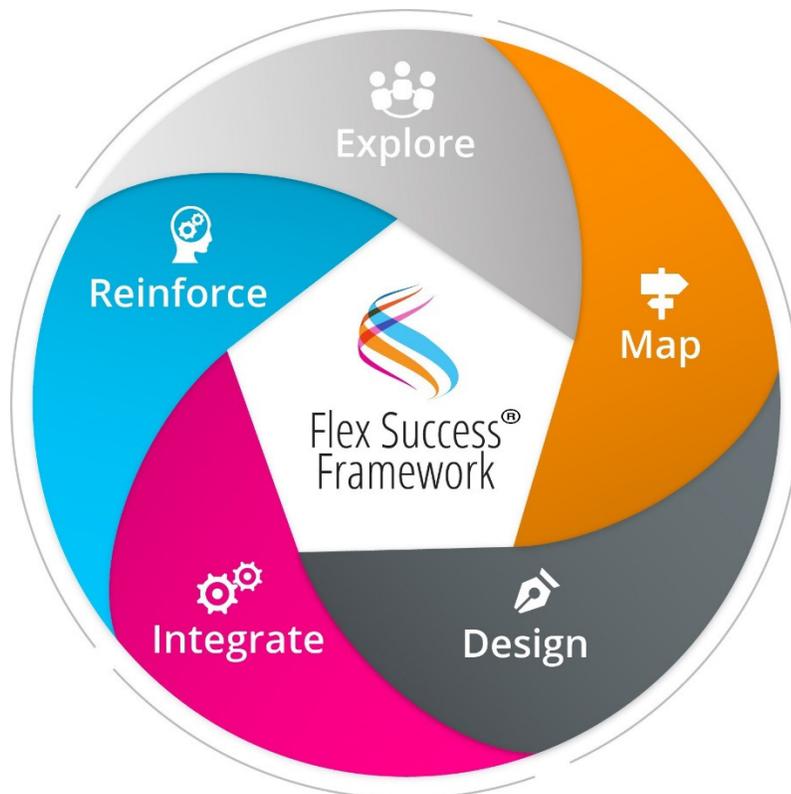




## THE PATH FORWARD: THE ALLIANCE'S FLEX SUCCESS® FRAMEWORK



A successful flexible work program requires strong buy-in, thoughtful implementation, and regular monitoring. It also needs to be adaptable – evolving with the organization as the needs of its people and clients change. Whether your organization needs to create a flexibility program from scratch, expand its existing program, or pinpoint issues within the current program, the Alliance's **Flex Success® Framework** provides a five-step road map to achieve your organization's objectives. Read on for details about each step.

**Explore the Business Case:** This first step is the critical point where buy-in is gained through

a clear articulation of why lawyers and other professionals want and need flexibility, as well as why your organization needs to meet this need to remain viable. Getting there requires analyzing workforce data – who is staying and who is going – and what factors, including work/life issues, have contributed to those patterns. In addition, it involves gathering and sharing information about the link between flexibility and client satisfaction. Examples include the continuity of benefits of retaining lawyers who know the clients' business as well as showing the ways in which the organization itself benefits from flexibility. The results of these analyses will be the factors that influence adopting a flexible work culture as a strategic business objective.

**Map the Components:** After getting a clear sense for the myriad of drivers for flexible work through the business case analysis, the next step is to identify the types of flexibility needed based upon those drivers. Establishing a program that reflects *holistic flexibility* (which provides both reduced hours and full-time flexibility options) such as telecommuting and flexible start/end times, is best-suited to meet those different needs. At this stage,

organizations should develop markers such as usage rates and advancement of flex attorneys to indicate whether their flexibility objectives are moving forward.

**Design the Program:** Once an organization identifies the types of flexibility needed, it should proceed with establishing a working group to memorialize its flexible work strategy and formalizing a written policy or framework. Formalizing the policy is important for consistency across the organization. A well-written policy should include, but not be limited to: a statement on why the organization is establishing or expanding the policy; the organization's expectations of those using the policy; who is eligible to use it; and detailed instructions for how professionals can avail themselves of flexible work. For reduced hours policies, it is essential to articulate that pay, benefits, and advancement will be at least proportional to the schedule. It should also include provisions for truing-up those who work in excess of their agreed upon schedule. This stage also includes aligning the processes and resources needed to support the various forms of flexibility, including a flex management structure.

**Integrate the Strategy:** Well-articulated policies are important, but they alone will not make a successful flexibility program. Implementation is what makes the difference. A successful implementation process starts with communication from the organization's leaders about why flexibility is important and what is expected of everyone to support its success. It also must include an educational component so those on flexible schedules, as well as those working with or supervising individuals on flexible schedules, acquire the necessary tools to carry out what is expected of them. Finally, the resources established to make flexible work a reality should be activated and readily accessible to all.

**Reinforce Flex Success®:** Processes to continuously improve upon the organization's strategic flexibility initiative should be built into the program from the start. This is done through regular monitoring and measuring its results against the success markers established in the *Map the Components* stage. A critical part of this reinforcement is holding individuals accountable for the expectations communicated by the organization's leaders during implementation. This includes incorporating questions into the performance evaluation and compensation processes to determine whether and how supervisors are supporting flexibility. It is also essential to have a process for regularly checking-in with those utilizing the flexibility program and to do periodic climate surveys across the organization to address challenges and build on successes.

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The Diversity & Flexibility Alliance is a national leader in diversity and flexibility programming, and we advise on organizational solutions that integrate more women into leadership positions, create inclusive work cultures, and promote the use of non-stigmatized, holistic flexible work policies. We are here for you and happy to help develop or enhance your organization's flexibility program using the **Flex Success Framework®**. To learn more, visit our website at [www.dfalliance.com](http://www.dfalliance.com) or contact us ([manar@dfalliance.com](mailto:manar@dfalliance.com)) to schedule a complimentary overview call.