



How to Create a Flexible Schedule (for employers)

It's no secret that local mountain professionals appreciate some flexibility at work. After all, everyone has a life outside of the office, and it's not always easy to manage.

Flexible schedules give your employees much-needed agility when it comes to handling their lives. This isn't just a nice perk; it's a game-changer. They can tackle their professional responsibilities and their personal obligations with greater ease. That's a serious morale, productivity, and efficiency booster.

But you can't just let your employees skitter about without any controls. Luckily, by having a formal flexible schedule policy, you can herd those cats. If you're considering creating flexible schedule options, here's what you need to know.

Why You Need to Offer Flexible Schedules

Flexible schedules have long been touted as the benefit du jour. So much so that [21 percent](#) of professionals would willingly give up a chunk of their vacation time to get flexible schedules instead.

Local mountain professionals adore having some wiggle room when it comes to when they work. It gives them the ability to manage their personal lives with ease, potentially achieving that elusive work-life balance everyone's after.

But what does that mean for employers? Well, it means a few things, actually. Now that many pros who were working from home are getting ready to return to the office. Work-from-home arrangements automatically have a degree of flexibility, and now many professionals are worried those days are over.

Sure, some may roll with the punches and adapt to set schedules once more. But, for others, that isn't going to happen. They understand the value of flexibility, and they may not settle for an employer that doesn't offer it. After all, [73 percent](#) of professionals state that flexible arrangements increase their job satisfaction, so it shouldn't be a surprise that they wouldn't want to give it up.

If you want to keep your best and brightest, you'll need to take action. By creating flexible schedule options (and policies), you can retain your top performers. Plus, you can market this highly-sought benefit when you recruit, making it easier to snag the talent you need.

How to Create a Flexible Schedule

Here are some tips for creating your company's flexible schedule policies and arrangements.

Understand Your Options

The world of flexible schedules is a bit more complex than many companies realize. There isn't one way to do it. Instead, there are a handful of approaches that can work.

The loosest option is going results-driven. When your workplace is results-driven, you abandon the 40-hour workweek entirely. Essentially, as long as employees are handling their duties and at least meeting expectations, they can work whenever they want for as long as they need to. If they can manage their responsibilities in just 32 hours a week, that's fine. They won't lose pay or have any fallout. It's the outcomes that matter.

Another approach is flexible time. It's only slightly more restrictive than going results-driven. With this, employees can work whenever it suits them best. The only requirement is that they are in the office for a specific number of hours each day or week. Beyond that, it's all up to them.

In some cases, flexible time does have some limitations. For example, you may require employees to be in the office during specific "core hours," hours representing the peak of daily business operations. All

employees have to be in the office from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm. But, for the remaining required time, they can work any hours outside of that window. It gives you extra control but keeps you from being overly rigid.

Compressed workweeks are another flexible schedule approach. Your employees might work four 10-hour days instead of the traditional five 8-hour days, for instance. With that, you may let employees choose which day they don't work, and even adjust to let them change their day off from week to week.

Some other options can include job sharing, where two or more employees work part-time to cover one full-time role. Technically, telecommuting is a flexible schedule option, too, though you may want to outline that in a separate remote work policy to be safe.

Set Clear Expectations

Flexible work arrangements are known for performance improvements. However, even though [78 percent](#) of employees state that flexibility made them more productive, that doesn't mean you should throw caution to the wind.

When it comes to flexible schedule policies, ambiguity is the enemy. Before you launch the program, make sure you clearly outline who is eligible to participate and any limitations that determine when employees have to work. You may also need additional guidelines, including what steps employees have to take to request a flexible schedule, the approval process, and more.

It's also wise to set performance expectations within the policy. This includes not only what they have to accomplish but also any conditions that could cause them to lose access to flexible arrangements.

Focus on Fairness

Yes, not all jobs work well with flexible schedules. For example, your customer service team has to be available when customers are reaching out. That's a must.

Most professionals understand if their position doesn't really work for flexible schedules, so that isn't typically an issue. However, if there are two roles that could be done during any hour of the day, but you only allow one a flexible schedule option, fairness issues arise.

While you can certainly roll out a new flexible schedule program slowly, adding positions or departments one at a time to make it manageable, make sure that you plan the final iteration to be as fair as possible. Otherwise, employees who aren't allowed flexible schedules may get resentful, and that could come back to bite you.

Consider Trial Runs

Trial runs are an excellent tool. Not only can you evaluate how an individual employee performs before making their arrangement long-term, but you can also test different roles and departments to see if they can be flexible. It's a great option for exploring the potential of the program safely.

For trial runs, anywhere from two to four weeks is a good starting point. During the first few days, everyone involved is acclimating, so you don't want to judge them too harshly then. However, once the first week is over, people start getting into a groove, making the results closer to what you can expect long-term.

By implementing trial runs, you can also refine your flexible schedule policy over time. You can figure out what works and what doesn't. Then, you can correct the missteps before moving onto the next trial.

Ultimately, all of the tips above can help you create a winning flexible schedule program. If you'd like to learn more, visit us at TrendsWithBenefits.org. We've got a slew of nifty resources that can help you cultivate the productive, happy workforce of your dreams.

If you're asking yourself, "Why is Walking Mountains talking about flexible schedules?" The answer is quite simple: we aim to reduce local carbon emissions by 25% by 2025. Telecommuting, compressed workweeks, and other flexible schedule options can actually reduce your footprint, so we want to help everyone embrace these options successfully. To put it simply, we are protectors of Mother Nature; she is our kind of people.