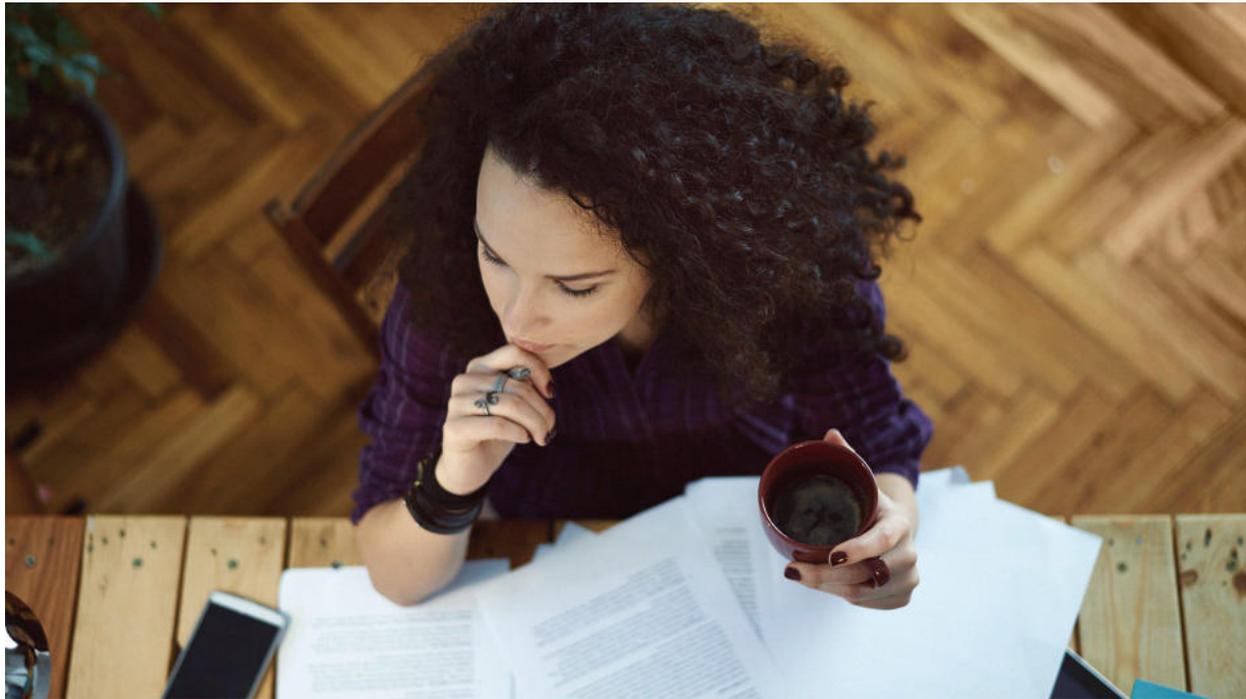


Exactly What To Do To Convince Your Boss To Let You Work From Home On Fridays

Trust and results are essential when you are making a play to work from home.



STEPHANIE VOZZA 09.09.16 5:27 AM

If you think working from home on Fridays sounds good, you're not alone. "Flexible work hours" is the most desired benefit among workers, with more than half of adult U.S. workers picking it as their top perk, according to the technology staffing firm Modis.

While 80% of companies offer flexible hours, just 44% advertise this to employees, according to a study by WorldatWork, the nonprofit human resources association. That means working from home on Fridays might be as simple as asking.

"When a company values an employee, managers are usually willing to have a conversation about working from home, and often are willing to work out some type of an agreement when feasible," says MaryAnne Hyland, professor of human resource management at the Robert B. Willumstad School of Business at Adelphi University. The real issue is about trust, says **Anna Conrad**, founder of **Impact Leadership Solutions**, a Denver-based leadership development and consulting firm. "You are

asking your manager to trust not only your willingness to stay focused and work, but your ability to work autonomously with little or no guidance," she says.

PREPARATION IS KEY

Before you ask, **Conrad** suggests knowing how you will use your time and how you will provide evidence of the work you accomplished. "This is especially critical during the first month when trust is being established," she says. "Assure your manager you will be readily available when needed, just as if he wanted to stop by your cubicle."

You also have to prove that you can work autonomously. Consider your last performance review, suggests **Conrad**. "Was any of the feedback related to your inability to get things done with little or no guidance? Was any of it related to your inability to meet deadlines?" she asks. "If your answer to either of these is 'yes,' explain to your manager things you have done to prove this is no longer an issue."

You also need to make sure you have the required information technology tools and skills, says Wilma Jones, author of *Is It Monday Already?!* "High-speed internet and excellent telephone service are required at your home office," she says. "Working from Starbucks every Friday is not a sufficient arrangement. And make sure you have an Ethernet cable so you can hardwire into your router if your computer has a Wi-Fi issue," she cautions. "It happens. Be prepared."

Finally, think about your typical Friday schedule and identify how telecommuting might enhance it, says Jones. "For example, you have reports to complete, and working from home allows you to concentrate with fewer interruptions," she says. "Or you have a day full of conference calls, and you can focus without your cubicle neighbor's noise and distractions."

HOW AND WHEN TO ASK

Timing is everything. "You can't just stand up on your desk one Friday afternoon and declare, 'From now on, I will work from home!'" says Ramit Sethi, author of *I Will Teach You To Be Rich*. "Everyone will think you're a weirdo, and building security will usher you out of the office," says Sethi.

The best time to ask is immediately after you've received a glowing performance review or had a business success, says Sethi, and approach the topic using the "ARMS" technique:

Agree
Reframe
Make your case
Shut up

Sethi suggests starting the conversation like this: "I'd love to provide even more value to the company in the future. But lately, I've been getting burnt out from the commute. It would make a world of difference if I could work from home a day or two each week."

If your manager says 'no,' adding that it isn't a perk the company offers, agree with what was said, and then reframe your request by turning it into an opportunity. For example: "I understand that Acme Co. hasn't done it in the past. But this could be a great opportunity for the company. If it works out, we can find candidates in other states for X role that we've had a hard time filling. And given my track record here, testing it out with me on a small scale is low risk. If it doesn't work out, we can always go back to the old way."

After you've made your case, shut up and wait, says Sethi. "The important thing to remember is that you're proving the concept for now. Once your boss agrees to this small request, and it works out well, they're more likely to agree to you working from home regularly," he says.

STRENGTHEN YOUR CASE

You can improve your odds of getting a 'yes' if you share research that shows employees who have flexible work arrangements are actually more productive than those who don't, adds Katina Sawyer, assistant professor of psychology and graduate programs in human resource development at Villanova University. "This may be because employees feel valued and trusted, or it may be because it allows employees to better multitask," she says.

Finally, do your homework to find out if there are other employees in your department that currently have approval to telework, says Jones. "If their situation is working well, accentuate how your arrangement would be similar or even better," she says. "If it's not going very well, contrast how you would handle your telework arrangement to ensure the same concerns will not exist with you."