

Hours to Suit

Working Flexibly at Senior
and Managerial Levels



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Foreword

LEHMAN BROTHERS

Lehman Brothers is committed to helping employees manage the demands of their careers and personal lives so that they can operate at peak performance in all areas of their lives. As an employer in the financial services sector, delivering on this commitment is central to our ability to attract and retain top talent. We seek to nurture talented individuals over the arc of their careers, including at senior levels, and we know this goal requires that we be open to new and innovative ways of working.

Our experience has shown us that identifying new ways to work, leveraging new technologies to facilitate remote working and offering a suite of life balance policies and programs are increasingly important to delivering a workplace where people feel that they can be their very best.

Working Families' study *Hours to Suit: Working Flexibly at Senior and Managerial Levels* is a substantial addition to the growing knowledge base on flexible work. We are convinced it will play a vital role in helping all employers develop the types of innovative programs and processes that will empower more senior leaders to maximize their personal productivity by working flexibly.

We are proud to support this important research study and welcome the challenge it poses to all of us – to continually innovate 'new ways to work' so that we can create the workplace of the future today.

Anne Erni

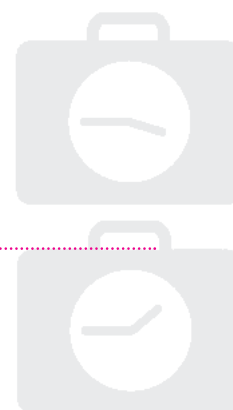
Managing Director and Chief Diversity Officer

John Phizackerley

Managing Director and Chief Administrative Officer



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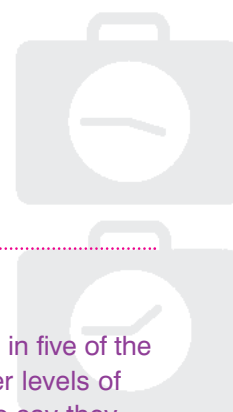


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Key findings

- There is a strong business case for facilitating senior managers to work on a reduced hours and flexible basis. This is linked with retention, recruitment, energy, enthusiasm, effectiveness, motivation and long term loyalty. The diversity aspects are also increasingly recognised to be of importance to customers and clients. Clients see the company as innovative.
- There are indications that company cultures have changed over the last three to four years. A change of attitude is beginning in some organisations to enable senior managers to work on a reduced hours and flexible basis.
- Individuals in this study acknowledge the importance of the support they have received from people at the top of their organisations, as well from line managers, their teams and other colleagues.
- Being a visible role model working at a senior level on a reduced hours and flexible basis sends a powerful message to others in the organisation, and is key to further change.
- Managing others is possible whilst working part-time, compressed hours, from home or job sharing. There can be benefits for staff who can be encouraged to develop and take decisions for themselves. Trust is a key issue as is communication.
- Developments in technology over the last five to six years are recognised as a key part of making these working arrangements possible, in particular by facilitating communication. However the downside of the volume of emails was mentioned by a number of participants.
- Job sharing can be highly successful at enabling senior roles to be carried out on a part-time basis, where full-time role cover is necessary. Participants pointed to the fact that: “job sharing enables you to do jobs that aren’t so suitable for part-time.”

Hours to Suit



“Many women and men who work part-time are working below their potential, an estimated one in five of the working population. Out of every 10 part-timers, five have previously held jobs requiring higher levels of skills or qualifications or more managerial or supervisory responsibility and an additional three say they could easily work at a higher level.” One of the key findings of the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) investigation into part-time and flexible working (*The Hidden Brain Drain*, 2005)

Many women who gave evidence to the Women and Work Commission cited the lack of quality part-time work as being a major barrier to taking on senior roles. The Commission believes “that one of the main barriers is managers’ perceptions that some jobs – particularly management – cannot be done in this way.” (*Shaping a Fairer Future*, 2006)

Introduction

In the autumn of 2000, New Ways to Work (now Working Families) conducted interviews with 22 senior managers who were working flexibly. This study was published as *Flexi Exec: working flexibly at senior and managerial levels* in 2001.

The interviewees in *Flexi Exec* were largely from the public sector, with three private sector companies. The key issues identified were:

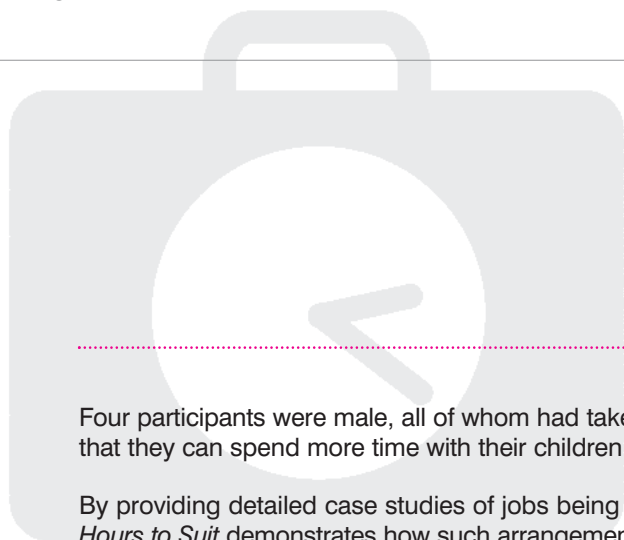
- **The importance of having the right workload for reduced hours and gearing the tasks and appraisal to the number of hours available.**
- **The role model of senior staff working flexibly sends important messages to junior staff.**
- **There is no one working arrangement that will always be appropriate.**
- **Particular attention needs to be given to the development and training of part-time employees and ensuring there can be career progression for people working non-standard work patterns.**

For the current study, *Hours to Suit*, semi-structured interviews have been carried out with 23 senior managers working reduced hours or flexibly. Twenty of these are from the private sector, one is from a professional body and two from the Ministry of Justice. Other sectors included are finance, IT and communications, retail, professional and business services, an oil company and a utility company. Eight are City based organisations, including two law firms. The jobs covered include a marketing director, two partners from law firms, three executive directors, a store manager, a production asset manager, and a vice president of sales.

All participants have been working a reduced or flexible arrangement for at least six months, many for between three and seven years, and in one case for 19 years in a variety of different job roles. Three of the interviewees did not have direct responsibility for managing others, although they were employed at a senior level. Those that did had between three and ten direct reports; some were responsible overall for up to 300 people.

More than three quarters of the participants (18) were working reduced hours and eight of these were job sharing (covering five roles). The other ten used a variety of different arrangements, including a 10 per cent reduction from full-time, four, three and two day weeks. The remaining five participants were working full-time. One was based at home, two work from home one day a week, and two compress their hours into either four or three or four days a week, with some working from home.

The vast majority of the participants had changed their working arrangement in order to spend time caring for children, although a number specifically stated that it is important that flexibility is seen to be for all. However, one noted that: “I think it’s sometimes seen as not being justified in some quarters unless it’s for child care reasons.”



Four participants were male, all of whom had taken active decisions to change their working arrangements in order that they can spend more time with their children and family.

By providing detailed case studies of jobs being successfully carried out on a reduced hours and flexible basis, *Hours to Suit* demonstrates how such arrangements work in practice, and the benefits to employees and business.

A second stage of *Hours to Suit* will be published later in 2007 covering jobs in the public and voluntary sectors.

Context

The lack of part-time and flexible work at more senior levels in organisations is high on the agenda (Equal Opportunities Commission, 2005, Women and Work Commission, 2006). There is still considerable suspicion that senior and managerial roles, or certain types of jobs, cannot be effectively worked on reduced hours or on a flexible basis. This can be a real barrier to men and women reaching their potential if they chose to work other than full-time, fixed hours.

