

newstimes.com

Hemingway Custom Cabinetry, with 4-day work week, builds cabinets, relationships

By Peter Healy

Appeared on July 5, 2011

Hemingway Custom Cabinetry and Architectural Millwork doesn't have to switch to a four-day work week to cut costs.

The company that employs 30 people in the Black Rock section of Bridgeport has kept the Monday-to-Thursday policy it started in 2008 -- the last time gasoline surpassed \$4 a gallon.

Hemingway, named for Heming Way, the North Stamford street where he and his wife, Debby, live, employs clerical staff, designers and woodworkers that range from sanders to master craftsmen.

"Our people realized it was a good thing," said owner and founder George Krawiec. "We are taking 30 cars and a fleet of my vehicles off the road every Friday. We also made substantial savings in electricity use and heating." Krawiec said his workers also save on child-care costs and can do side jobs on their three-day weekends.

In addition, Hemingway trimmed overtime because workers are less willing to stay for extra work after a 10-hour day, he said.

"We increased productivity by 10 to 20 percent while bringing our overtime to zero," said Krawiec, 62, a former human resources executive at IBM Corp.

The compressed work week had been a recruiting tool during economic boom times, said David Lewis, founder and chief executive officer of OperationsInc., a Stamford-based HR consulting firm.

But now, the four-day week is obsolete as a hiring perk because so many people are looking for jobs, Lewis said.

"What happens on day five? What do customers do when you are not around?" he said.

Hemingway's clients have adjusted to the company's four-day operation, Krawiec said. The Merritt Parkway and Interstate 95 are jammed on Friday, which lengthens trips to clients' homes in Greenwich, New Canaan and Westport, he added.

The company, which has been around for 10 years, has a small office crew at his 12,000-square-foot factory and showroom at 3400 Fairfield Ave. that stays open on Fridays, and clients can make appointments to see a staff member on weekends, Krawiec said.

Hemingway makes and installs cabinets for kitchens, bathrooms, wine cellars and home entertainment centers for houses that can be as large as 20,000 square feet, Krawiec said.

"If it can be made out of wood, we can do it," Krawiec said.