

## Workskills Fact Sheet Number 21

# TIPS FOR INCREASING YOUR WORK HOURS

**G**reat news! You're working and it's fantastic to know you are now spending your time productively and being paid for it. However, if you're only working limited hours you may still be receiving Centrelink benefits and still have participation requirements you need to meet.

On the positive side you're now in a much better position to move forward now you are working. Your new employer is pleased to have you on board and working in their team. And if they're approachable and understanding, they may be willing to help you increase your hours and therefore meet your Centrelink obligations. Workskills may be able to assist you with this. Ask us how.

You can't take anything for granted though. You'll need to prove you're worthy of any consideration by doing a few things to help your case.

This Fact Sheet will give you some clues as to how this might be achieved.

## BEFORE YOU ASK

- Be on time. All the time, every time. Show you're reliable and conscientious
- Do your job and do it well. Your employer had expectations you would do the work required to the best of your ability when they hired you. Don't let them down
- Be available to do extra hours as and when required. Accepting extra shifts, or doing an hour or two of overtime will go down well. Volunteer without being asked. Show some initiative
- Show you're willing to learn and take on extra tasks and responsibilities.



If your employer sees you trying to improve their business because of your commitment they're going to be very receptive to your requests

- Get on well with others you work with. A harmonious workplace is essential to productivity. Just being friendly, polite and willing to help out will get you noticed
- Keep a record of your accomplishments, particularly if you believe you're doing more than the minimum required. Write them down as a reference for future discussions
- Consider taking on extra training that may result in extra hours.
- Try and understand the long term goals for the business and ensure you work to fulfil them. The boss will be well pleased if you show you're interested in helping the business to prosper

## OK, GOT THAT? NOW WE CAN ASK

So you feel you've covered these off. Now you're in a position to take the next step. It's OK to be nervous, you can't anticipate their reaction but if you think things through and have done your 'homework' you should be good to go.

Here are some tips on how to make the approach:

- Practice what you'll say. Ask your Case Manager or a family member or friend to listen and give you feedback
- Be clear and concise about what you want. How many extra hours do you want or need to fulfil your Centrelink obligations? Your Case Manager can help you here
- Make sure you've thought it through. For instance maybe extra child care has to be arranged but you've sorted that out, or show you've covered transport needs with the different hours you'll be working?

- Be ready to say why you're worth it. If you've checked through the other dot points beforehand you'll be up for this. Tell the boss why the business will be better off if you're working more hours
- If you think you might struggle with any of this ask your Workskills Case Manager to help you out. We contact employers regularly and would be happy to assist by approaching them on your behalf.
- With a bit of luck you'll be able to get what you need and everyone will be happy with any new arrangements.

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## ***BUT, IF AT FIRST YOU DON'T SUCCEED...***

However there may be very good reasons why your employer *can't* assist, either immediately or long term.

Sometimes they'd like to help but their budget just won't stretch to it at that time. You can let them know you're disappointed but you'll continue to work as before and would still like to be considered if circumstances change. There still might be a chance things could be different if you're prepared to wait or negotiate further.

However if it all falls over and you still need to get those extra hours, you'll probably need to think about looking further afield. Here are some thoughts about taking the next steps:

- They say it's easier to get a job when you already have one. Being employed is a big plus when hunting for new opportunities. It shows you're already organised and balancing your work/life commitments. So perhaps it may be wise to stay where you are while you explore those next opportunities
- Let your Case Manager know you're keen to work more. They can assist in identifying other jobs that may come through the Workskills system. It could be a position with more hours or even an additional job that complements what you're already doing. Don't forget

we can also assist with applications and even advice about how to go about cold canvassing

- Keep looking. You're the one still best placed to find something that will suit. Make sure your resume is up-to-date and your referees are current and aware of what you're doing. Speak to your networks; family, friends or industry links, let them know you're looking for other work. Your existing contacts can be like gold at these times.

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## **WE'RE ONLY A PHONE CALL AWAY**

If you're not sure about what to do next, need an 'independent ear' to listen to you or just need some good old straightforward advice, get in touch with us so we can help you out.

You can contact a Post Placement Care team member in the first instance on 6263 5785 (Monday to Friday from 8.30 am to 5 pm). You can also email us at [ppc@workskills.org.au](mailto:ppc@workskills.org.au)

Alternatively you may wish to speak directly to your Case Manager.

All of us are happy and willing to help.