

Annie Auerbach

Co-Founder of Starling and Future of Work Consultant

Annie Auerbach is a writer and consultant specialising in the new world of work and the future of the workplace. She is the co-founder of cultural trends and insights agency Starling, and the author of *Flex – Reinventing Work for a Smarter, Happier Life*. Her work and research has big implications and fascinating insights for anyone that employs people, sells things, or works for a living.

Well before the Covid-19 pandemic, Annie had identified both the demand, and the opportunity, for greater flexibility in the way we work. Social and demographic changes, as well as the acceleration in technology meant that increasingly people wanted a greater say in how they worked. This came alongside an awareness of the impact of long working hours on wellbeing and relationships. These trends were accelerated by the pandemic and flexibility in where, when and how we work became both an opportunity and challenge for employers and workers alike.

As in her book *Flex*, Annie examines the pros and cons of working remotely, from the impact on social lives and collaboration to the advantages for those with caring responsibilities. She explores the role work has in our lives and how work has shaped society, creating and reinforcing biases, unhealthy expectations and pressures. It is increasingly important for businesses to reconsider long-standing, industrial-age models of work and working hours. She examines what has held organisations back from redesigning work and why they've been so quick to dismiss the cost, productivity, engagement and diversity benefits of flexible working. Critically, she explores what flexible working actually is and what it means for individuals and their employers, highlighting that it isn't just working from home, and that flexible working policies and processes aren't one-size-fits-all concepts.

Annie also identifies wider workplace trends and the changing employment landscape as jobs that didn't exist a decade ago become commonplace, and jobs that have existed for decades are replaced by automation. She looks at the moments of so-called 'critical transition' where sentiments and expectations move from early adopter or an influential minority into more mainstream conversations.

Having worked full-time, part-time, freelance and everything in between, Annie is a long-term advocate and practitioner of working flexibly. After working in online journalism and market research, she cofounded Starling where she works with brands including Nike, Pepsico and Unilever to help them understand the cultural and social environment in which they're operating. She provides them with insights into social attitudes and expectations, informing brand and product strategy.