Changing demographics and family roles indicate that the demand for flexible working is likely to grow:

- **Men are more likely to be active fathers, (EOC surveys). This is the case for the four men interviewed in this study, yet at the same time one of them acknowledged that: “It can be difficult for men to come forward and ask for flexible working because they might be seen as demonstrating a lack of commitment to the business.”**
- **By 2010, nearly 10 million people will have caring responsibilities for an older relative due to the ageing population (Department of Work and Pensions, 2001).**

The legal ‘Right to request flexible working’ was extended to carers from April 2007. The Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) is recommending that this right be extended to everyone. (*Working outside the box, 2007*).

Business case

Without exception, the individuals interviewed for this study are highly skilled, experienced and motivated people. Their organisations have retained, and (in three cases) recruited, people who themselves refer to their passion, energy and enthusiasm for their jobs and who indicate that they are effective and motivated employees who have strong loyalty to their employers, partly due to the flexibility shown to them. A number of the case studies mentioned that they were in a win-win situation.

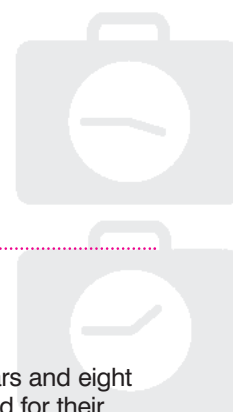
Retention and recruitment

“We are in a competitive market place for talent. The ability to keep people is crucial.”

The vast majority of the participants have been retained by their organisations.

“There is no doubt that with three children under seven and another one on the way, I would have very reluctantly left the bank by now if this arrangement had not been available.”

Of the 20 who had negotiated their arrangement from a full-time role, mainly after maternity leave, most specifically mentioned that they would not have stayed with their employer if they had not been allowed to work a reduced hour week or in a flexible way.



“The company wants to keep senior females and they are focussing on that at the moment.”

Seven had been working for their organisation for over 15 years, five for between eleven and fifteen years and eight for between 5 – 10 years. One of the job sharing roles is carried out by two individuals who have worked for their organisation for 25 and 29 years respectively.

Three very senior individuals had been recruited into their companies to work on a reduced hours or flexible basis – one of these was to a job share. In these cases the company has been able to recruit highly skilled, experienced and motivated individuals who changed their employer in order to work the arrangements they were being offered. In a highly competitive recruitment market there are indications that the ability to work in a way that suits the rest of their lives is an increasingly important factor taken into consideration by senior employees. One interviewee specifically mentioned that: “Someone came along recently and headhunted me. They offered me a lot of money to join them, but I said no because it wasn’t a four-day week.”

All interviewees spoke highly of their organisation and bore out the findings of recent survey research by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD, 2006) which found that: “employees who work flexibly tend to be more emotionally engaged, more satisfied with work, more likely to speak positively about their organisation and less likely to quit.”

Commitment and loyalty

The individuals in this study were all highly committed to their organisations. Many stated specifically that being able to work in the way that they do, meant that they were even more committed to their organisation.

“People now know I am equally committed if not more, equally productive if not more. That has slowly changed people’s opinions and the results show it too. It’s proving beneficial because motivation goes up.”

“It increases my loyalty to the firm, because I have felt much happier since working this arrangement. It has made me feel very positive about work and the balance I have between work and home. I can’t ever imagine me leaving here to go to another law firm.”

“Another benefit to the company is that because they have offered me that flexibility, I am not looking for another employer and cannot see myself doing so in the immediate future.”

Energy, enthusiasm, effectiveness

Those working a reduced working arrangement all referred to the high energy levels and freshness they brought to their jobs. In the case of job sharers this results in two high-energy people in a full-time role. A point made by all of the job shares interviewed.

“I think I am more productive and that I work smarter. I think that I am fresh and energetic and put everything into my work, at the same time as being able to balance my family.”

“I think that the way I work makes me more efficient. I have to be much more focused than if I was working five days a week. There is clearly a danger if you are working four days a week that you try and do five days over the four days.”

“Because of the flexibility that I can give them, there is probably no downtime. In most jobs there is a busy period and a slack period – I don’t really have slack periods. The slack periods are when I am not working. So it is probably a cost effective way for them to employ me.”

Most of those interviewed work remotely for some of the time. “Another advantage not to be underestimated is that I don’t get as many distractions as I would in the office.”



Meeting the needs of the business – a ‘win-win’ approach

When negotiating their working arrangements participants in the study showed evidence of very carefully thinking through the business case before making their proposals and were very aware of the potential advantages of their suggestions to their employers. “In my opinion, the times that I wanted to be off were the quieter times for marketing anyway.”

“If I’m requested to work extra times or swap days then that is the flexibility I offer the business. If there is a meeting on Friday, although I have no obligation to make it, I make it if I can.”

Reflection of diversity and being an innovative company

Fourteen out of the 20 organisations in this study are in the Times ‘Top 50 places where women want to work’. One commented: “We are the only law firm. I find it a very compelling case for businesses – it is a different mindset.”

“I am customer facing, so I go to speak to CEOs in other companies, and it is one of the most talked about things – ‘how do you work a four day week?’ That stimulates a conversation that is very, very beneficial. The company is seen by that client as innovative and progressive.”

A number of people working reduced hours mentioned other activities they were involved in, such as chair of governors at a local school and other community and public activities. There was a recognition by these individuals that there may be ‘spin-offs’ for their employer due to their wider development.

“I am very involved with the local pre-school and I have been chair of the governors of the local school for ten years. I’ve also been involved in setting up after school clubs. What I have learnt from being involved at this level in community activities has also helped with my job.”

Changing cultures

“Even young people these days are raising quality of life issues in interviews. So there are signs that working culture is changing in favour of a work-life balance.”

There is evidence that the culture in at least parts of these organisations is changing. Two participants from law firms mentioned that there had been significant recent change.

“I think law firms and institutions in the City will start accommodating flexible working more and more.”

“As a firm we are good at thinking about different ways of working for everybody, and certainly over the last three years it is becoming much more part of the culture.”

Organisational support

“Above all, I think the most important thing is that you need the support of your employer.”

Most of the individuals mentioned that their employers already had in place, not only policies and procedures for applying for flexible working, but that they had “already started to move towards a culture of support”. Many of the policies went beyond the legal right to request flexible working for parents. However one individual acknowledged that: “the introduction of the right to request legislation in 2003 helped.”



The importance of enlightened individuals at the top of organisations or to champion work-life balance was mentioned by a number of people. “Our senior partner is very much pro this approach, which is a tremendous help. The business case was being made from the top.”

However, people also recognised the importance of support from line managers and colleagues. Research by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD, 2005) found that in almost half of the 585 organisations surveyed, line managers were reporting difficulties implementing flexible working practices. The study concluded that line managers are key and that they need the right skills and attitudes. The individuals in this study all received support from their managers. In a number of cases it was their manager who had suggested – and in some cases, facilitated – an innovative working arrangement. Secretaries and PAs were openly acknowledged as key, by the most senior managers. “I have a fantastic PA as well – we work really well together and she works flexibly too.”

“More key to this, is that I have the best PA that I have ever worked with in my life – she enables me to do this. On a Friday she manages the requests, the emails and the diary so it doesn’t conflict and she fields a lot to my first line, so they can keep the ship going in the right direction.”

“I feel it is a privilege to be part-time and very lucky that I job share with Debbie.”

Role model

“People have said, ‘it is wonderful to see people at your level doing this’, and I think this reflects on the organisation itself and that can aid recruitment and retention.”

Although there is increasing evidence of change in some organisations, working either reduced hours or flexibly is still unusual at senior and managerial levels and the importance of being visible as a role model was mentioned by a number of participants.

“It sends out a good message to more junior lawyers that flexible working can operate successfully and at more senior levels. Retention is a big issue for law firms at the moment and one of the big issues is around work-life balance.”

