

Tips for Employees:

Building your case for a Flexible Work Arrangement – FAQ

Now that you've assessed your current work position and identified solutions/strategies for any potential obstacles, you need to schedule to meet with your supervisor and make your proposal. Some commonly asked questions (and answers) are presented below:

I'm nervous about this. What is the best way to approach my supervisor about flexible work arrangement?

Think about this like it was an interview for a job you really want or like it was a big presentation that you had worked on for a long and time and want to go really well. What that means is - you have to prepare! Figure out what you really want. How can that be of benefit to the workplace as well? Use the form on page one of this packet to help you structure your conversation with your supervisor. In addition to that form, be prepared to talk about how a flexible work arrangement could be of benefit to the department and to demonstrate concrete examples of how a flexible schedule would work in your situation.

Include information on your assets (what do you contribute, what unique skill sets do you have, and what institutional knowledge do you have due to your length of service with the university). Put your request in writing. Make sure to specify exactly what hours you would like to work and when you would like to begin that schedule.

What if my supervisor responds negatively?

Part of your initial preparation should be preparing and practicing replies. Anticipate what the objections might be. Prepare responses/solutions to those objections. Practice your responses to objections in role-plays with a friend, family member, or someone in the *HealthPoint Employee Assistance Program*.

Common objections are statements like:

"We've never done this before"

"If I let you do this, everyone else will want to do it too"

"It's not our policy to offer this sort of arrangement"

"I want you here if I need to tell you something"

How can I make this proposal as attractive to my supervisor as possible?

Again, you have to prepare – this is an important conversation. This about how you'll cover vacations, over time, work peaks. How can you be contacted if you are working at home? Will you check e-mail or voicemail when you are out of the office? Do you have equipment you would need to work at home? What about meetings when you are working at home or have the day off? What about staying in touch with the office when you are not physically there?

Talk to your supervisor about employer benefits: employee retention, avoiding recruitment/retraining costs, research that shows a positive influence on productivity, absenteeism and morale. Avoid talking about how a flexible schedule will let you attend Little League games or improve your bowling score. Focus on how the work will get done. Suggest a six-month trial period to see how it works.

I'd like someone to help me with this pitch. Where can I go?

The *HealthPoint* EAP staff can help you role-play your presentation to your supervisor and offer suggestions on how to present your proposal for a flexible work arrangement.

Strategic Workforce Solutions in Human Resources can answer your questions about policies, laws relevant to work schedules, written expectations, and timesheets.

Tips for Employees:

Building your case for a Flexible Work Arrangement - Chart

First assess your current position:

1. Can your job responsibilities be performed just as well or better during the hours of the flexible work arrangement you are considering proposing? **Yes/No**
2. If you modify your work schedule, will your coworkers' responsibilities remain the same? **Yes/No**

If you answered "No" to either of the above questions, a flexible work arrangement may not fit your situation. If you answered "Yes" to both of the above questions, continue through the following questions to plan a strategy.

Consider	Yes	No	Solution (Identify solutions whenever your answer is "No")
Do your job tasks require you to be at the workplace during regular work hours?			
Is there any way in which your proposed work schedule changes could negatively affect your coworkers?			
Is there any way in which your proposed work schedule changes could negatively affect your department's productivity?			
Is there any way in which proposed work schedule changes could negatively affect customer service?			
Is there any way in which your proposed work schedule changes could negatively affect your communication with either your supervisor or your coworkers?			
Is there any way in which your proposed work schedule changes could affect your job responsibilities or tasks?			
Would these proposed changes make it more difficult for your supervisor to supervise you and your work?			