

Career Pivot Conversation Template

How to ask for part-time, remote, or a leave without tanking your career

You've pitched investors, negotiated vendor contracts, made the case for headcount you didn't think you'd get. Asking your own company to let you work differently is the same skill, aimed inward, and it fails for the same reason bad pitches fail: too much emotion, not enough business case. This template turns "I need to slow down" into something a manager can actually say yes to, because it answers their real question before they ask it: what does this cost me, and what do I get back.

What you need: 30 minutes alone to draft, then a real conversation booked on the calendar.

The steps

1. **Name the ask in one sentence.** (3 minutes) Part-time, remote, a leave, a role change. Specific, not vague. "More flexibility" isn't an ask, it's a feeling.
2. **Write what you'd do differently.** (7 minutes) Hours, output, availability. Be concrete enough that your manager can picture the new arrangement.
3. **Write how it benefits the company, not just you.** (7 minutes) Retention, output quality, avoiding a costly rehire. This is the part most people skip and it's the part that lands the ask.
4. **Define what success looks like, with a check-in point.** (5 minutes) "We revisit in 90 days" removes the fear that this is a permanent, unreviewable change.
5. **Book the conversation and bring the one-pager.** (rest of the 30 minutes) Don't wing it live. You've made harder pitches than this one.

Your one-pager

The ask

What I'd do differently

Benefit to the company

What success looks like, and by when

When it goes sideways

Your manager says no outright. Ask what would need to be true for the answer to change. That turns a dead end into a roadmap, and shows you're negotiating, not begging.

You get emotional mid-conversation. Normal, this is your life you're pitching, not a vendor contract. Pause, breathe, go back to the one-pager. It's there so you don't have to hold the whole case in your head.

They say yes but nothing actually changes. Use your 90-day check-in date. If the arrangement isn't real by then, that's your answer, and it's useful information either way.

You've sold harder things than this. This time you're just selling the case for yourself.