However, there were others in the study who referred to the fact that many in their organisation were probably unaware of their working arrangement. Individuals have developed their own ways of operating, some of which are likely to be related to individual character, but are also likely to be affected by the general culture of the organisation.

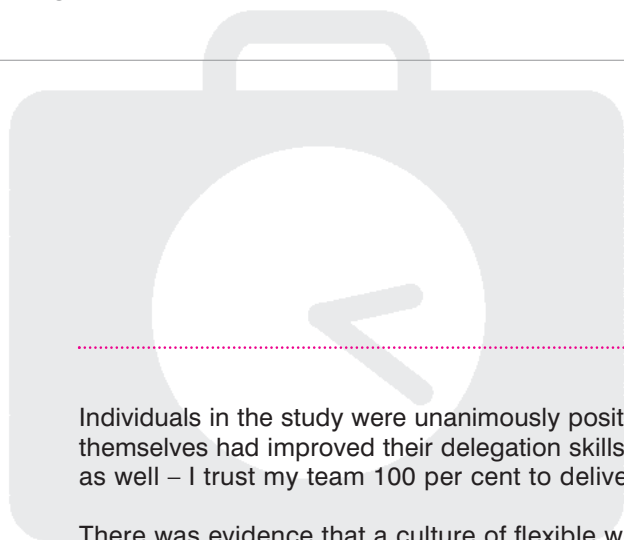
“One of my direct reports works from home on Fridays. I am sure a lot more people work from home on a Friday than they ever have before. We are meeting all our business objectives as well as our care objectives.”

Managing others

“I think you can work flexibly as a director as long as you make sure you are managing the team. I am very clear about what I expect them to do.”

Managing staff or a team is commonly seen as a reason why a role cannot be carried out on a reduced hours or flexible basis. Nineteen of the individuals were involved in managing other staff. A specific advantage mentioned by a number of those working at very senior levels, is the development opportunity which is given to more junior staff who are encouraged to make decisions without always referring to their boss. One person mentioned that:

“There are times when they have to deputise for me on a Friday, so they get increased responsibility. If there is a meeting of a senior layer they do it and they get that exposure and I think are thankful for it – they get increased visibility. They get the ability to use their judgement because they are asked to make decisions that would normally fall to me.”



Individuals in the study were unanimously positive about the staff working for them. Most were aware that they themselves had improved their delegation skills: “You can’t be a micro manager”. “You have to be very trusting as well – I trust my team 100 per cent to deliver.”

There was evidence that a culture of flexible working had permeated down into many of their teams. “I lead a very small team of four senior managers, one of whom works a four day week, and another works one day a week from home. We are a professional organisation and it is all about trust and confidence.”

Because senior managers working reduced hours and flexibly tend to be aware of the problems that could ensue if they do not make backup arrangements for their teams, one made the point that: “When I see the other directors on our executive team who travel so extensively, I realise it is very hard for them to be present for their team anyway.”

“I think that your staff can’t perceive you as unavailable – you are a senior executive. You can train your staff in terms of what is urgent and what is not. When they are calling you on your personal time you should feel ‘I’m glad you have called me today’.”

Technology

“One key thing is that you have to give people the technology to do it.”

Mobile phones, business phone lines and broadband at home, laptops, email and Blackberries were mentioned by participants. There is a sense that it is recent changes that have continued to make this possible. “Five or six years ago, technology-wise I don’t think this would have been possible.”

“We have an enormous amount of technology and we are virtually never un-contactable. I don’t know if that is a good thing or a bad thing.”

Job sharing

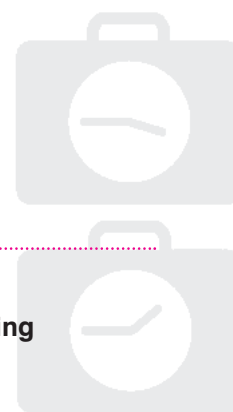
The eight job sharers interviewed (covering five jobs) were all in challenging roles. The main advantage identified was that job sharing opened up demanding roles to flexible working: “Because it gives you the full week cover, job sharing enables you to do jobs that aren’t so suitable for part-time”. Also the benefit of having “a sounding board” in challenging jobs was frequently mentioned.

There was no one particular model used by the job sharers – they had developed their own ways of sharing tasks and responsibilities depending on the job. Developing openness, trust, clarity and communication were seen as key factors in the success of the partnerships, as was the absence of the need to be possessive about work done.

“What we really do have in common is very similar levels of motivation, similar values and similar levels of drive and energy... neither one of us have the need to be the one in the limelight, although we are both very driven.”

Other comments included:

- **“We also have a very wide range of skills between us, which you wouldn’t necessarily get in one person.”**
- **They do not take holiday at the same time, so the job is still covered during absences.**
- **A recognition that job sharing would not suit everyone.**



- **It is about personalities and how you trust the person you work with – it's about having that open relationship.**

Further issues

Workload perceptions

A number of people had originally reduced their working arrangements to work half time or three days a week and had found that this did not suit their job role. "I ended up doing five days in my mind and getting paid for three". It was after this experience that two individuals in the study re-negotiated their situation either to increase the number of days they were working, or to return to full-time work and work partly from home, including compressing their hours.

There is a real danger that people who reduce their hours end up working a 'full-time' job. Three interviewees specifically referred to this issue: "I reduced my salary by 40 per cent and after about eight months of doing this, it was clear to me that I was delivering a full role in three days and missing 40 per cent of the salary." This individual was then able to re-negotiate a full-time role working a compressed week.

There was a recognition that some of the roles would be difficult to carry out on a two or three day a week basis. "Working 50 per cent was really hard and I ended up going up to 60 per cent. I was probably working three days a week, even though I was only coming in for two days."

Other issues mentioned:

- **There was "a recognition that you tend to be a little less social than when you are full-time."**
- **"You have to be highly organised. Deadlines are much shorter."**

Two individuals who had originally reduced their hours after maternity leave eventually managed to re-negotiate to work in a job share. Initially, neither had seen job share as a possibility in their roles, but both have now resulted in very successful job shares.

Career progression

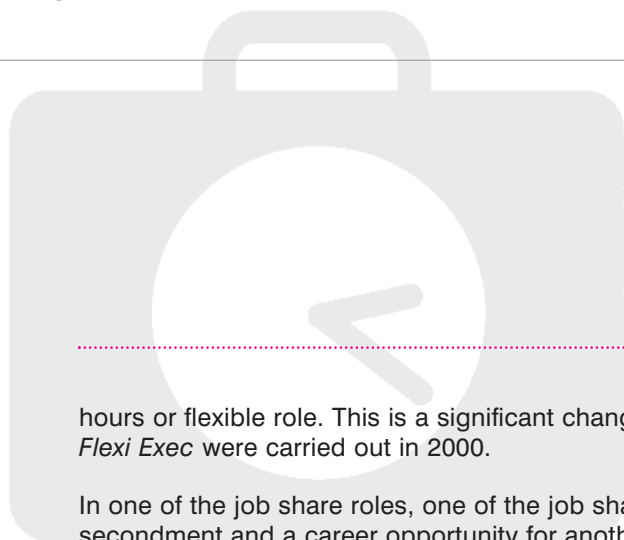
"At that stage I was promoted to director – the stage between partner and senior manager. I was promoted with the firm knowing I was working four days a week."

A number of individuals had received promotion since they had been working their reduced or flexible arrangement. This includes three who had been promoted to the board. One who is now a Marketing Director and is on the Company's Board said: "My working pattern wasn't discussed at interview because I felt confident that I would be able to do all the work involved in being a director."

In addition most participants said that they did not see that their working arrangement would affect their ability to be promoted further.

"I don't think that working a four day week has affected my promotion. Three days is very firmly seen as part-time, four days is different, because nobody expects you to be sitting at your desk five days a week – that's not the way this firm works."

