

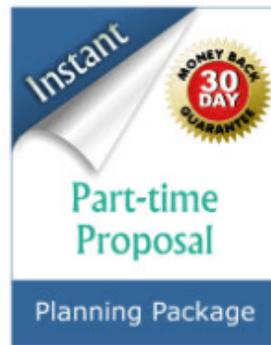
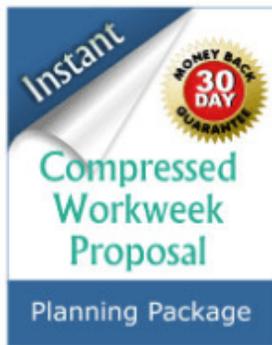


By Pat Katepoo, founder of WorkOptions.com



If you're in a big hurry, get a condensed version of key steps by [watching my 5-minute video here](#). And if you want a first-class proposal fast, use one of my proposal template packages. Click on the covers below to learn more. Yours for flex success, [Pat Katepoo](#)

Download It Today. Done by Tomorrow.



What if you knew **the exact tactics** that convince most managers to give fast approval of a flexible work arrangement?

In this comprehensive free guide, you get those tactics in five clear steps.

Just think: **You could be working from home or going part-time or [taking Fridays off](#) within two to three weeks.** That's no exaggeration and here's why:

I started WorkOptions in 1993 and put it online in 1997 to equip working mothers and others get their boss to let them have a flexible schedule at their current job.

That's given me literally *decades of data from thousands of professionals* who've asked for a flexible work arrangement. So I know what works—and doesn't—when it comes to getting management approval of a request for job flexibility.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.
WORK & FAMILY
Ways to Talk Your Boss Into Flexible Work Hours
By Sue Shellenbarger Staff Reporter of The Wall Street Journal

→ The best all-around Web site is www.workoptions.com, by flexibility coach Pat Katepoo of Kaneohe, Hawaii. Ms. Katepoo covers the bases for employees on four options -- part-time hours, a compressed workweek, job-sharing and telecommuting.



These time-tested tactics are not only effective; in most cases, they deliver quick consent.

By quick, I mean some of my customers get instant approval in response to their proposal—but that’s not typical.

More commonly, you’re looking at roughly two weeks from the point that you present your proposal to the point of final approval. Then figure another week or so to put the communication and tech pieces into place.

So by this time next month, you could be enjoying more job flexibility and free time.

That might sound too good to be true, especially if your employer doesn’t have a flexible work policy. But in this comprehensive guide, you’ll discover what it takes to get the green light—even without a policy.

25+ years of Time-tested Tactics Distilled into 2500 Words

Let’s get started on the five essential steps that lead to fast approval of a flexible work arrangement.

STEP 1: Aim to Match the “Approval Profile”

The Approval Profile is a predictable pattern I’ve seen over the years. It looks like this:

A set of three defined criteria which, when met by an individual, almost always results in management approval of the requested flexible work arrangement.

The Approval Profile has been so consistent over 20+ years that I can confidently say that **roughly 9 out of 10 people who match it will get a Yes to their request.**

Even where there’s no policy.

Do You Meet These Three Approval Profile Criteria?

Those are decent odds so let’s check if *you* meet those three Approval Profile criteria. They are:

1. You've worked for the same manager for at least one year.
2. You're a reliable employee who meets or exceeds expected job performance.
3. Your request includes [a detailed proposal](#) describing how your plan will work.

Do you meet all three? If you do, continue with the steps in this guide and be encouraged about your prospects for starting your flexible work arrangement in the next few weeks.

STEP 2: Complete the Pre-Proposal Checklist

To foster agreement, the approach of your flexible work request and the tone of your proposal need to be tailored to match your manager's style.

Beyond that, knowledge is power, so you'll want to be well-versed in your employer's flexible work policies and practices.

Complete the checklist below to gather the needed information to plan your approach and strengthen your negotiating position.



I've read my employer's documented employee scheduling policies.

I've assessed the scheduling policies to gauge how my proposal might be received. For example, are they progressive or outdated? Vague or well-defined?

___ I've checked specifically for flexible work policies such as telecommuting, flextime, part-time, compressed workweek, job sharing, and family leave, and reviewed their provisions.

___ I've reviewed my employer's website career section, its mission statement, employee newsletters, and other management documentation to find any alignment with my proposed arrangement.

___ Where I've found alignment, I've excerpted the supporting language for possible inclusion in my proposal.

Pat's Tactical Tip: This is a powerful method for blocking objections or rejections. Using their words to build your case makes it difficult to refuse your proposal without violating their published assertions. Insert these quotes in the Introduction section of your proposal or the Proposal Package template.

