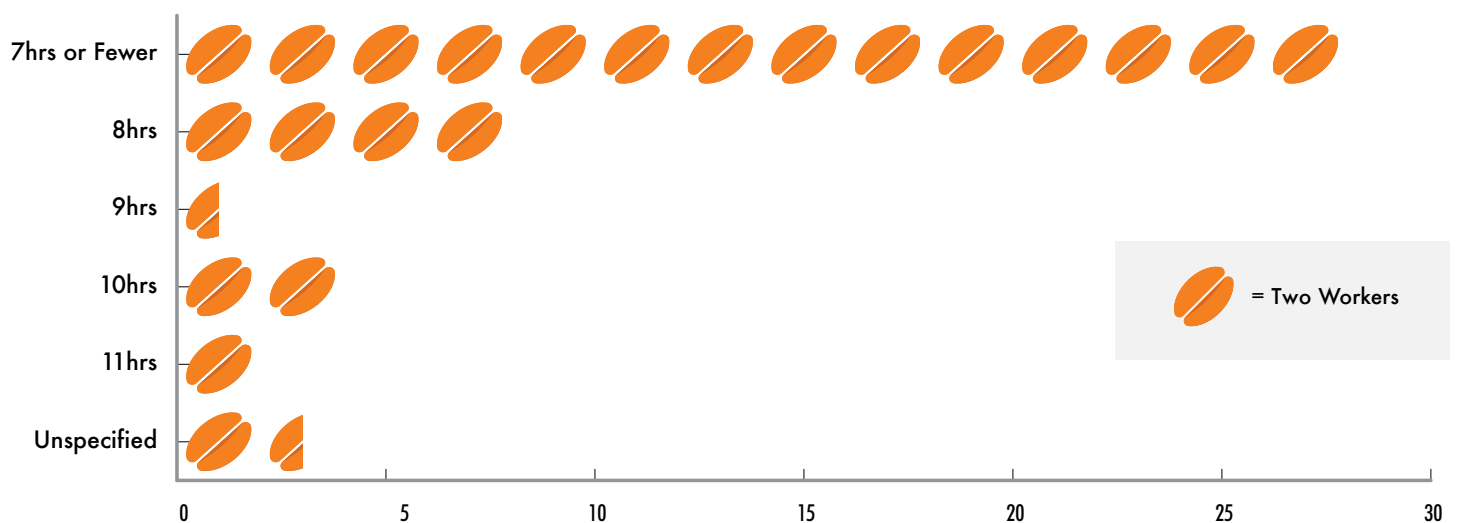
CLOPENING SHIFTS UNDERMINE WORKER HEALTH

Starbucks states that all workers should get eight hours between shifts when they have to close and then open the store, but partners nationwide reported that they still work clopens and often have under seven hours between shifts. Starbucks needs to end the assignment of back-to-back closing and opening shifts altogether, to allow workers adequate time between shifts to eat, commute, and rest.^{viii}

In the aftermath of increased public attention to the practice of assigning workers clopening shifts (or a schedule with a late night closing shift followed by an early morning opening shift), Starbucks restated its policy that all workers should get eight hours of rest between shifts when they have to close and then open.^{ix} Yet, nearly one in four workers surveyed responded that they themselves or other workers in their store still work clopens. Out of the workers who worked clopening shifts, 60 percent reported having seven hours or fewer between shifts.

// **STARBUCKS USES 'SKELETON SHIFTS,' SO WE ARE CONSTANTLY UNDERSTAFFED, ESPECIALLY WHEN SOMEONE CALLS OUT.**
Starbucks worker | Georgia

Over **60%** of surveyed workers who were assigned clopens get seven hours or fewer of rest between a closing and an opening shift.



Even if Starbucks consistently adhered to its policy of guaranteeing eight hours of rest between shifts, that standard does not adequately protect employees from working with too little rest. Several baristas reported that eight hours between shifts is not enough time for workers to get sufficient sleep to return to work safely and effectively the next morning, particularly in light of the lengthy commutes that many American workers in the service sector now face.

The bare-bones staffing reported at many Starbucks stores also contributes to unhealthy clopening shifts. Employees reported that “skeleton shifts,” in which just three employees remain in a store for the closing shift, are common. If one of those employees is unexpectedly absent, just two employees are responsible for completing the tasks to prepare the store for closing, which may mean staying even later than expected.