Only one person mentioned that they did not feel they could progress to working at the next level in a reduced



hours or flexible role. This is a significant change from the situation encountered when the interviews for *Flexi Exec* were carried out in 2000.

In one of the job share roles, one of the job sharers is currently on maternity leave. This has opened up “a secondment and a career opportunity for another individual with the right experience, to move further up the ladder” while the permanent job holder is away.

Suitability of a role

“I think working flexibly is easier when you are at a senior level. You are driving the work strategically, but you are not actually doing it all.”

There is some recognition that it can be easier to work flexibly at more senior levels, but that this is very dependent on the job role. Three participants work in marketing or public relations roles and one of these recognised that “I think I have some luxury in having a strategic horizontal role where my thoughts are sometimes more important than what I do.”

Both lawyers in the study are partners in their firms and have negotiated their 10 per cent reduction in hours since becoming partners. They both made a similar point that “In some ways it might be easier to work flexibly the more senior you become. I think what’s quite easy for me now would have been much harder six or seven years ago when you are drafting documents.” However, one of them also commented that: “I was very careful to stress that there could equally be a shorter working week, for example a four day week, which would work in litigation. I didn’t want to prejudice anyone else who might want to work in that way.”

There was general agreement that some roles were best suited for particular forms of flexible and reduced hours working. “I couldn’t do my job in three days a week and I don’t think I could do it in four. But I can do it flexibly.”

Communication, availability and visibility

“The times I was suggesting I would take off would be when clients are away a lot of the time.”

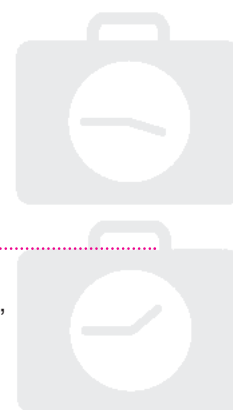
Decreased availability is often raised as a particular problem for senior managers working reduced and flexible arrangements. Participants in this study found different ways around this challenge. Some made it possible for their staff to contact them when there is an emergency, using phone or text messages. Others made a specific point of not being available on their ‘days off’ and were of the opinion that this empowers their direct reports to take decisions themselves and is a development opportunity – trust is clearly a key issue here.

“I haven’t worked a Friday; I have been true to myself in sixteen months. My phone and my Blackberry are turned off at midnight on a Thursday night. They are turned back on at 5am on Monday morning...”

“Visibility is an area you certainly need to focus on.” An individual who mainly works from home commented that: “you have to make certain that you are in regular contact with your colleagues, in particular senior management. Effective communication from a remote location is a challenge.” A number of these individuals are working for global companies and a high proportion of their business is carried out on the telephone and by email.

Performance measurement

“You are judged on your output and if you are not performing, it soon becomes apparent, wherever you are based.” All interviewees were measured on their outputs rather than their presence or visibility. “I also work some evenings from home or late in the office to make sure that I deliver against the agreed plan of activity. It is a very objectives-driven role, rather than needing to be there nine-thirty to five-thirty.”



“I have a mantra that somebody a long time ago set for me that says, ‘non-delivery is not an option’.”

Are there disadvantages?

Some downsides of flexible and reduced working at senior and managerial levels have been raised throughout the study, but overall very few. Clearly it is important the working arrangement fits the role and the individual, and that there is open communication:

- **“I can’t see any disadvantages and if I asked my manager, I don’t think he would see any. I have learnt to become more efficient – to prioritise and be more effective.”**
- **“As a senior executive you have a day of non client facing work a week and if you are part-time you can’t afford to spend a day doing that.”**
- **“I feel that we more than compensate for any lack of continuity that people might see as a potential disadvantage of a job share... for example when I had a bad car accident. If I had been full-time, the bank wouldn’t have anyone fulfilling the role, but as it was a job share they had my job share partner whilst I was off.”**

Background

One of the key findings of the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) investigation (*The Hidden Brain Drain*, 2005) was that many women and men who work part-time are working below their potential, an estimated one in five of the working population. Out of every 10 part-timers, five have previously held jobs requiring higher levels of skills or qualifications or more managerial or supervisory responsibility, and an additional three say they could easily work at a higher level. Research for the EOC in 2003-4 found that only four per cent of women part-time workers were managers or senior officials compared to 15 per cent of full-time working women who are managers or senior officials.

Much of the evidence heard by the Women and Work Commission (*Shaping a Fairer Future*, 2006) showed that women’s choices are, to some extent, constrained by the nature of the jobs available on a part-time basis. They found that in the professional and associated technical occupations in particular, working part-time can represent a barrier to promotion and progression. Only seven per cent of managers and senior officials work part-time compared to 33 per cent on those in administrative and secretarial occupations. Only eight per cent of those in skilled trades occupations work part-time compared to 52 per cent in sales and customer service jobs. Around 20 per cent of teachers and a third of nurses work part-time.

Many of the respondents to the Women and Work Commission’s call for evidence wanted more quality part-time work and flexible working at senior levels. Many women who gave evidence cited the lack of quality part-time work as being a major barrier to taking on senior roles. The Commission believes “that one of the main barriers is managers’ perceptions that some jobs – particularly management – cannot be done in this way.”

We would like to thank all the case study interviewees for so generously giving their time and sharing their experiences, and for their organisations for putting them forward for interview.

Case Study

Chris Ainslie

Chris Ainslie works for BT Global Services. He is Vice President of Sales for the Systems Integrators & Channel Partners Business, looking after a business turning over half a billion pounds per annum revenue. It is one of the main growth areas for the Global Services Brand. The job involves selling BT services through systems integrators. Chris looks after about 300 people. He works a compressed four-day week between Monday and Thursday.

Chris comments: "I joined BT straight into this role in November 2005. My span of control has increased since then. I was in charge of sales, but I now look after business management as well. The job is certainly a five day a week job, if not seven days a week. I am contracted to work four 10 hour days. Those days are fixed, so I always have Friday off. I joined Hewlett-Packard straight from University and spent 14 years working for them in IT. I then worked for Energis for two and a half years.

"Four and a half years ago my identical twin brother died. This gave me a very, very different slant on life – a real paradigm shift. This was a wake up call; I asked myself why I was working all the hours that God sends. I was probably working 80 hour weeks. I was very well thought of inside Energis and was going to be on the board before they sold to Cable and Wireless. I suddenly thought, 'this is not a dress rehearsal!' I asked myself, 'who do I really value and care about?' The answer was, 'my wife and my children.' That is why the four-day week became very important. It is the best thing I have ever done – it's brilliant.

"I was headhunted by BT and they were persistent in asking me to work for them. So I thought 'what is the most outrageous thing I can ask for?' I said the only way you can get me to leave Energis and come and work for BT is on a four-day week. We talked about it and negotiated on that for six months before I joined.

"The question was, could a job of this seniority be done on a four-day week? Even if we did agree to that, how would you ensure that you could maintain that, and was there any flexibility around it? I pushed very hard to see that in my contract of employment it states four 10 hour days. I was very specific about that, because I knew from my experience of the last 17 years in the IT and Comms industry that it is all-consuming – you can spend every single minute of the day working and you still wouldn't get the job done. BT was hugely creative in what they did. They really showed some innovation – even considering it in the first place was very brave. Three months after I joined, I moved jobs. My new boss was very good because he realised that as he was inheriting someone who works a four-day week, and he had to change his view and his business management of the situation. He used to have all his management meetings on Fridays, so when suddenly when one of his five vice presidents didn't work Fridays, he had to change his meeting days.

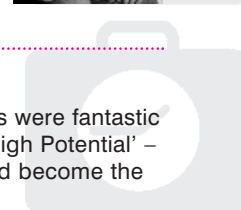
"Instead of thinking how would I make the one day off a

week work, I thought how would I make the four-day week work? I realised that the compromise would probably be that I would have to be away a lot in those four days, and would be working even harder, from early in the morning until very late in the evening, because of the sheer volume I am going to have to get through. It is a sacrifice worth making to then have three days off which I can then spend with my wife, and have real quality time with my children during the weekend. I can now play squash and go to the gym. It has changed a lot of things; I can support my son when he plays rugby on a Sunday. We go out and go bowling and go to the cinema, instead of mowing the lawn and digging the garden. It has completely changed family life and my work-life balance.

