



Guide to Flexible Working

Systems of Work

Outcomes

- Managers and employees understanding of flexible work improved.
- Challenges and mitigants to flexible working understood.
- Myths about flexible working busted.

Flexible Working

Making flexible work the norm is a priority within many businesses today. It is a good thing for many reasons and many people. We have all heard about the benefits and team leaders can make the experience a positive one by creating an environment that enables each team member to achieve their full potential while respecting and supporting their commitments.

This guide will cover:

- What managers / team leaders and employees can do to support flexible working.
- Flexible working tips.
- Challenges and mitigants.
- MythBusters.

The Manager's Guide to Flexible Working

Theme	Guidance
The Basics	<p>Trust and respect. These go hand in hand. Everyone is trusted to make the right choice when it comes to managing both work and home, and there is mutual respect for boundaries between the two, ensuring reasonable use of flexible working arrangements.</p> <p>Great communication. Use clear and open communication, so everyone is on the same page and, importantly, the team remains connected even when people are working in different places or at different times.</p> <p>Equality of access. Flexible working is available to all people, roles, and levels, regardless of gender or life stage.</p>
Your Role	<p>Get the conversation going. Openly talk to your team about flexibility, make it business as usual, and empower them to choose how, when and where they work. Take the opportunity to keep flexibility front of mind in coaching catch-ups, kick-off meetings, and check-ins.</p> <p>Think in a team mindset. When you receive a request for flexible working, think about how this may work in your team and collaborate with team members to embed a team-based flexible approach. Discuss and agree on some basic operating principles and leverage simple tools, e.g. shared calendars, to provide transparency around each team member's commitments.</p> <p>Managing expectations. It is always a priority to focus on customers and to deliver excellent outcomes for them. Great communication is crucial with customers. Being transparent around how the team will operate to serve their customers (internal or external) is critical.</p> <p>Be a role model and 'walk the talk'. Do you adopt flexible working arrangements? Share your experience with others on how you make flexible options work for you – add your flexible working arrangements to team calendars, your out of office message and email signature</p>
Other Considerations	<p>Be flexible with it. Give and take is essential when it comes to flexible working. Sometimes we need to change the approach to make it work for everyone including our teams and our customers.</p> <p>Hold each other accountable. As a business, we want to make sure our people manage balance and boundaries and stick to the flexible working arrangements where possible. Having each other's back and holding each other accountable in an effective way helps make this happen.</p> <p>Embrace technology. There is a range of technology and online tools available to keep everyone connected. Look at what is available and utilise it fully.</p>

Practical Tips for Managers

Tip	Guidance
Communicate	<p>Ensure regular, open and honest communication.</p> <p>Make a personal connection by using the phone or video conferencing, as well as email.</p> <p>Keep the conversation going –be honest if it is not working and be open to finding alternative solutions.</p> <p>Be proactive – check with people about how flexible working is going and be responsive to changing needs.</p> <p>Ensure there are alternatives available if people cannot attend meetings in person. Circulate agendas and minutes.</p> <p>Create time for building team relationships from virtual Friday night drinks to in-person team meetings.</p>
Establish Expectations	<p>Establish team norms, e.g. everyone is in the office on a Wednesday, everyone works core hours of 10 am - 3 pm, fortnightly team catch-ups or ensure requests to work from another location are made at least 24 hours in advance.</p>
Empower	<p>Empower your team by changing from defining the 'how' people work to focusing on the 'what'.</p>

Flexibility Challenges & Mitigants

Potential Challenges	Possible Mitigants
Might require more effort to create and maintain the sense of team.	Take the time to consciously develop team spirit rather than expecting it to happen automatically.
More complexity with rosters, meetings and training.	Where possible, involve the team in how flex will work for the group.
Attitudes from other team members who are not working flexibly -there may be perceptions that they are not working as hard.	Build a culture of trust. Be open and transparent, speak up if something is not working, share success stories.
Highly collaborative roles may need to be more organised.	Use all available forms of technology.
Some people may take advantage of flexible working to do less.	This should be addressed as a performance issue.
Customer expectations that people are available during traditional office hours.	Ensure customers are communicated with and kept informed.
Some roles require specific hours/locations to be adhered to. This does not mean that there cannot be other types of flexibility.	Ensure your team is aware of the types of flexibility offered within your organisation and what the negotiables and non-negotiables are in your team.
Some people may suffer from technology encouraging an 'always on' mentality.	Lead by example and acknowledge that people handle 24/7 connectedness differently.

