

1MFWF FACT SHEET: HOW TO ASK FOR WORK FLEXIBILITY



A step-by-step guide to requesting the flexibility you need from your current employer.

PHASE ONE: PREPARATION

Ask yourself some questions.

What are you hoping to gain by having work flexibility? What are your goals? What kind of flexible work option do you want or need? You may wish to talk to your loved ones about what will make the most sense for your circumstances and, if relevant, for your family.

Do some reconnaissance with your co-workers.

Look for colleagues who have a flexible work arrangement. Ask how they approached their conversations with management and what worked—or, just as important, what didn't work.

Evaluate your job.

Which of your tasks can or cannot be completed in a flexible work environment? Which tasks are better suited for at-home work vs. a flexible schedule vs. reduced hours, etc.? Be specific and detailed.

Choose the flex that will work for you.

Do you want to work from home every day? Shift hours to avoid traffic? Telecommute once or twice a week? Reduce your hours? What sorts of flexibility best match your job?

PHASE TWO: PROPOSAL

Check with human resources.

Your HR department can tell you whether your company has formal flexwork policies. If it does, tailor your message accordingly. And if it doesn't, be prepared for some pushback.

Rank-order your preferred flex.

Knowing what your ideal situation is and also what your best alternatives are will help you discuss options with your employer.

Draft a proposal.

Detail what kind of flexwork you want, how you'll stay connected to colleagues, how you'll complete your daily tasks and larger projects, and how your plan will benefit your work, your team, your boss, and the company. Don't spend time discussing personal reasons you want flexibility; treat this as a business proposal.

Plan for a trial run.

In addition to your proposal, create a plan for a four- to six-week trial period, outlining specifics about what you'll do and how you and your manager can measure success.

Rehearse with a friend.

Run through your proposal with someone you trust. Ask her to pepper you with tough questions. Hone your responses.

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PHASE THREE: DISCUSSION

Set up a meeting with your boss.

Be smart about the timing for this. Choose a moment that will fit her schedule and allow for a detailed discussion of your proposal.



Take a deep breath & make your pitch.

Remember that your boss will want to know how your proposal will help her and the company. Stay calm and focused throughout the conversation, even though this may be an emotional issue for you.



Share the details.

Talk about how you will complete your tasks, communicate with your boss and your co-workers, and maintain or improve your productivity.



Propose your temporary trial.

Lay out ideas for putting this plan into action in a trial period, emphasizing communication, collaboration, and trust.



Suggest time to think about it.

No one likes the pressure of needing to make an on-the-spot decision, so let your boss know you aren't expecting to hear a decision right now.



Show your gratitude.

Whether or not your boss approves your proposal, thank her for taking the time to discuss the issue with you and for being open-minded.

RESPONSE: "No"

Maintain your professionalism.

After you receive a rejection, you might not feel like performing well at work—after all, you're understandably upset. But it's important to maintain your professionalism, even if you get a negative answer. Keep working as hard (or even harder) in your job.

Don't take it personally.

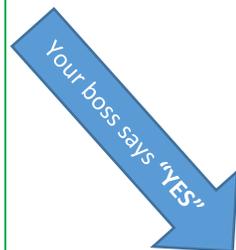
It's hard not to take your boss' rejection of your request as a personal affront. But you might not know why your boss turned down your request. Keep in mind that the reason for the rejection might not be a reflection of you and your work.

Showcase how flex could work.

Look for opportunities to highlight the value of flex. For example, during inclement weather, you might ask to work from home for a day to avoid poor road conditions. Use this time to show your boss that you're able to work remotely, keep up your productivity, and communicate well.

Don't give up.

You may be able to bring up this proposal again in the future. Continue to be a stellar staffer and look for chances to prove your dependability and productivity regardless of the work situation. In a few months, consider revisiting the conversation to see if anything has changed.



RESPONSE: "Yes"