"Working a four-day week is tough. My management of myself has changed. I have to be immensely self-disciplined. Within the first two weeks of being here one of the presidents asked me to be at a meeting on a Friday. I thought 'I have made a big change in my career for very good reasons', so I went back and I said 'I am sorry, I don't work Fridays – I can do Monday or I can send a deputy'. There was a real pregnant pause and he said 'firstly, I didn't know you worked a four-day week and secondly I am sure we can arrange that', but it was very frosty. You have to keep with it and dig your heels in. I haven't worked a Friday; I have been true to myself in 16 months. My phone and my Blackberry are turned off at midnight on a Thursday night. They are turned back on at 5am on Monday morning and BT owns me for that time. They get a lot out of it, I do a lot of dinners with clients in the evening and I also attend breakfast meetings; I work back-to-back on those days.

"There needed to be quite a lot of justification to make it happen. It does show that BT are being flexible and innovative and focusing on how we attract talent. The real key here is that I would not have come and worked for BT if it were not for the arrangement of the four-day week. This is part of my passion about how to retain talent and motivate people. I believe there are four levers on which you motivate people: time, money, power and fame. Nowadays more companies should start thinking about the levers other than money. In fact money has always been the biggest lever, but for those people who are really talented, they generally are successful, and success brings money and wealth anyway. So in some instances those people, who are talented, have money already. But they are still the ones you want to retain and to progress and motivate to do well, and money doesn't necessarily hold the same allure as it did when they weren't successful. The last one is time, because money can't buy time. I value that more now than money. Someone came along recently and headhunted me. They offered me a lot of money to join them, but I said no because it wasn't a four-day week.

"I had many doubts; could I do this job in four days? I thought the only way I will be able to do this is if I have a very strong team around me and I don't know them - I've never met them, I don't know the calibre of them.



It was a leap of faith – but we are having the best year we have ever had. BT has a care survey every year – it allows everybody in the company to vote on how their managers are doing and it cascades. Since I've joined I've had three care surveys and in the first two I scored the highest within BT Global Services of any manager. It is interesting that even a four-day week VP can still score the highest. Most of them feel they are being led by someone who is being innovative, and we are being successful. There were some problems to begin with and I had to address those problems very quickly. This isn't about an easy life, this is doing the same job but working three times as hard in the time I have available. People now know I am equally committed, if not more and equally productive, if not more. That has slowly changed people's opinions and the results show it too. It's proving beneficial because motivation increases.

"I now have 11 direct reports, and these people are exceptionally talented. If you are working a four-day week, then you need some very good deputies who can share the challenges and the responsibilities that inevitably come on a Friday when I am not here. More key to this, is that I have the best PA that I have ever worked with in my life – she enables me to do this. On a Friday she manages the requests, the emails and the diary so it doesn't conflict and she fields a lot to my deputies, so they can keep the ship going in the right direction. It is surprising how much can wait until Monday. When you boil things down there aren't that many things that can't wait 24 hours.

"Quite a lot of thought went into which day I should have off, because Mondays would be very different – you'd be behind yourself all week. My working practice in relation to emails has changed considerably. I now don't copy people into things and I will only touch everything once. You make decisions far quicker without so much information, so your judgement is used more, rather than your logic. My working practice has become much sharper. All the time I know that I haven't got time. In the morning I evaluate the top five things I have to get done. My deputies didn't know I was working a four-day week before I joined, so I had to educate them. We did it by being very, very open. I am part of the team, I am not here as a slacker. That same top team is still there. I think they are quite vocal about supporting this. One of my direct reports works from home on Fridays. I am sure a lot more people work from home on a Friday than they ever have before. We are meeting all our business objectives as well as our care objectives. There are times when they have to deputise for me on a Friday, so they get increased responsibility. If there is a meeting of a senior layer they do it, and they get that exposure and I think are thankful for it – they get increased visibility. They get the ability to use their judgements because they are asked to make decisions that would normally fall to me. It stretches them and gives them a bit more of a challenge, a bit more responsibility. They have the ability to contact me at any time during the four working days.

"In the first three months we were feeling our way and initial feedback was very good. Getting top jobs from the

outside is very unusual. The business results were fantastic in my area. I have been voted onto 'Rapid High Potential' – those people who could go further and could become the next president.

"I am employed in a customer-facing role, so I go to speak to CEOs in other companies, and it is one of the most talked about things – 'how do you work a four-day week?' That stimulates a conversation that is very, very beneficial to BT; the company is seen by that client as innovative and progressive. They are attracting people who are doing a four-day week and it creates a buzz.

"I am convinced that BT gets more out of me doing a four-day week. I am that much more committed because I know I've got so much to achieve in the time available. Every now and then if you are working a five-day week you might have an off-day – I can't afford an off-day. The benefit for the customers is that they see BT changing and see that this is not the BT that they thought it was. It is subtle things like that that make a difference in perception.

"I can't extol how good it is when I wake up on Friday and I can take my kids to school, I can take my wife out for lunch, I can play squash when I want, I can get to the gym, I can get all the jobs done. Then at the weekend when the kids come home, I can pick them up from school on a Friday and I can go and see them play rugby and football for the school."

My deputies didn't know I was working a four-day week before I joined, so I had to educate them. We did it by being very, very open. I am part of the team, I am not here as a slacker.

Case Study

Amanda Brown

Amanda Brown works for first direct, the UK's leading direct bank and a division of HSBC. first direct employs over 3,400 people at its sites in Leeds and Scotland. Amanda is the bank's Public Relations Manager, based in the Marketing Department in Leeds. She works a 30 hour week spread over five days, with the option to work from home one day a week.

Amanda comments: "I started working at first direct as a full-time Public Relations Manager 12 years ago. When my first child was born in 1998 I returned to work and continued as a full-time employee. However two years later and pregnant with my second child, I felt that I wanted to spend more time at home with my children and in 2000 I left after my maternity leave.

"In 2005 it was time to start contributing to the household income again and I was lucky enough to be able to rejoin first direct in my old job. However I now had three children and was uncertain of how my whole home and work balance would work. I soon realised that I was trying to do the impossible, working full-time and juggling three children and their needs.

"I had discussed my concerns about working full-time with the human resources team when I first returned and they were extremely supportive. I soon realised that full-time was too much but that by working a 30 hour contract over 5 days I could sort my hours out to suit both the business and my home life. I discussed this with the bank and they were happy with the arrangement.

"I am also able to work from home. I can log into my work computer remotely and my desk phone diverts to my Blackberry. You can easily become a virtual office. It doesn't really matter where I am, I can access my work, and I am contactable.

"I drop the children off at school and pick them up two days a week. I also have the flexibility to adjust the days I leave early, which is great as the children's needs change from term to term. However I'm aware that I put pressure on myself to work full-time but no one makes me feel guilty for leaving early on my pick-up days.

"first direct is a family friendly company to work for. All employees have flexible contracts and in fact 75 per cent of staff work flexible hours. This is a lot to do with the nature of the business but there are many people outside the call centre who work non-traditional hours. Some people compress their full week into four days or three days, others work split shifts or part-time depending on their needs and the needs of the business.

"There are subsidised on-site crèches at both our sites. In fact the one in Leeds is the UK's largest on-site workplace crèche with spaces for over 350 children. These are a great bonus for people coming to work with young children as they feel secure knowing their children are nearby. We have an ironing service, valet and garage services, a masseur

and a concierge to list just a few of the services aimed at helping with time consuming tasks which would normally need to be done outside working hours.