___ I've asked around my workplace to find out who has a flexible work arrangement on a formal or informal basis.

Pat's Tactical Tip: Build your case on its own merits first. Adding precedents within your workplace can be a comfort point for your manager and could foster proposal approval.

___ I've asked those who have such arrangements how they obtained them, how it's working out, and for advice for successful proposal acceptance.

___ I've determined who, in the chain of command (besides my manager), will have to approve my proposal, keeping them in mind as I devise my strategy.

Assess Your Manager's Mindset

Because I'll need the support and approval of my immediate supervisor, I've determined the best way to present this proposal. For example, does s/he:

___ Seem more relaxed and receptive to new ideas in the morning or afternoon? In the beginning, middle or the end of the week?

___ Have current major work pressures that would cause me to reconsider my timing or to position my proposal to mitigate the situation? (E.g., going part-time would save the department money as your salary would be prorated.)

___ Seem to prefer face-to-face, written, email or digital presentations? Outlined in bullets or a narrative? Detailed or bottom-line concise?*

___ Like to have ownership of new ideas (as if s/he thought of it), so that I should ask for advice and input on my proposal?

The Wall Street Journal's Work & Family columnist labeled this checklist as "excellent homework for wannabes," and that's the point:

For the best possible outcome, do the research then align your timing, talking points and tone to match your employer and manager.

An added bonus: These preparation steps will fuel your confidence when making your request. Confidence is convincing.

Note: If you decide to use one of my flexible work proposal templates, you can choose either a condensed and casual version or a thorough and formal version. Both versions are contained within any [proposal package](#) you select.

STEP 3: Position Your Request from Your Employer's Perspective

Even though your motivation for wanting more job flexibility is personal, angle your request from your employer's perspective. **As an example, below is an excerpt from my Job Sharing Proposal Package** that shows how you can position the employer benefits of (in this case) job sharing.

Advantages to [employer name] of Proposal Approval

Double the talent: My job partner and I bring a broader range of talents and experience to the position than either one of us alone; you get two sets of skills and perspectives in one position. This type of pairing generally results in a better work product. For example, [be briefly descriptive]. We can also learn from each other's strengths.

Productivity increases: With two people sharing one full-time position, each job share partner can afford to devote greater energy and focus when [s]he is on the job. There is also a built-in checking system, maintaining quality control and preventing errors. Finally, when people have better control of their personal and professional lives, it boosts morale which drives higher loyalty and productivity.

Continuous job coverage: Even during vacations, sick leaves and other absences, the job will continue to get done. Also, if one person moves on, there is at least partial job coverage that would otherwise go vacant until a replacement is hired.

Retention: Because job sharing allows for both career-driven achievements and work-life balance, loyalty and retention are high and absenteeism is low among job sharers.

No matter which flexible work arrangement you plan to propose, recognize that the advantages are two-sided so you can confidently position the arrangement to meet both your needs as well as your employer's.

My flexible work proposal packages have the wording to help you build your case.

Read more on this topic: [Don't Get Personal! Make the Business Case for Flexible Work](#)

STEP 4: Be Ready to Answer Common Objections

Are you anxious to ask for a flexible work arrangement? Have you been procrastinating because you're nervous to negotiate the request?

You're not alone. Over the years, many of the women I've helped with flexible work issues initially viewed their planned request as a yes-or-no exchange:

"I'll ask, and will either get the flexible work arrangement I want or I won't. My request will either be accepted or denied."

With that viewpoint, they kept stalling their request or were afraid to ask at all. Sound familiar?

My advice is to adopt a new perspective of the meeting with your manager. It's not a request for permission. (Well, there *is* an element of that, but don't let it dominate your perspective.)

And you're not in a me-against-manager position. Rather...

It's a collaborative, problem-solving conversation that you initiate around your well-prepared business proposal. The goal of the conversation is to reach mutually-agreeable terms about your new way to work.

The path to reaching that goal involves discussion, including questions and answers from both sides.

As each person's interests and concerns are unveiled and explored, there should be some discussion of options (e.g., which day(s) of the week to work from home) and some give-and-take on terms of agreement (e.g., how often you'll check email).

So again, it's not a yes-or-no proposition; it's about reaching terms that will work for both parties. Keep the negotiation conversation going until you reach that place.

You don't want the conversation to stall or stop because of an objection or question that you didn't consider.

So your job is to anticipate your manager's questions and to have ready replies before you walk into the meeting.

What Objections and Questions Can You Expect?

