

## ***Ten Tips for Creating and Maintaining a Flexible Schedule***

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The last decade has brought about numerous changes in the employment marketplace as well as many options in the workplace. More than ever, professionals are opting for flexible work schedules, including part-time positions, job sharing, flex time, home offices and reduced work schedules.

Once viewed as a luxury, these options are becoming more and more accepted as viable, successful work models. In many cases, these options have become necessities to compete in a volatile marketplace.

As our country and economy faces challenges, corporations are recognizing the strategic value of providing flexible work schedules.

Business leaders have grown to appreciate the rewards and benefits of providing options, which result in financial success and productivity as well as intangible rewards such as loyalty, commitment and goodwill.

The population of the workforce that desires this type of work model has increased and evolved. All types of employees are requesting quality of life throughout various demographics and it ranges from young to older, male and female, professional, semi-professional and senior management.

This is all good news. The reality remains, however, that it requires creativity, resourcefulness and tremendous resilience and flexibility to create these models within our workforce.

Management still needs help in identifying the potential gain, possible scenarios and situations where such a model can be achieved. It takes initiative to seek out, propose and implement these programs. Senior management must be educated on the strategic need for these types of policies to be competitive.

With corporations facing much uncertainty, cost-cutting, tightened budgets and reduced head-count, it could become increasing difficult to sell this concept. Many surveys indicate across the board, however, that quality of life remains in the top five factors that all employees look for in their current positions and companies. It is imperative that companies continue to forge ahead successfully implementing and managing such programs.

The best advertising is a strong track record. Making a case is increasingly easy with so many success stories. The key is to focus on the value-add of a work schedule based on a detailed, specific, accomplishment-driven plan bent on achieving results.

### ***Ten Tips:***

- 1) Personal exploration - identify priorities
- 2) Define model (i.e. job share, telecommuting, part-time, flex time, reduced hours, contract/free lancing/consulting, etc.) that will work best for you and your needs AND will also fit within the culture of your organization.
- 3) Make a case - Prepare specific, detailed proposal that outlines not only how it will benefit you but ALSO how your company will benefit from it - from the productivity and financial perspectives.
- 4) Spell out exactly how it will work - who, what, where, when, and how - dot all the I's and cross all the T's. Answer anticipated questions/concerns. Be thorough and thoughtful in presenting a well-detailed plan.
- 5) Remember to present in a way that comes across as a mutually beneficial proposal. You will be entering into a partnership that requires commitment on both sides in order to be successful. It needs to be a give and take so that it will be a win-win situation.

6) Most importantly - BE FLEXIBLE. Allow for exceptions and changes depending on business needs and/or your own needs.

7) Constantly evaluate and revisit arrangement to see if it is working. Don't be afraid to admit to mistakes and/or suggest amendments to make it more effective. Constantly work on enhancing and improving.

8) Keep channels of communication open with manager, peers, colleagues, subordinates, clients, customers, etc. Make extra effort to stay in the loop within all of these venues.

9) NETWORK, NETWORK, NETWORK - Keep your network current, active and strong. This will take extra effort since you are trying to balance but this is a critical area to not be lax on.

10) Be and stay true to yourself - your goals, ethics, priorities and talents!

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