"My responsibilities are to create media interest for the brand – encouraging the press to write about the bank favourably. It could be anything from writing a press release on a new mortgage to involvement in a new art sponsorship.

"I think the main benefit to the company of allowing me to work flexibly, is that they employ someone who has a great deal of experience of working with the brand and culture, and who is prepared to be available outside traditional working hours. It also speaks volumes about the business itself when you are talking to journalists. I often speak to journalists who are also working mothers and need to juggle the needs of their family and work. It makes them realise that first direct is a good employer.

"The bank also gets dedication from me. If there is a crisis or a big story breaking, I leave my phone on because I am aware that I am the route for journalists to learn about what's going on. I can be remote and join in conference calls with people who are in the office. I do take calls at 10pm or 11pm if necessary – I am quite happy to do that. If first direct is prepared to respect my needs for a work-life balance with three children, I absolutely respect that the job I have means that I might be needed to work outside my usual hours. The benefit of being able to work remotely is that I can continue when the children have gone to bed.

"I'm certain that you do as much work in four days as you would do in five – you just condense it because you are very focused at what you are doing. I'm not sure that many people realise I work reduced hours although I find myself making a point of telling them, just in case they see me walking in at odd times. I think you assume that a PR role, and the only such role in Leeds, should be a full-time position. The senior management team that I work with are aware that essentially I work a four-day week, but I am in five days so that I can fit in with my children. There has never been a time when they couldn't get hold of me.

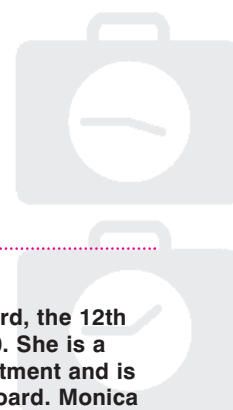
"I am assessed on the work that I do – the fact that I work reduced hours is not an issue. As with any position in a company it's your contribution to the business that counts.

"At first direct, working flexibly is not a barrier to being promoted. There are quite a few managers, both men and women, who work reduced hours and flexible shifts. I do know of quite a few couples who both work for the bank and split their working week in order to provide all the childcare they need between them!

"I report into both the HSBC press office in London and the marketing department at first direct. I'm the only working mum in the press office, so I am a bit of an anomaly. But they are great, and it's not an issue that I work flexible hours.

Case Study

Monica Burch



“I think that unless you are prepared to work closely with a business to reach a mutually beneficial work pattern it won't work for either party. The main benefits to me are that I can hold down a good challenging job which I enjoy. I feel I am very lucky – it means I can drop my children off every morning at school which is so important to me. My children are nine, seven and four.

“It's important for companies to work hand in hand with the employee seeking flexible working, and for them to respect that the person wants to do their job properly and well. I think that first direct is a great example of how being able to work shifts which suit an individual's life brings huge benefits to a company. We are renowned for our customer service and by ensuring that our staff are looked after and happy in their work lives, they have the energy to help our customers in a way we would expect.

“The huge emphasis the bank places on ensuring its people are happy at work, ensures that they are going to get the best out of their staff. From my experience I think it is so important that people are able to have open conversations about what both sides need and expect from the relationship. So often these days, red tape and political correctness prevents us from doing so.

“I've worked for a number of companies in my working career and none has come close to the great working experience I have had with first direct.”

If first direct is prepared to respect my needs for a work-life balance with three children, I absolutely respect that the job I have means that I might be needed to work outside my usual hours.

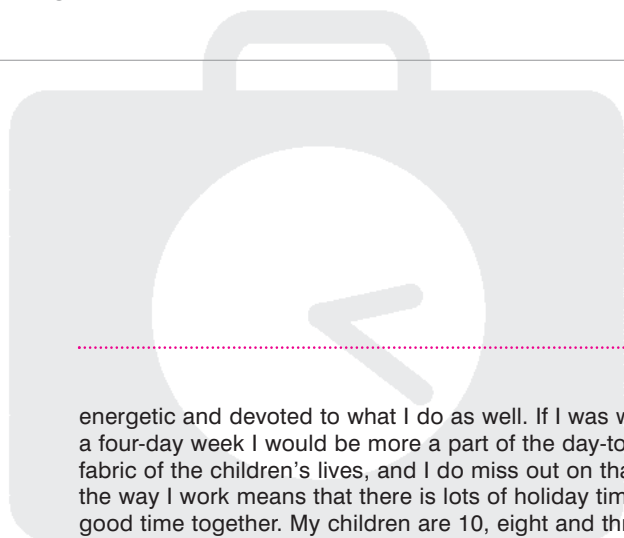
Monica Burch works for Addleshaw Goddard, the 12th largest law firm in the UK, employing 1,300. She is a Partner in the Commercial Litigation Department and is also a member of the firm's Governance Board. Monica joined Theodore Goddard as a trainee in 1988, leaving briefly for 18 months in 1997 to work in New York. She rejoined the firm in 1998, became a partner in 1999 and then a partner in the merged firm. She works on a 90 per cent contract.

Monica comments: “I continued working full-time after my first two children and returned to work in January 2004 after my third child. At that point I thought about what might suit both me and the business. I proposed that I came back with some extra unpaid holiday. Partner holiday is 32 days, and I requested a further 22 days. This is a reduction of 10 per cent from full-time and is the equivalent of working a nine-day fortnight. I asked if the days could all be grouped together. Broadly, I proposed taking three weeks over the summer holidays, a week at every half term, two weeks at Easter and two weeks at Christmas. This arrangement left some other days that I could take off at convenient times. The logic for this was that court holidays broadly mirror school holidays. Trials lasting for a number of weeks don't take place in Court vacation. The proposal was agreed and I have worked in this way ever since January 2004. There haven't been any problems. My starting point was that with three children, I didn't think I could strike the right balance carrying on working full-time. In terms of my specialism, I thought this particular working pattern would be the least disruptive to the business.

“Also, the times I would take off, essentially school holidays, meant that clients are away a lot of the time. However, I was very careful to stress that there could equally be a shorter working week, for example a four-day week, which would work in litigation. I didn't want to prejudice anyone else who might want to work in that way. However, from my point of view, I thought this suited everybody concerned.

“We are a client-facing business – a service industry – and availability is a key issue. We operate in teams, so if we have a case or transaction there is a partner-led team. In terms of organisation I simply tell clients I am going on holiday in the same way as anyone else would take holiday. Some clients who I work closely with know that I work in a flexible way and some don't. Technology means you can stay in touch. Sometimes another partner will look after things in the way that I might if a partner was on holiday. At other times I monitor and am available in the same way that I would be if I took the 'usual' holiday entitlement.

“On a normal day I will get home at 7pm, having left home at 7.30am. On average there are two evenings a week with client entertainment or firm functions, so I have a full-on working week, the same as others who work full-time. There are stresses because of the hours and after hours, both working and entertaining. But then I know, for example, that I've a week coming up at half-term and I've two weeks coming up at Easter. It makes me happier and more enthusiastic,



energetic and devoted to what I do as well. If I was working a four-day week I would be more a part of the day-to-day fabric of the children's lives, and I do miss out on that. But the way I work means that there is lots of holiday time and good time together. My children are 10, eight and three.

"We are part of a competitive market place for talent. The ability to keep people is crucial, because of the cost to the business. The comments I have received have been positive in terms of how I work. On the basis of the presumption that the firm wanted to keep me, then they have kept me. I'm very happy with the way I work. I think I am more productive and that I work smarter. I think that I am fresh and energetic and put everything into my work, and at the same time being able to balance my family. Whilst there is of course a 10 per cent reduction in fee-earning time, my role isn't just a fee-earning role – it is a business-getting role. As a firm we are good at thinking about different ways of working for everybody, and certainly over the last three years it is becoming much more part of the culture. It is seen very positively.

