

Jack McGaughnea, NE HR for Hire

Dear Jack,

My company has 20 employees and conducts business from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Saturday. My employees have started to express interest in working a flexible schedule but I'm not sure how to even get started.

Signed,
Flexible Employer



Dear Flexible,

Almost any company can offer flexible work schedules to their employees and flextime can take various forms:

- permitting employees to work a 40-hour week in fewer days, such as four 10-hour days
- letting workers put in fewer hours each day, but work more days
- having employees work a regular day shift, but change their hours. For example, some people work 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. while others come in at 10 a.m. and work until 6 p.m.

It sounds like there's interest, so ask employees who want flextime to take on the task of developing a program. This includes figuring out what form flextime will take, who will be eligible for the program, how people will apply for flextime, and how it will be administered. Once your workers come up with a draft, you as the employer will need to go over the plan and fine-tune it.

It would be in your best interest to have an application form for employees. In it, employees make the case for flextime. The application should spell out both your and your employee's responsibilities and how the flextime arrangement will work. Be clear about your expectations and how the program will work.

After your company's flextime program is up and running, take time to reassess and adjust the program. How often the program should be reviewed depends largely on your business, your employees, how quickly change occurs in your industry, and how well the program is working. The idea behind the review is to make sure it's being carried out as it was designed and that it's meeting its goals.

Give me a call at (518) 355-4556 if you want to set up an appointment to talk more about implementing your flexible schedule.

Good Luck!

Jack

Northeast HR for Hire

To submit a question, e-mail SSA Membership Services at membershipservices@ssamembers.com, or write: SSA Membership Services, 300 Main St., PO Box 130, Schoharie, NY 12157.

To contact Jack directly, call (518) 355-4556 and be sure to mention you're a member of SSA.

PLAN AND PREPARE FOR THE SALE OF YOUR BUSINESS

by T.L. Wright, Realty USA

Selling your business is an important decision that has heavy financial and emotional implications. Business people seldom think about selling until they approach retirement age or have financial, personal, or health problems. They worked hard for many years to build equity only to put it all at risk because there is no plan for exiting the business.

Making the Decision

The best time to do an exit strategy is when your business is mature and profitable. Timing and content of the plan should reflect the owner's personal and family needs. Other considerations are: economic conditions, business trends, and financial requirements. It's easier to sell a business when it's profitable and market share increasing.

Preparing the Business for Sale

It can take several years to properly prepare a business for sale and nine to 18 months to market, negotiate, and close the sale. When preparing the business for sale, minimize owner perks, cut expenses, and record all income. Profitability adds value. Many business owners wink and say, "What I report is only a portion of my income." You can't have it both ways. Unreported income lessens the value of the business and makes it more difficult to sell. Also, close parts of the business that are troublesome or unprofitable, eliminate non-essential products and services, and renegotiate onerous contracts and leases. Clean and upgrade equipment, buildings, and grounds.

What's My Business Worth?

In 80% of all business sales, either the seller or buyer is disadvantaged because there was no professional representation and value was carelessly set. Valuing a business to the exact dollar is impossible because there are too many intangibles. However, using computerized programs, current market data, and professional expertise, a realistic and supportable price range can be established. A business broker can provide these services.

To be marketable, a business must produce sufficient cash flow to cover all expenses, pay owner(s) a living wage, and service debt. People seldom buy a business that is losing money. You often hear about industry rules of thumb, sales ratios, and projected earnings. These are good for conversation purposes but aren't reliable to accurately establish value.

Next month we'll discuss how to market your business and how to complete the sale. □