

Writing file 3

Writing a proposal

1 Work with a partner and discuss these questions.

- 1 What change would you like to see in your company?
- 2 If you had to write a formal proposal to implement this change in your company, what information would you include?

2 Read the proposal. What is the problem and what is the suggested solution?

From: Amy Wallis and Trevor Seymour, HR Managers

To: Managing Director

1 _____

This proposal is based on detailed results from staff surveys and information gained from consultations with line-managers.

The company currently enforces a strict system of working hours, whereby each member of staff is expected to work 37.5 hours per week, with each day beginning at 9.00 a.m. and ending at 5.30 p.m. Any overtime will be completed outside these hours. Several members of staff have recently requested a more flexible approach to working hours. Moreover, during exit interviews, employees leaving the company have cited the strict working hours as one of their reasons for leaving. Due to these factors, we decided to conduct a staff survey on the topic.

The survey we conducted showed that a significant majority of staff want to have flexible working hours. The main reasons given were that staff are currently restricted to commuting during peak times therefore adding time and stress to their journeys, and that many employees have families and would appreciate the possibility of being able to pick up or drop off their children on certain days. Around a third of those asked would also like to be able to work from home on a regular basis.

We also consulted line-managers. The majority are happy to allow a certain amount of flexibility, however some managers were concerned about being able to arrange meetings, and being able to keep track of what staff are working on, etc.

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What we propose is to introduce flexible working hours, but with certain restrictions. Each employee will still be expected to complete their 37.5 hours per working week. They will be expected to be at the office within core hours (between 10.00 a.m. and 4.00 p.m.). This means that an employee starting work at 10.00 a.m. will leave at 6.30 p.m., and an employee who wants to leave at 4.00 p.m. must start work at 7.30 a.m. We suggest that the policy on working from home should not be changed at this point – it will still only be allowed in certain circumstances, with prior permission from a line manager.

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By implementing these changes, the company will benefit from increased levels of motivation in staff. There should also be a reduction in traffic in the immediate area during peak times, and lateness should decrease. Through the introduction of core hours, disruption to the business will be minimal.

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We suggest that all staff should be informed of the decision to introduce flexible working and core hours before the end of this month, with changes taking effect from the beginning of next month. We recommend that the scheme is initially implemented on a three-month-trial basis. The scheme can then be reviewed and a decision can be made on whether the scheme will be permanent.

3 Match headings a–d to paragraphs 1–4 in the proposal. What is the function of each paragraph?

- a conclusion: _____ c recommendations: _____
b proposal: _____ d introduction: _____

4 Find examples of the passive in paragraphs 2, 3, and 4. Why has the passive been used?

5 Rewrite the following sentences using a passive form.

- 1 The MD will introduce a new bonus system.
- 2 Line managers should inform employees about the new bonus system before the end of the month.
- 3 Management will implement the new bonus system on a three-month-trial basis.
- 4 The HR department can then review the success of the bonus system after three months.

6 Read your notes on a problem at your company. How would you organize a written proposal about this issue? Compare your ideas with a partner.

Problem: low levels of staff motivation – perception that no investment is made in their personal development

Solution: provide new training opportunities for staff

Ideas: 1 shadowing scheme: staff shadow colleagues from different departments to see how the company works as a whole, 2 allow staff access to a variety of online courses, 3 allocate a training budget to each department

Action: prepare formal proposal outlining the best option

7 Write the proposal including the following:

- current situation and description of options
- proposal for preferred option giving benefits
- conclusion explaining how the proposal will benefit the company and recommendations for further action.