Let's say you plan to submit a [proposal for a telecommuting arrangement](#) (Step 5) as part of your plan to [get your manager to let you work from home](#). Here are five questions or objections that you need to be ready to answer as part of the process.

- "If I let you telecommute, then everyone else will want to." [Get the reply](#).
- "We've never done this before." OR "It's not our policy."

- “You’re a manager; you can’t telecommute.” [Get the reply.](#)
- “Your type of job can’t be turned into telecommuting.”
- “Why do you want to telecommute anyway?”

Each version of my flexible work proposal packages has scripted replies to the objections above, plus one more.

Whatever your manager’s response, maintain a collaborative frame of mind, not a combative one. As you develop your replies, use a problem-solving tone, not a pleading one, and keep the conversation going.

See how that works?

STEP 5: Present Your Request with a Detailed Written Proposal



You’ve seen several references to a proposal throughout this guide so far. That’s because a detailed written proposal brings all the other parts together to deliver a convincing case to your boss.

- Your proposal is a proven component of the Approval Profile (Step 1)
- Your proposal takes the information you gathered (Step 2) and puts your tailor-made talking points into writing.
- Your proposal describes the business case and employer advantages of approving your flexible work arrangement. (Step 3)
- Your proposal addresses questions and objections before they surface. (Step 4)

Or as one of [proposal template](#) customers, Aimee, reported:

[My boss] was extremely impressed with how thorough it was and...even said, 'You just addressed every single concern I had.'

(Read more of Aimee's [telecommuting success story](#).)

That's the impact of a detailed, written proposal.

From what I've seen, [there are three reasons having no proposal is the #1 big mistake](#) people make when requesting a flexible work arrangement.

When it comes to making "the ask," don't blow your chances of approval by winging it.

Whether you write your own from scratch or take the fast and easy route of using one of my flexible work proposal template packages, make sure you answer this question:

"Exactly how will your job get done in this new scheduling arrangement?"

A detailed plan is what assures an otherwise doubtful manager that your thoughtful proposal is worth a trial period, at the very least.

I've seen it happen for customers over and over again, even with [tough-sell managers](#).

WARNING: The Five Steps Won't Work If...

...you don't ask.

In other words, all your preparation is in vain if you don't follow through and initiate the conversation.

"Keep Quiet"

Before she became my [proposal template](#) customer, Alison had been struggling with her full-time work hours for more than a year.

A research scientist and married mother of three, she labeled herself "one stressed-out lady." Managing both work and family was overwhelming her.

How much overwhelm? Alison told me she was making regular visits to a psychotherapist to help her cope! She wanted to cut back her work hours, but...

"Everyone I trusted told me to keep quiet about wanting to change my life."

Her exact words. Alison's co-workers and others advised her not to ask. (Ironically, she works for a famous-name corporation who regularly makes the list of 100 Best Companies for Working Mothers.)

So she kept quiet. She didn't ask. She continued to struggle—and to see the psychotherapist.

What About You?

Is your strategy to "keep quiet?" Think about it: You're never going hear your boss say, "I've been thinking: it's time you restructure your schedule to be more family-friendly."

Not going to happen, right? At same time, accepting the status quo keeps you stuck in work-life conflict.

To conquer that conflict requires one more crucial step. Here it is:

"...the **most important step** in any negotiation process must be **deciding** to negotiate in the first place. **ASKING** for what you want is the **essential first step** that kicks off a negotiation." *Women Don't Ask*, page 12, emphasis added.

There you have it: **Make the decision to ask.** Then do it.

Of course, your “ask” needs to be well-planned. That’s what this preparation guide has been about. But *not* asking for what you want gets you nowhere in your quest for a flexible work arrangement.

Need Encouragement?

Look to Alison. She reached her limit of dissatisfaction, stopped heeding the misguided “keep quiet” advice, and *decided* to take the essential first step: *she asked* for what she wanted. After submitting her [proposal for part-time hours](#) she wrote back to me.

“I have the classic boss whom I thought would never say “yes.” You made the change seem possible, for a lot less than what I’ve been paying for psychotherapy. **I have management’s blessing to switch to reduced hours**, working three days a week.”

Not long after her part-time arrangement was in place, Alison emailed me with a happy report about having enough time to plan her son’s birthday party.

Fortune favors the bold.

In this guide, you’ve discovered what’s worked for thousands of professionals with all types of managers to get approval of a flexible work arrangement.

Now it’s your turn. Follow the steps above and then [let me know](#) about *your* flex success story in the weeks ahead.

Ask with Confidence. Download It Today. Done by Tomorrow.