“ I OFTEN WORK A NIGHT CLOSING THEN COME IN AT 7 A.M. I MAY HAVE EIGHT HOURS BETWEEN A SHIFT, SOMETIMES, BUT THAT DOES NOT GIVE ME EIGHT HOURS OF SLEEP. I AM NOT ABLE TO SHOWER OR EAT, OR PREPARE A MEAL TO TAKE WITH ME. I WOULD SAY GIVE US 11 HOURS BETWEEN SHIFTS.”

Starbucks worker | Kentucky

“I feel that baristas should have a minimum of 10 hours in between shifts. Everyone should have a fair chance to get home, settled, and be able to sleep for eight hours before having to get up for another shift.”

STARBUCKS WORKER | ILLINOIS

“As a Starbucks barista, I loved interacting with customers every day. But I often worked clopenings with 7 or 8 hours between shifts. Last year, I was clopening more than 6 times a month! I was exhausted and it was hard to stay alert on the job, which is important when you’re handling very hot liquids all day. Then because of high turnover in our store, I was often forced to stay even later than my scheduled shift in order to make sure the store was ready to open for the morning rush. So when I stayed late after a clopening shift, I got just 4 or 5 hours of sleep a night.”

STARBUCKS WORKER | CONNECTICUT

FINANCIAL STRAIN FROM UNSTEADY, PART-TIME HOURS

Many partners who want stable, full-time employment cannot get enough hours to achieve economic security. Starbucks should guarantee minimum hours and full-time work for those who want it, in keeping with the practices of other high-road employers.

In its analysis of youth unemployment, Starbucks highlights that **full-time employment is a key dimension of “economic well-being and career attainment.”**^{xix} The company states that it “help[s] partners achieve their goals through opportunities to develop, grow and be recognized,” and that it “strive[s] to be the best workplace - one people actively seek to join and where they stay to build their careers.”^{xii}

Yet, the employee handbook sets a different tone, asserting that **“there is no assurance that any hourly partner will receive the hours desired, the same schedule each week or a minimum or maximum number of hours,”**^{xiii} and that cafe attendants, baristas and shift supervisors “generally work fewer than 40 hours a week.”

“I’M FED UP WITH MY LOW WAGE, A PERPETUALLY STRESSED MANAGER, AND A NEEDLESSLY STRESSFUL WORKING ENVIRONMENT. I AM CONSTANTLY SCRAMBLING FOR EXTRA SHIFTS IN ORDER TO MAKE SURE I HAVE ENOUGH MONEY TO PAY MY BILLS AT THE END OF THE MONTH.”

Starbucks worker | Georgia

Starbucks partners across the country have an extraordinary sense of loyalty to the company and are genuinely invested in working for the company. But it can be difficult for them to get enough hours to cover basic living expenses or to advance in the company. Employees report that managers often hire more part-time people instead of giving existing staff who want full-time hours the schedules they want. While Starbucks offers health insurance to many part-time employees, some report that it can be difficult to work enough hours to qualify. Unpredictable schedules can make it even harder for underemployed part-time workers to access stable, full-time employment or a second job. In addition to work schedules that change weekly, it can be especially difficult for part-time employees who want to work full-time to hold down another job because Starbucks requires employees to sometimes work outside their stated availability.

“Instead of scheduling full shifts, my manager keeps hiring more people and schedules 'baby' and 'princess' shifts [shifts that are shorter than eight hours] five days a week, so if I want to pick up shifts, I have to work every day of the week just to reach my desired full-time hours.”

STARBUCKS WORKER | NEW YORK

“I love Starbucks overall, the only thing is they hire so many people that we hardly get any hours. I’m full-time and sometimes if I’m lucky I get 27 [hours a week]. I’m a student [who] goes to college and I need that money...”

STARBUCKS WORKER | CALIFORNIA

“I was hired full-time at my store, which is between 35-40 hours a week. As of last year, my hours have been cut in half to 20 hours a week and I can no longer provide for myself and pay bills accordingly. I got a raise, but it does not compensate or make up the difference for the cut in hours. And, I have discussed this situation directly with my manager too many times.”

STARBUCKS WORKER | VIRGINIA

INFLEXIBLE SCHEDULES BECOME FAMILY STRESS

Starbucks understands the importance of providing its partners flexible schedules, yet many employees report that it is common practice for their managers to require them to work outside of their stated availability. Starbucks can create work schedules that respond to partners' needs and preferences, ensuring that employees can meet family obligations, attend school, or work a second job to make ends meet.

Publicly, Starbucks has stated that it takes "pride ...in offering partners flexible work hours,"^{xiv} and that it "believe[s] in treating our partners with respect and dignity." The company asserts that its store managers work to "create a weekly work schedule for the store, focusing on creating stable shifts, improving teamwork and enhancing connections with customers."^{xv} Partners are able to provide and adjust their scheduling availability, which many managers make a real effort to accommodate.

