



# Tips for Leaders: How to Get the Most out of FlexWork

## Why did we implement an alternative work (FlexWork) schedule?

- To provide employees some balance and flexibility, more time for life outside of work, an effectively higher rate of pay per hour worked.
- To allow employees a chance to innovate and think of better ways to be more efficient (for example, make better use of meeting time or even reduce meetings).
- To improve cross-training & opportunities for cross-departmental coverage.
- To identify processes and services that the institution has always had in place, but may not necessarily be needed anymore (for example, is there a service provided by an area that is nice to have but that causes more work for an area, without much extra value?)

# How can you help with employee work-life balance?

- Schedule emails when you know someone is off so that they don't feel like they have to respond.
  - As a leader, set the example and try to avoid responding to communications when you are off. Talk to your team about the benefits of taking your time away so employees also feel like they can disconnect.
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# Disconnecting

- Supervisors should set the standard and allow time off to be time off. Don't send or expect email.
  - Create the expectation that non-urgent messages can wait. Do employees feel that they don't have to check email and chat outside of core business hours?
  - Encourage staff to leave work on time as much as possible.
  - Encourage staff to leave work at work and to spend their time off on rest, play and family.
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# Focus Time

- Encourage employees to carve out calendar time for focused work or meeting-free blocks.
  - Create the norm that people should look to schedule around those time blocks when possible.
  - This can be especially beneficial at the end of the day, say 4:00-5:00 PM, to catch up and prepare for the coming workday. It allows employees to do focused work, without having to squeeze it in between meetings.
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# Email Settings

You may want to add a note to your signature with your standard working hours. Let people know up front that you may be responding during hours that are different from theirs due to your work schedule and preferences. If this works for your area, encourage your team to follow suit.

Examples:

- “I choose to work flexibly & send emails outside of normal office hours. Please do not feel the need to respond to my emails outside of yours.”
- “I do not expect you to respond to my email outside your normal work hours.”
- “At Utica University we value and respect flexible work arrangements so please respond when you are working.”
- For more read: [“It May Be a Benefit to Change Your Email Signature To Reflect Your Flexible Work Schedule”](#)

# Communication

- Flexible work arrangements may mean that not all team members will be together at the same time. Try and provide opportunities for occasional face to face workdays. Consider things like shared communication logs to keep everyone looped in, or weekly team notes to staff.
  - As you implement your plan on January 1st, don't forget to check in with your team. Encourage your team to let you know what parts are working well and what may be causing problems. Remember – this is a TRIAL and there is time to correct!
  - Work to foster a culture of transparency, trust, and collaboration. Everyone communicates differently but everyone must work together in order for this to be successful. Learn what the preferences are for communication by your team to help ensure effective communication.
  - Seek out differing points of view. Gain an understanding of what your employees want and need.
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# Taking Paid Time Off

- The University provides a significant amount of paid time off that, if not managed, can end up being lost. Encourage employees to plan their vacation time in advance. This will be even more critical when the flexible work arrangements are implemented.
  - Leadership should also schedule and plan vacations and time off in advance. As leaders, we can help to set the work-life balance example for our staff.
  - Talk to your employees about their personal interests. Don't be afraid to share your own stories. How have outside interests helped you manage work and family obligations?
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# In Closing

- FlexWork is one way to help employees find a balance between their personal and professional lives.
- FlexWork shows your employees that you value them as people and not just workers

Please contact the Office of Human Resources with questions

[hr@utica.edu](mailto:hr@utica.edu) or (315)792-3276