The Employee's Guide to Flexible Working

Theme	Guidance
The Basics	<p>Trust and respect. These go hand in hand. Everyone is trusted to make the right choice when it comes to managing both work and home, and there is mutual respect for boundaries between the two, ensuring reasonable use of flexible working arrangements.</p> <p>Great communication. Use clear and open communication, so everyone is on the same page and, importantly, the team remains connected even when people are working in different places or at different times.</p>
Your Role	<p>Be clear about what flexibility you need. What will help you to be at your best, both at work and home? Think about when and how you are productive and are at your best to think and process information effectively.</p> <p>Think in a team mindset. When you receive a request for flexible working, think about how this may work in your team and collaborate with team members to embed a team-based flexible approach. Discuss and agree on some basic operating principles and leverage simple tools, e.g. shared calendars, to provide transparency around each team member's commitments.</p> <p>Have the conversation. You need regular check-ins to ensure the arrangement is still working; these can be with managers or peers.</p>
Other Considerations	<p>Be flexible with it. Give and take is essential when it comes to flexible working. Sometimes we need to change the approach to make it work for everyone including our teams and our customers.</p> <p>Hold each other accountable. As a business, we want to make sure our people manage balance and boundaries and stick to the flexible working arrangements where possible. Having each other's back and holding each other accountable in an effective way helps make this happen.</p> <p>Embrace technology. There is a range of technology and online tools available to keep everyone connected. Look at what is available and utilise it fully.</p>

Practical Tips for Employees

Tip	Guidance
Communicate	<p>Let your colleagues know when you are here.</p> <p>Block out times in your outlook when you start or finish early.</p> <p>Add an 'out of office' message.</p> <p>Set realistic expectations on when you will respond Provide an alternative contact for urgent queries.</p> <p>If you often respond outside of office hours, recognise this is your email signature, so clients / team understand you are working flexibly and do not expect an immediate response.</p> <p>Update your email signature with your days/hours of work. For example, as an email signature, "We value working flexibly at XYZ. As a result, you may receive this email outside of usual business hours or an out of office notification "I have received your email outside my regular working hours. I will respond when I return to the office. Alternatively, and for any urgent queries, please contact... [insert details]"</p>

Myth Busters

01 Flexibility is just a tool to help staff balance work-life. It is more than that -flexibility is proven to be a business tool to drive performance and wellbeing. For example, a study found that employees with access to flexibility showed 55% higher engagement, 55% less stress and 45% lower turnover.

02 Flexibility does not work in our business. Flexibility can work in all industries and roles. The secret is superior design and putting that into practice... let's give it go!

03 Flexibility is just for parents. Flexibility is for everyone. For many reasons. More and more people want access to flexible working. It can be for lots of several reasons from volunteer work to surfing to looking after your grandchildren or pets.

04 Flexible workers are less ambitious. It is the total opposite. Research found that 90% of high potentials who worked flexibly aspired to senior roles, compared to 77% of those without access to flexible work.

05 Flexibility is another word for part-time work or working at home. That is just two examples. Flexibility is about all types of work, for all types of people.

06 The ideal worker is full-time face-time. Not anymore -flexible workers can be more productive than their non-flexible colleagues. The most productive way of working is not a one-size-fits all approach, as everyone's commitments are different. Research shows that managers with caregiving responsibilities are rated as better managers.

For specific assistance and enquiries, please contact EMA Advice Line, Consultants or Legal services. Advice Line NZ 0800 300 362 or AU 1800 300 362.