Yet, despite providing their availability well in advance, Starbucks employees describe schedules that change week to week making it difficult to plan ahead. In its employee handbook, the company states that partners may be asked to report to work at times "that may fall outside the partners' days or hours of availability" from time to time. While it is not uncommon for companies to reserve this right to require workers to be available when business demands it, Starbucks partners note that managers regularly disregard employee availability when making scheduling decisions.

Skeleton staffing likely contributes to the frequency of calling employees to work outside of their availability; because the baseline scheduling is so minimal, unexpected absences require a scramble for substitutes rather than making do with one fewer barista. Starbucks' lean staffing model is in tension with its aspiration to provide workplace flexibility by respecting employees' availability.

"I have received a lot of pressure to change my current availability which has me off on Sundays, which I spend with my family and going to church. That manager is currently out on medical leave and my assistant manager is pressuring me to change my availability. The pressure to change my schedule has made me want to look for other jobs. I feel that my needs as a partner are being overlooked and it's very upsetting."

STARBUCKS WORKER | ARIZONA

"Because we were understaffed, my boss started scheduling me wherever they needed me instead of taking into account my other responsibilities. It became impossible to balance a second job and school because they'd make me stay late, even though I had given my availability in advance and my manager knew I had other obligations. So even though I liked being a barista and I think I did a good job, I had to quit."

STARBUCKS WORKER | CONNECTICUT

RECOMMENDATIONS

It has been a year since Starbucks pledged to address the scheduling issues outlined in this report. These survey results show that while some Starbucks partners do experience schedules that work for them and their families, far too many Starbucks employees across the country still struggle with unpredictable schedules; short notice of work hours; no guarantee of stable, full-time hours; and insufficient access to earned sick time.

In the past, Starbucks has indicated a commitment to addressing the very issues its employees highlighted in the survey. **A lasting solution can be achieved if Starbucks adopts a real partnership with employees to develop robust scheduling principles and practices.** A schedule that works is one that meets both the needs of employers and the employees.

KEY PRINCIPLES FOR A HIGH-ROAD WORKWEEK

Starbucks can lead the service sector toward a future of family-sustaining flexible employment, where employees have a base of stable hours and real input into how much and when they work. The following core standards can serve as the baseline principles from which employers and employees can achieve sustainable schedules for hourly workers.^{xvi}

PREDICTABILITY: Starbucks should deliver predictable schedules that make it possible for working families to plan ahead to meet their responsibilities on and off the job. Starbucks already forecasts labor demand three weeks in advance, making it possible for managers to create the schedule with the same amount of notice for partners. Managers in at least 12 states already do so, and Starbucks could follow their lead and make three weeks' notice an official policy.

STABILITY: Starbucks should provide stable work schedules so that shifts are largely consistent week to week. Providing all partners with a clear standard of stability in their schedule would ensure that partners do not bear the brunt of business fluctuations in their incomes and family lives. Managers can utilize scheduling software to ensure that stability in customer demand translates into stable schedules.

HEALTHY SCHEDULES: Starbucks employees should be guaranteed enough time between shifts and staffing sufficient to ensure baristas are able to rest enough to work safely. Policymakers are increasingly regarding protections that ensure eleven hours of rest between shifts as a common sense standard.

EARNED SICK TIME: Starbucks employees should start to accrue paid earned sick time immediately, rather than having to wait a year. Managers should no longer place the burden of finding a replacement for a shift on its sick employees. Managers should be trained to curb negative reactions when partners need sick days, a practice consistent with earned sick and safe time laws in many cities.

ADEQUATE HOURS: Starbucks should guarantee core minimum hours and full-time work for those who want it, hallmark standards for family-sustaining employment. Other high-road employers ensure a minimum of 24 hours of work for part-time employees and 38.5 hours for full-time employees.^{xvii}

FLEXIBILITY: Starbucks should ensure that work schedules are consistently responsive to employees' needs and preferences. The company currently allows employees to adjust their availability and indicate their preferred hours, but partners report that those preferences are often disregarded. Scheduling technologies can create work schedules that balance the needs of business with the availability and scheduling preferences of partners more accurately than ever.

Today's workforce technologies provide a valuable tool for companies like Starbucks to adopt transparent, accountable processes for developing employee-friendly schedules. Technology cannot replace visionary leadership, an employee voice, or store managers' relationships with individual employees. However, in addition to enabling companies to forecast their business needs, the next generation of workforce software can adeptly accommodate the complexity of hundreds of thousands of employees' scheduling preferences as well as generate data to measure whether the experiences of frontline baristas reflect company policy (for example, how many baristas work back-to-back shifts, and the number of hours between shifts). The software can be used to monitor scheduling trends and match the data with sales volumes as well as employee satisfaction and retention. Through this technology, employees can suggest new approaches to scheduling in an iterative process as Starbucks continually strives for an improved employee and customer experience.

