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Want flex-time? Show your boss how it's good for your organization

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Flex-time, telecommuting and other nontraditional approaches to work became commonplace in the past decade. Then the recession hit.

Many layoff-fearing workers understandably put quality of life issues aside in favor of being thankful to have a job, any job.

Many employers took advantage of this culture of fear and allowed many nontraditional benefits to lapse. These bosses should have taken a closer look at the benefits before they retreated.

As workers watch those around them being shown the door, it may seem far-fetched to push for job flexibility. But it's all about the approach.

The one that will turn your boss' head is this: Demonstrate how it's good for the organization. Be specific, and break it down into dollars and cents. You'll have their attention.

DEVELOP YOUR PITCH

Many employees who hope to arrange a flexible schedule make the request poorly. Think of the conclusion you'd draw if, as a boss, an employee said, "I'd like to 'work' from home because I'd like to spend more time with my kids, and we've just taken in my elderly mother-in-law."

Bosses want to hear, "If two of us work from home 50% of the time, we can save on office space and still get all of the work done."

PROVIDE EXAMPLES

There are many managers who view flex-time as unrealistic. It's up to you to open their eyes.

"Employers that support employees with nontraditional schedules are able to retain valuable talent," said [Deborah Epstein Henry](#), who runs a consulting firm that focuses on work/life balance.

CALCULATE THE SAVINGS

Although I was once wary of flex-time and telecommuting, I've come around since launching a startup. My Web site, [Work Her Way](#), is run by a staff comprised 100% of remote workers.

No one needed a calculator to show me what it would have cost to buy computers and desks and lease office space in the city if we did this the old-fashioned way. By leveraging technology, we can afford a staff of Web developers, editors and writers.

NO REGRETS

Don't abuse your flexible arrangement by taking liberties. Flex-time requires trust. One bad experience can end an otherwise successful experiment.

Your Money columnist [Carolyn Kepcher](#), author of the best-selling business book, "Carolyn 101," and the upcoming "Work Her Way," is the former "Apprentice" star who thrived working for one of [America's](#) toughest bosses. She's now CEO of Carolyn & Company Media (workherway.com), an enterprise created by and for career women.