

What's the best way to propose a flexible work schedule?

Question: "I am a full-time working mother of two children, one is 4 years old and the second is 21 months. Recently, I proposed a flexible schedule at my job so that I could pick up my 4-year-old from preschool, Monday through Friday. I currently work until 4:30 pm and my children go to bed at 7 pm. Does anyone have any ideas on how I can propose this to my boss in a way that sounds good to my boss and works for me?" — *Tracy Fehd*

Comments

I think it all depends of how is your relationship with your boss. I have a real good relationship with mine and she is very understanding. I have been in the same situation than you and what i was honest and clear with her.....it works great. I was told "doesn't really matter the time you come in or leave as long as your 40 hours are done every week" and i always end up working more than 40....good luck

Posted by: Sandra | November 30, 2007 at 12:53 PM

If you and your boss do not have a close relationship or if you are new to the job, I would suggest going to your HR group/person and ask about company policy regarding flextime. They may already have something in place that you can work with. If no plan(s) are in place, I would just go to your boss and explain the situation and propose a start/end time that works for you and ask if that is agreeable to him/her. Most bosses are agreeable to a schedule switch as long as it doesn't impact on office work flow.

Posted by: Anita | November 30, 2007 at 12:59 PM

I have a flexible schedule. I start at 7:30, work through lunch and get off at 3:30 so I am home it time for when the bus drops them off. I now have time to help with homework and spend time with them before bedtime at 8pm. I am also able to connect remotely from home if I need to. Good luck!

Posted by: Debi | November 30, 2007 at 01:03 PM

I think a lot depends on the type of company you work for & what your position is within that company. (Obviously if you are a receptionist - it would be much harder to allow a schedule shift for that position.) One person commented working through lunch - - - be sure to check with your local labor laws before you propose that idea to your employer. I know that in our employees situation, the "straight 8" isn't a legal option for them because it violates our state law. Without knowing your situation in detail - it is hard to tell... I would say (again, without knowing all the details) that as long as it doesn't put your company in a position of violating any state

labor law, it never hurts to ask! Good Luck!

Posted by: Kristie | November 30, 2007 at 01:10 PM

I agree with the first comment. If you have a good working relationship with your boss and it doesn't conflict with the things you need to take care of at work, then you should be fine.

Posted by: Chris | November 30, 2007 at 02:13 PM

My boss is very good about flexibility - thank God. My kids are my heart. I put my son on the bus in the morning, and do the later shift (8:30a-5p) instead of working 8a-4:30p. My husband and I take turns picking him up from after school care because he doesn't like to be picked up too early some days because he is having fun! It truly works out!

You could also shorten your lunch hour to a 1/2 hour and see if it would be okay to leave a 1/2 hour earlier. 30-minutes definitely does make a difference as well!

If these ideas do not work, well, I suggest changing their bedtime to 8pm. This way you can still have an hour longer with your babies if you cannot change your hours at work. In my honest opinion, I think a 7pm bedtime is early -- depending on the child and/or what time they have to get up in the morning -- like 6am. My kids' bedtime was 8:30p. As they got older, I lengthened their bedtime to 9p-9:30p, but if it was too much for them getting up I told them it would go back to 8:30-9pm.

However, it finally works out for you -- I wish you the best of luck! I've been there, so I totally understand. Children grow up too darn fast, so I treasure every moment I can with my children! Take care!

Posted by: Michelle | November 30, 2007 at 03:40 PM

Okay, I don't want to sound mean here, however, I have two children as well and although they are now teenagers, I always managed to work full-time and spend time with my children without changing my work schedule.

If you want a flexible work schedule, perhaps you need to look into a different career or position.

The new "moms" of today think their employers should change their schedules and give them special treatment because they are "working moms". I feel as though either you want to work full-time or you want to be a stay-at-home mom. Your employer hired you to work an agreed upon schedule....you accepted the position knowing what the hours were. It is not fair to your employer for you to change your work schedule just because you became a "working mom".

Posted by: | November 30, 2007 at 04:07 PM

I would try to propose the flexible schedule keeping the employer's concerns in mind. Have a plan as to how you would still meet the deadlines you may have and communicate those ideas to your boss. I think he/she would be more receptive if you show you're thinking of the company's needs as well. Good luck!

Posted by: Karen | December 03, 2007 at 01:18 PM

Tracy, I have gone to my bosses and 1) presented my dilemma (caring for an aging parent), 2) presented a couple of alternatives, and 3) presented how this is not a loss to the company. Of course, the most important point is showing how your new schedule will not cause a loss of production time. I disagree with anonymous because most employers realize that employees have special needs and most of them will try to work with employees as long as the employee fulfills his/her obligations. Plus, not everyone has the same set of circumstances in an issue. I have not yet worked with a boss that has not had issues arise in their own lives. It is worth a try. Some of our staff, including executives, have been out because they care for aging parents, leave early because they attend school or have medical conditions and most of the staff has not been resentful because when they need time off, they get it. You do what you feel you have to do but be prepared when you ask and also be prepared should the answer be "no." Best to you.

Posted by: Anita T. | December 03, 2007 at 01:28 PM

I completely understand your desire for an alternate work schedule. My boss is extremely family oriented and understands the importance to our children to spend quality time with their parents. My work schedule has been adjusted so I can put my kids on the bus each morning before school.

When my kids were young (preschool age) I worked a regular 8-5 schedule and, yes, it worked, but the time I get to spend with the kids in the morning has added so much value to my life, I regret having missed out on the time when they were younger. I don't believe that the comment posted by an unidentified individual regarding working a normal schedule was mean, but it did lack thinking outside of the "what is expected" box. I do not feel that working Mom's think it is their "right" to work a flexible schedule, but working a flexible schedule can certainly add value to the family experience and if such a schedule is possible, I say go for it! This forum offers a lot of information and I wish you the best of luck. Enjoy the time with your children...they grow up so fast.

Posted by: Colleen | December 07, 2007 at 11:25 AM

I read the majority of the replies and they are missing critical component of flexible schedule – your co-workers. In some positions, you might not need the support or assistant of your co-workers. In other positions, you might need their collaboration and support.

Get their support and you will have a better chance to get your supervisor agreeing to allow flextime. If you do not have your co-workers and even subordinates support, you might be opening an assortment of problems.

Posted by: L Dunn | December 10, 2007 at 09:09 AM

Please take all comments to mind except the (No Name) she seems unhappy with her own situation. I proposed a flexplan to my boss and it went well. I had several choices, which I consulted my co-workers, (department of 4). Now, the whole district is using a Flex work schedule. I used several schedules as my grandchildren grew. I can in late, to take them to school and worked through lunch. I found a preschool where they went in early and I was able to work an extra 30 minutes and have every other Friday off or any day that I needed.

Of course I had to convince my boss that my flexing would not impose on my ability to assist the 6 of 18 schools that I serviced, as well as the psychologist that I worked one on one with. All went well. Even to the point that other departments in the district are flexing and taking every Friday off.

My boss believes that any employee that can manage a schedule that work for them is a better employee, that will work smart all around.

Posted by: Marie | December 19, 2007 at 10:09 AM

Make your proposal clear and concise, covering all bases, verbally with a written statement to leave with your manager after the conversation is done. If you have time-specific duties, though, first go to you peers and ask if/how they might be able to adjust their schedules for your mutual benefit. You could start 1 hour early and Jane Doe could start 1 hour late to cover all needs, for example. Or consider moving to part time. Flex time is a benefit, not a right in most companies. So play it smart and keep your expectations commensurate with your job description.

Posted by: pat | December 22, 2007 at 06:53 PM