

Dear HR Knowledge, should I offer my employees a flexible summer schedule?

Warm summer days are approaching fast, and a popular time of year when businesses consider offering flexible schedules. Whether it's compressing a 40-hour workweek into four days instead of five, starting and ending the workday at times other than the traditional 9 to 5, or allowing employees to work from home, a flexible schedule can provide a low-cost, high-reward employee perk.

Creating "summer hours" is a wonderful way to promote work-life balance and improve morale. We recommend that you carefully plan a summer hours policy before putting it in place to ensure that the program is a win-win for both employees and the needs of the business.

Here are some tips to make a summer schedule work for your organization:

Survey your team. Ask employees what they would think about a flexible schedule. Your team may decide that coming in early or staying late Monday through Thursday in exchange for an early Friday is just the ticket, or they might like to telecommute on Fridays to avoid the beach weekend commute.

Plan and strategize. Adequate staff needs to be available to maintain overall productivity and customer satisfaction. Identify which jobs can be done on a flexible schedule without disrupting the business.

Determine the scope of the program. A flexible schedule can take various forms such as leaving early, working from home on Fridays, or working a condensed workweek. Your policy can also offer a combination of these options to meet the demands of different departments and ensure everyone can take advantage of the benefit without interfering with business.

Establish clear policies. Outline who is eligible, what options are available, when summer hours are in effect (such as June 1 – September 1), and how employees can obtain approval. Explain the purpose of the policy, so everyone understands the objectives and parameters. Additionally, establish protocols and procedures to help manage staff during the summer months. Consistent and fair treatment of all employees is key in making this a successful program.

Evaluate the program to ensure that the protocols and procedures are being followed, and the policy is having the desired effect.

Employee benefits programs don't have to break the bank. Offering simple rewards, such as a flexible summer schedule, can yield many positive results. If a flexible summer schedule can work for your organization, this can be a terrific way to make employees feel appreciated and allow everyone the opportunity to take advantage of those all-too-short summer months.



About HR Knowledge

Founded in 2001, HR Knowledge, Inc. is a privately funded company providing integrated outsourced HR services tailored to our clients' needs. Our full array of offerings includes managed payroll, employee benefits administration, and HR consulting and support services, such as training, compliance, custom-built software solutions, and Hiring Process Management™, our comprehensive recruitment service that takes you from finding to onboarding new talent. Our major markets are fast-growing small- and medium-sized businesses, many of which are venture-capital-backed; foreign companies expanding into the states; and charter schools. Partnering with HR Knowledge can reduce your administrative costs, minimize your legal risk, help you find and develop talent, and alleviate the HR burden so that you can focus on your core business.

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