"I do see myself carrying on in this way. In the market place law firms have a very rigid sense of what flexible working means. By its nature it is not a rigid thing at all – there are different ways of doing things. There are formal arrangements and informal arrangements. It doesn't have to be (although there is no reason why it shouldn't be) a four-day week. Our business is the business of helping clients solve their problems, and that is what we are supposed to be good at. If this issue were presented in terms of looking at the cost to the business of retaining and recruiting talent, there are very compelling business reasons, but I also contend that it is the right thing to do. We ought to be meritocracies, we ought to be doing our best to have our young people enthused, coming through and feeling empowered to be able to do things in the way that they want to do, both male and female. Younger people, in particular are thinking, 'I want something different, I want some flexibility, I want some work-life balance'. If as a business you are working in a dynamic way it may be possible that we can't do X, but perhaps Y might work.

"I am Diversity Champion. The firm has very good policies and it is a case of communicating these and seeing them very positively as part of the fabric of the firm. We have people who work compressed hours and who work a traditional four or three and a half day week, as well as people who work from home on a regular basis. It has been about publicising that, talking to groups and getting management buy-in. Our senior partner very much supports this approach, which is a tremendous help because the business case came from the top.

"In 2005 this really took off. There were very helpful coincidences in that clients started asking about our diversity policies and actions. They were asking: 'Where are your statistics, what is your gender split, what is your ethnicity split and what are you doing to improve these?' This added to the business case and was very helpful

indeed. Addleshaw Goddard is a growing and aspirational business. We need to attract and retain the best people; we like to think of ourselves as innovative, dynamic and grasping opportunities. That's really helped, as people are more open minded and prepared to embrace different ideas. We have male partners who work flexibly and male associates, although the balance tends to be in favour of women who have children. We have associates who work three or four-day weeks. We have had associates working that pattern who have become junior partners and then senior partners. So we have had people coming through who have been promoted whilst working flexibly. It can work well, although the work pattern does depend on the specialism to a certain extent. This communication and discussion process has meant that partners have appreciated thinking more about the team, and thinking about the different ways they are working. It is important that other members in a team are not feeling that X is leaving now and they are left with the work. There is recognition that other people might have times in the week when they might want to go early or have a day off. If you are in a meeting all day then your secretary will say to other clients that you can't take a call and that is accepted. If you are not in that day there is exactly the same issue. If there are urgent matters, you might have to come out of a client meeting – if you are away that day you will take a client call and communicate in exactly the same way. However to succeed there needs to be the mentality and culture to think that if someone isn't there on Monday, don't schedule the client in for Monday unless it is necessary; it's about having the awareness.

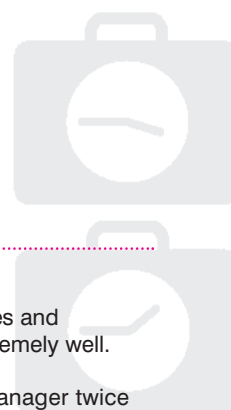
"We are in the Times 'Top 50 places where women want to work'. We are the only law firm featured in that this year.

"I think flexible working is very compelling for businesses – it is a different mindset. To think about working in different ways is a positive and I do believe there is real productivity gain. I think it is almost moot, that happy workers work well. It's not all about gender, but it's a lot about gender and about people with families. Don't be blinkered. If something isn't going to work particularly well, then think about what might work and how to do it. Think really hard about the business benefits, because there are business benefits, and it is a long term gain. It takes time to embed in the culture, but I think it can be done. Don't say no, say how.

"It is important that the teams are not all working full-time. I have two people who work flexibly in my team. You can't be a person who works in a way that relies on everybody else working full-time. The people that you work with do benefit, you are more prepared to give them the lead. It is easier to work the way I do at my level, but if you report to the right person, the sort of person prepared to think outside the traditional, anything is possible!"

Case Study

Sue Cook and Debbie Feldhaus



Sue Cooke works for Yorkshire Water, a Bradford-based water supply and treatment utility company employing over 2,200 people. Sue is Production Asset Manager in the company's Water Business Unit, and is based in Leeds. Her role involves responsibility for the long-term stability of the company's assets. She job shares the role with Debbie Feldhaus, who is currently on maternity leave.

Sue comments: "I started working for Yorkshire Water in 1999 as a Distribution Asset Manager. I worked full-time in this role for approximately five years and I was responsible for a team of about eight people.

"I took my first maternity leave of five months in 2002. There wasn't an opportunity in Yorkshire Water at that point in time for me to reduce my hours, so I came back full-time in the same role. I was passionate about my job and thoroughly enjoyed it. I didn't really know if I wanted to work part-time or not.

"In 2003 my boss took long-term leave and I was seconded to his role for a year. I was responsible for both distribution and production in one of four areas. At the end of 2004 I left to have my second child. I knew I wanted to come back part-time. My first child was then two, and I did feel that I hadn't seen enough of her. It was a very, very full-time job, and I couldn't imagine a job share arrangement. I did say to our director and my manager at the time that I wanted to come back part-time.

"It was important for me to find a place within the organisation, and I didn't mind what level it was at. I said that when I came back from maternity leave I didn't want the same level of pressure and responsibility. They said that they would do their best to accommodate me, and they were overwhelmingly flexible. I came back in July 2005 as a Strategic Asset Engineer, which was a level lower, because I wanted less responsibility and accountability day-to-day. They also allowed me not to be on standby.

"Debbie Feldhaus had a baby six weeks after I had mine. She mentioned to the director that she would love to work part-time. He said 'could we not accommodate you? Is there no other manager who has been at your level who could work part-time with you?' He believed that Yorkshire Water should be able to accommodate Debbie at that level in her job.

"She gave me a call and asked if I would consider doing a job share with her to allow both of us to have a part-time role. I said I would. I had worked with Debbie before, and we had a very good working relationship. I had confidence in her.

"Our director asked us 'would you like to take on this challenge together?', and we said 'yes'. We then went away and worked out how we would go about it; how to split the role to make each of us accountable for particular areas, whilst maintaining an awareness of other areas. We came up with an excellent strategy where I would be responsible for performance elements of production assets, and reservoir safety. Debbie would look after other aspects of production –

capital development, promoting capital schemes and prioritising our capital spend. It worked out extremely well.

"We met with the line manager and the HR manager twice before it happened, and they were very impressed by our proposals. Before Debbie came back from maternity leave I visited her at home a few times to talk about it – I was already back at work at that point. My expertise and experience fitted well with Debbie's. We started the job share role in December 2005.

"Debbie looked after 13 people working in two teams; Asset Projects and Asset Engineering. I had 10 people working in two teams, one responsible for how we carry out reservoir safety inspections and manage capital work, and the other for asset performance. It was very straightforward for us to split it in that way. We were each responsible for the line management of our two teams. It worked out very well. Debbie worked Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays and I worked Thursdays and Fridays. Debbie did three fifths and I did two fifths of the full-time role (which is 37 hours) – this suited me very well.

"We are very flexible and we swap days but we could be in on the same day some weeks. Sometimes I work a Tuesday or a Wednesday and Debbie works a Friday. We manage our weeks according to where we are needed. We use email and mobile phones to communicate, mainly by text messages. If I ask 'are you free to talk now?' I might get a text back 'no, – feeding Henry – once settled will call later.' We also make lots of notes for every handover on Fridays and Wednesdays. Debbie leaves me a list of tasks or urgent things – 'hot topics'. Then we have a handover electronically; anything that we can't do electronically we discuss on the telephone. Modern technology is critical for us. We usually speak on the phone about once a week.

"We always have an awareness of what the other is doing, but not detailed knowledge. The most important thing is to make sure your diary is up to date as far in advance as possible. The four people who work for us are very, very capable. They usually have a good degree of background knowledge of the operational situation, so we are able to brief effectively. We have a joint team meeting with our four managers once a month and cover 'hot topics', so everybody is aware of everything else that is going on in the team. Every quarter we try to get the whole team there.

