

Flexibility at Novartis: Ana Graf

Graf explains how flexible working has contributed to her success.

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The “Flexibility at Novartis” series spotlights associates who have one thing in common: They work flexibly. As a result, they are able to manage the demands of their work and private lives. Flexible working can boost employee engagement while increasing efficiency and productivity. This series provides a glimpse into flexible working at Novartis.

Ana Graf serves as Senior Global Program Head for Alzheimer’s disease programs at Novartis in Basel, Switzerland. She shares her story below.

My secret to success

In March, I celebrated my 25th anniversary at the company. I have worked in neuroscience nearly all that time. Today I am responsible for the development of compounds targeting Alzheimer’s disease. If you ask me how I’ve managed to have such a long career in clinical development while raising a family, flexibility is a big part of the answer.

[Flexible working] can make it harder to draw the line between work and free time, but being able to accommodate my private commitments is very important to me.

I have been lucky to have supportive managers throughout my time at Novartis. After having each of my children, I came back at 60% and then gradually over six years returned to full time. This arrangement allowed me to adapt my work schedule to fit my family needs and motivated me to stay at the company.

My kids are now 15 and 17, and I still work at home one day a week – as does the rest of my team. It can make it harder to draw the line between work and free time, but being able to accommodate my private commitments is very important to me.

It’s up to us as employees, not only Novartis, to be flexible. For instance, I do whatever it takes to be in the room for certain discussions or to ensure that a project that depends on me keeps moving ahead. My colleagues and I also make sure that a critical mass of us are in the office every day.

There used to be a perception that flexibility is not efficient. That’s changing now with the help of new technologies, attitudes and policies. I think giving people more freedom and support to create flexible work arrangements that work for them and for the business would help.

What does flexibility at work mean to you?

Flexibility means creating opportunities for people to contribute whenever, however and wherever they can do so best – and, as an employee, making the most of those opportunities.

A Senior Global Program Head at Novartis describes the benefits of #flexibleworking.

Learn more about careers at Novartis

While our diverse workforce brings different people and perspectives together, inclusion is making the mix work. It is about creating an atmosphere and an environment where each of us feels valued, respected and heard.

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