

## Why can't WE get Friday off?

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Have you ever asked this question? Do you notice other companies giving their employees every Friday off? Or every Friday off during the summer? Do you have to use a vacation day or absorb a day off without pay in order to get a Friday off? If so, ask your boss to read this column or suggest one of the following options for your place of employment:

To get Fridays off without hindering productivity, allow employees to work four 10-hour days per week rather than five 8-hour days (if the company is constructed in a manner and with a mission that can accommodate this). Most employees are more effective (and have higher morale) when they enjoy a 3-day weekend every week.

If your nature of business can't accommodate this type of schedule, try "thinning the forces" on Mondays and Fridays. Have everyone work 10-hour days from Tuesday through Thursday with half of employees working a 10-hour day on Mondays (with Fridays off) and the other half working Fridays (with

Mondays off). Still not feasible?

Well, since we all know very little work gets done on Friday afternoons, it's reasonable to assume that your company's productivity wouldn't decline very much, if any at all, if your doors were closed at noontime every Friday. Right? Knowing this, how about allowing employees to work four 9-hour days Mondays through Thursdays and just a 4-hour day on Friday mornings, closing at lunchtime?

The beauty product company L'Oréal does something very similar to this. They use Friday mornings for casual/social activities then release everyone for the weekend at 1:00 p.m. Or maybe your company can use Friday mornings for planning time or meetings in order to get ready for the following week, allowing employees to hit the ground running on Monday mornings instead of sitting around waiting for guidance on the week's objectives.

If there's no way you can shut your doors due to mission or service requirements (like emergency response, police, medical, or news media), try giving employees some reward time

off, like that of a sabbatical (time off not counted as vacation time).

The DeMoss Group, a public relations firm, does this. After an employee works at The DeMoss Group for 5 years, they earn a 4-week sabbatical where they are ordered to not report in for work. When someone is on a sabbatical, no one in the company is allowed to make contact with them for any work-related reason, and he or she is directed to not check work emails or contact clients or colleagues, etc. Other employees team up to pick up the slack when someone is on a sabbatical. Furthermore, after an employee completes 10 years of work at The DeMoss Group, they earn a 6-week sabbatical!

Sabbaticals and 3-day weekends can pay big dividends in production, morale, and loyalty for any workplace. These downtimes can re-energize employees as they often return with more vigor, new ideas, and a greater appreciation of their workplace. I encourage companies to implement a schedule I suggested herein and I'd be happy to hear about the results.

~ The End ~