Starbucks can be a leader in maximizing the potential for scheduling technologies to balance employee and business needs. As it strives to model high-road employment practices, Starbucks can drive technological innovations that elevate the quality of employment the company provides.

TRANSLATING PRINCIPLES INTO PRACTICE

Starbucks partners have already reached corporate leadership about the ways that poor scheduling practices harm employees and customers. The company recognizes that sustainable work patterns for its frontline employees are essential if Starbucks is to embody its core values and consistently provide excellent experiences to customers. Yet, as demonstrated by the failure of Starbucks' 2014 commitments, a new approach is required to truly deliver improved schedules. Starbucks should adopt the following processes to allow corporate leaders, store managers, and employees to meaningfully collaborate on scheduling:

Include frontline employees as true stakeholders in developing concrete policies and metrics by allowing employees to form an advisory committee to work with managers and corporate to ensure aligned, sustainable work schedules. In addition, allow employees to bring in advocates or representation of their choosing to navigate individual and company-wide scheduling issues.

Hold managers accountable for delivering sustainable schedules by reviewing fair scheduling metrics when evaluating their performance, and ensuring that pressure to stay within labor budgets does not make providing decent schedules unrealistic.

Collect feedback from frontline employees and managers on an ongoing basis so that Starbucks' leaders will quickly realize when policies or on-the-ground practices are out of sync with company values. And with the employee advisory committee and independent oversight, conduct an annual analysis of the Starbucks scheduling practices to assess adherence to policies, identify solutions to areas needing improvement, and facilitate a process that incorporates employee feedback into company policy.

Starbucks is at a crossroads. The scheduling issues outlined in this report are not outlier circumstances but rather demonstrate persistent and challenging issues that affect Starbucks partners and the sustainability of the company's success. Yet, through real employee partnership, comprehensive scheduling principles, and an innovative use of workforce management metrics, Starbucks can create a high-road workweek that can serve as a national and even global model. With basic protections in place to ensure stability, adequacy and predictability of employees' schedules, Starbucks should work with its employees and incorporate their input to provide work schedules that are as reliable as their dedicated customer base. With this approach, the company's management team and employees can work together to achieve work schedules that evolve with the changing business landscape and the lives of their employees. And if Starbucks moves toward a more inclusive and responsive model of workforce scheduling, other large customer-focused chains will soon follow.

ENDNOTES

ⁱ <http://www.starbucks.com/about-us/company-information/mission-statement>

ⁱⁱ Troy Alstead, Q3, FY 14 Starbucks Earnings Call, October 2014.

ⁱⁱⁱ Starbucks, *Starbucks Partner Guide: A Guide to Your Partner Experience – US Stores Edition*, (Seattle: Starbucks Coffee Company 2011), 5.

^{iv} Jodi Kantor, “Working Anything but 9 to 5: Scheduling Technology Leaves Low-Income Parents With Hours of Chaos,” *The New York Times*, August 13, 2014. Accessed August 27, 2015. Available <http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2014/08/13/us/starbucks-workers-scheduling-hours.html>

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^{vi} Starbucks, “Doing What’s Right for Our Partners—Store Action Plan,” August 18, 2014.

^{vii} Starbucks, “Doing What’s Right for Our Partners—Store Action Plan,” August 18, 2014.

^{viii} In 2015, legislators in several states (Minnesota, Massachusetts, Maryland, and Connecticut) introduced bills to guarantee workers at least 11 hours between shifts.

^{ix} Starbucks, “Doing What’s Right for Our Partners—Store Action Plan,” August 18, 2014. Accessed August 26, 2015. Available <http://beta.img.cbsnews.com/i/2014/09/08/8c3f0c71-753d-40a4-b2ec-e872e6f30975/starbucksfull-size.jpg>

^x Starbucks, *Starbucks Partner Guide: A Guide to Your Partner Experience – US Stores Edition*, (Seattle: Starbucks Coffee Company 2011), 44- 45.

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^{xvi} Carrie Gleason and Susan Lambert, “Uncertainty by the Hour,” 2015. Open Society Foundation, Position Paper. Accessed August 26, 2015. Available <http://static.opensocietyfoundations.org/misc/future-of-work/just-in-time-workforce-technologies-and-low-wage-workers.pdf>

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