



Flex-pertise

A GUIDE TO ASKING FOR FLEXIBILITY AT WORK

Having a baby is a major life transition - and being our best at home and at work will very likely mean asking for support and flexibility. But let's face it—asking for that flexibility at work can be daunting and downright uncomfortable.

Fear not, Josie family! We've gathered some tried-and-true tips to help you confidently make the ask as you settle into your groove as a devoted parent and driven professional. Let's dive in.

DO THE PRE-WORK

Yes, preparing for the ask is just as important as the ask itself. Before you set a meeting with your manager, take time to think through the following:

- **Get clear on your priorities and needs**
 - This also means knowing where your flexibility is flexible - what are you willing to compromise on versus not?
- **Get clear on what you are asking for**
 - Leave the ambiguity behind! Flexibility for you might not mean the same as flexibility for your manager or someone else. Be specific about the flexibility you are asking for. So, rather than “I would like my working hours to be more flexible,” try “I am requesting my working hours be 8am-4pm on Tuesdays and Wednesdays.”

At Josie, we like to think about flexibility in 3 ways:

- When you work (i.e., Days of week, hours)
- Where you work (i.e., Physical location —home, office, that hipster local coffee shop, etc. — Time zone you're in and impact to team collaboration)
- How you work (i.e., Communication preferences, availability on things like Slack / email, etc.)





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Often we think of flexibility in terms of the where and the when. But just as important is the how. Think about how you best communicate, and for which responsibilities. Maybe flexibility for you is taking a call off-camera so you can pump breast milk. Maybe it's suggesting that the weekly team meeting you lead shifts to asynchronous communication for the first month back. Get flexible with your flexibility needs! 😊

- **Get clear on your why**
 - How will this change in your working arrangement benefit you and allow you to move through your day-to-day more in line with your values and priorities? You'll also want to highlight any shared values and priorities between you and your employer - more on that later.

SET ASIDE A DESIGNATED TIME

- While it might be tempting to work your ask into an everyday conversation and make it more casual, being intentional about setting up a specific time to talk with your manager will only further demonstrate that you have been thoughtful in the request you're making.
- Be intentional and lay the groundwork for the conversation that's to come. Give your manager a hint of what to expect so that you do not catch them off-guard. Your email requesting time with your manager might look like...

Hi [MANAGERS NAME],

I hope your week is going well.

I have been reflecting on my working arrangements and how to best show up as a team member at [COMPANY NAME]. I'm hoping we could meet 1-on-1 to discuss the ideas I have come up with.

Do either of the below dates/times work for you?

- [INSERT DATE] at [INSERT TIME]
- [INSERT DATE] at [INSERT TIME]

Best,
[YOUR NAME]



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EMPHASIZE SHARED GOALS AND VALUES

- How will the flexibility you're asking for benefit you, your manager, and your team?
 - Perhaps you and your employer both value efficiency. If so, highlight how a change in your working hours will put you online at the most optimal times free of distraction.
- Be prepared to answer questions that align with your manager's goals, for example: how will you continue to fulfill the responsibilities that have been assigned to you?

MAINTAIN OPEN COMMUNICATION

- If the flexibility you're asking for gets approved, this arrangement will be new for you and your manager. Commit to maintaining an open line of communication with your manager about how the new arrangement is working for you and for them.

OFFER A TRIAL PERIOD

- Offering a trial period might help soften the ask. Establish a duration (ex. 3 weeks) in which you will test out the arrangements you are asking for. Be diligent during that trial period to track your productivity, check in with your manager, and be prepared to potentially have to adapt in some areas (remember bullet point #1 and knowing where your flexibility is flexible!)

HAVE MORE QUESTIONS?

Get in touch with team Josie:



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