Definition of Workplace Flexibility

The Sloan National Initiative defines workplace flexibility as:

- The ability to have flexibility in the scheduling of hours;
- The ability to have flexibility in the number of hours worked;
- The ability to have career flexibility with multiple points for entry, exit and reentry into the workforce; and
- The ability to address unexpected and ongoing personal and family needs.

At Workplace Flexibility 2010, we believe that workplace flexibility is best achieved through a combination of voluntary employer efforts and thoughtful public policy. When we talk about achieving workplace flexibility, we are talking about a workplace that effectively addresses the following categories of employee needs — while recognizing and respecting employers' need to get the work done.

Flexible Work Arrangements

Flexible Work Arrangements (FWAs) alter the time and/or place that work is conducted on a regular basis — in a manner that is as manageable and predictable as possible for both employees and employers. FWAs provide:

- Flexibility in the scheduling of hours worked, such as alternative work schedules (e.g., non-traditional start and end times, flex time or compressed workweeks) or arrangements regarding shift, break, and overtime schedules;
- Flexibility in the amount of hours worked, such as part time work, job shares, phased retirement or part year work; and
- Flexibility in the place of work, such as working at home, at a satellite location or at different locations.

Time Off

Time Off provides leave from work for a defined period of time to address unexpected or ongoing personal and family needs.

Time Off in Short Increments

- Short-Term Time Off (STO) is used to address the ordinary predictable and unpredictable needs of life (e.g., a sick employee, a sick child, a child's school conference, a death in the family, a home repair).
- Episodic Time Off (EPTO) is used to address a recurring predictable or unpredictable need for time off from work (e.g., an employee who has — or cares for a family member who has — an illness or chronic health condition that flares up sporadically, an employee who volunteers regularly in the community, an employee who is obtaining advanced training).

Time Off in Long Increments

- Extended Time Off (EXTO) is used to address a need for time off from work for a single reason that extends for more than five days but less than one year (e.g., caring for a newborn or newly adopted child, having a serious health condition or caring for a family member with a serious health condition, or serving in the military).

Career Exit, Maintenance and Reentry

Career Exit, Maintenance and Reentry addresses the needs of employees who, out of necessity or personal choice, leave the workforce completely for a period of time, but need and/or want to reenter the workforce later.