

## Implementing Flexibility

Successfully implementing flexibility not only requires an understanding of offerings, but also relies on organizations committing to guiding principles and effectively communicating information to its employees.

### Establish Guiding Principles

We recommend grounding flexibility offerings in the following principles.

#### TRANSPARENCY AND TRUST

Flexibility requires openness, professionalism, transparency, and trust. Managers and employees should be in continuous conversation about what is working and what isn't, so that minor disruptions don't become major issues.

#### BALANCED WITH BUSINESS NEEDS

Flexible working outcomes vary. We encourage managers to come from "a place of yes" when considering flexible arrangements, while also acknowledging the constraints of the nature of the job, the impact on the rest of the team, and the achievement of business goals.

#### REASON NEUTRAL

Flexibility access should be reason neutral. Whether it's about life circumstances, productivity optimizations, or other responsibilities, as long as the flexibility works within the context of the individual's role and team, the personal reasons behind the request should not matter.

#### FLEXIBLE FLEXIBILITY

To succeed with flexibility and ensure the organization is meeting the needs of the business and team members, it must be acknowledged that there will be times when individuals will need to be flexible with when and how they use their flexibility.

After having established guiding principles, determine what flex offerings will be made available to employees.\* [Then be sure to...](#)

Lay out tactical considerations for how individuals should go about requesting flexibility. Be sure to address:

- Who can request flexibility
- How to request flexibility
- If there are certain flexibility offerings that are “off-the-table” for certain groups
- Where to go if there is a disagreement or issue around eligibility criteria or the process in general

Address any performance management related considerations that might arise from implementing flexibility, such as:

- Does an employee need to be in good performance standing to request flexibility?
- How will performance be managed in a flexible environment?
- What steps will be taken if flexibility isn't being used appropriately?

\*For a deeper dive into four critical flex offerings, read our [Best Practices Guide to Understanding Flexibility](#).

## Manager's Guide to Having Conversations on Flexibility

[To begin the conversation](#), encourage direct reports to set up a meeting or utilize existing 1:1 time. Convey openness and receptiveness to having the conversation.

[During the conversation](#), have the employee set the agenda and guide the conversation, but come prepared to engage around their needs. As employees share their flexibility needs, treat each need as valid—do not assign differential value to needs and do not ask about personal reasons surrounding such. While it's important to be open and receptive, you should also express questions and or/concerns about what the arrangement will look like practically.

[To close the conversation](#):

- Ask for a recap: Ask the employee to summarize their understanding of what was decided and send it to you via email. This ensures that you and your direct report are aligned on next steps. Respond to the employee's recap with further clarifications or considerations.
- Determine next-steps: When will the plan go into effect? When and how will the employee communicate the plan out to team members and other stakeholders? When will you meet again to discuss how the plan is working and what, if anything, needs to be adjusted?

### Why WerkLabs?

There is no 'one size fits all' approach to implementing flexibility. Unique actions need to be taken for each organization to ensure that implementing flexibility aligns with employee and organizational goals.

WerkLabs' customized approach to understanding employee experience leverages 1:1 employee interviews and predictive analytics, to uncover actionable insights into implementing flexible work.