"We have formal quarterly one-to-one reviews with our managers, but we also try and meet with them as often as we can just to see that everything is okay. Debbie and I talk to each other about carrying out the quarterly reviews for our direct reports -it's not just their contribution, performance and objectives that are assessed, it is their values and behaviours. We haven't had any problems. I am happy to take calls at home, because at this level I strongly believe that not only should Yorkshire Water be very flexible – so should I. I feel it is a privilege to be part-time and I am very lucky because I job share with Debbie.



“I would say that the foundation that Debbie and I had from working together historically gave us both the confidence to move into this role together. That gave us the trust – we have worked together as a team. Everybody says Debbie and I complement each other very well as managers.

“Debbie and I have experience in different areas of the business. She has a very strong chemical process engineering background and I have a civil engineering background. In addition we undertake standby; Debbie does Sundays, Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays and I do Thursdays Fridays and Saturdays. So retaining two qualified experienced managers and allowing them this period of time in their lives where they want a different work-life balance is a big benefit to the company.

“The HR manager has been extremely supportive. She said, ‘you are our future, there is no way we would let you go – not willingly – you are in our succession plans!’ You don’t take for granted that, as a senior manager, you will get a part-time post. You think ‘I would love to work part-time but I don’t know how they will accommodate me.’

“I do sometimes think I am not here enough, not because of anything specifically – it’s the challenge of having an awareness of everything that’s going on. When you work part-time you do try to cram an awful into a short period of time, and you tend to be a little less involved socially at work.

“When people around the business see what we do, it gives others the confidence to ask about their own individual working arrangements. Within a commercial environment I think it is quite difficult sometimes to accommodate part-time working. Yorkshire Water encourages diversity, so managers do now look at possibilities in more detail – how can we do this, can we overlap people etc? Even though Debbie and I have four discrete teams, they are very flexible in order to make sure all the areas of business need are dealt with, in accordance with priorities. So we are a very fluid team, but the team are very good – accommodating and flexible.

“Our manager carries out one-to-one reviews with us individually because we have our own objectives for our own areas. We share budgets and financial and team objectives, but it is one role, so whatever objectives Debbie gets, I get – we don’t have an issue with that. The quarterly one-to-ones are also to find out how am I as an individual, and to discuss development needs. We have never had a review together, but we do have business meetings together with our boss.

“Debbie is currently on maternity leave for a year. When she knew she was pregnant we had an off-site meeting and talked about different options. These included me working full-time or seeking another opportunity for a while. Our preferred option was to find somebody in the business with asset management experience who could be seconded to the role two days a week. I would then do three days. It would provide a secondment and a career opportunity for somebody with the right experience to move further up the ladder. So that’s the proposal we put to our boss and the HR manager, and that’s what happened.

“I am now job sharing with a Yorkshire Water colleague, Rod, while Debbie is on maternity leave. For ease of transition when she comes back we felt it was important that I have more visibility about what was going on in her absence. In practice this means I am now working three days a week until Debbie comes back, probably in October 2007. Debbie has said that she wants to come back three days a week and I will then move back down to two.

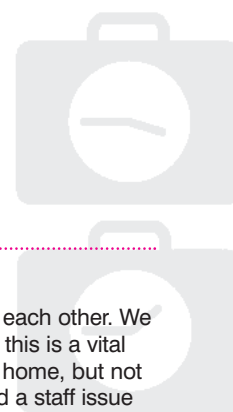
“While Rod is sharing with me, we have split the job differently. He has engineering and performance and I have capital and reservoir safety, which means I have taken on a slightly larger responsibility. Two days a week I see a lot less people, but with three days a week I have been a lot more visible, as well as the fact that I have changed roles and responsibilities.

“Rod still works full-time overall. He is working three days a week on strategic projects, which means that he can be a mentor to the person who has moved full-time into his role. It is about personalities and how you trust the person you work with – it’s about having that open relationship. I don’t think Debbie and I feel this precludes us from anything else in the future. Yorkshire Water is passionate about individuality and inclusion, which means accommodating people’s work-life balance, as long as it works well for the individual and the business.

When people around the business see what we do, it gives others the confidence to ask about their own individual working arrangements.

Case Study

Laura Doig and Ashley Van-Hoeven



Laura Doig and Ashley Van-Hoeven share the job of Store Manager at the Tesco Store, South Road, Dundee. The store employs 130 people and takes approximately £14.5 million a year. Laura has worked for Tesco for 12 years and Ashley for 11.

Laura had been deputy manager for about a year before she took maternity leave in August 2005. She had completed her training for a store manager role, and was ready for a placement, had she not taken maternity leave at this point. Ashley had been personnel manager at the same store and was due to return from maternity leave at the same time as Laura in the autumn of 2006.

Laura comments: “When I was on maternity leave I had requested to come back on a job sharing basis as the deputy manager. At that stage I didn’t think that a job share role at store manager level would be an option.

Ashley continues: “I was hoping to be able to job share within the personnel manager role. I received a telephone call saying that Laura had requested a job share post and that they were going to run a trial in the store manager role. The store director thought it would be an opportunity to trial job sharing for a year within our region, as he knew that Head Office were looking at flexible working opportunities.

“It was a case of being in the right place at the right time. We were told that we had to cover the same working week as a full-time store manager and we would have to do some early and some late shifts. The ball was put into our court to work out the details. The contract is 39 hours, but to launch the job share they initially allowed us to cover a six-day week. This was so we could get our processes up and running, and work out how we would communicate. We thought it would work best if we didn’t have fixed days, so we work a two-week rota. One of us works Monday, Tuesday and Saturday one week and the other works Wednesday and Friday or Thursday and Friday. The next week we change over. We worked out the detail based on the needs of the business and what we thought would be practical. We each have three days off in a row and this has worked really well.

“It was agreed that we would be jointly responsible for the key performance indicators for the store and that is what we would be measured on. We have 11 direct reports (line managers) and we divide them between us, six and five. We have one-to-ones with them on a weekly basis. After a 12 week period we change managers, so we each see them all. We have conversations between ourselves about the performance of every one of our managers, so we are both kept informed of how they are performing. We each give them their objectives for the week, but together we manage them, to see that they achieve those objectives. When we are completing their six monthly and end of year reviews we overlap a day to do them together. We keep their agreed objectives in a folder that we can both refer to. We had a couple of incidents where one asked one of us one thing and then asked the other the same thing to see if they got a different response. But because we were communicating so well we cottoned on to it instantly and we addressed the issue.

“The key is that we communicate very well with each other. We have a small dictaphone and leave messages – this is a vital link. We do sometimes telephone each other at home, but not as much now we have the dictaphone. If we had a staff issue that you couldn’t leave a dictaphone message about, we would have a word at home.

“When we were starting the job share role the company had begun to look at flexible working and job sharing, and we received a ‘Briefing on job sharing’ from Head Office. There was a pack with personality tests and ways to find out if you were likely to be suitable job sharing partners. Because we had worked together for so long we didn’t need to do this, but there was the support available.

“We are very similar in the way we communicate and our thought processes are much the same – that’s why our job share works so well. If we were completely different and we approached communication really differently, there could be challenges. That initial work, finding out if people are suitable to job share, is vital. We are measured on key performance indicators and those can’t be split up. Because it’s a job share we have to deliver them as a unit, so if our attendance figures are poor, that’s for both of us to work on, it’s not for one or the other.

“Our first quarter in the job share was the strongest quarter in the entire year in this store. This improvement in key performance indicators speaks volumes for how we work together. From a staff point of view this store traditionally has high absence figures; this has significantly reduced since we started the job share. In our staff survey ‘Viewpoint’, held in January we were in the top performing stores in our group. We are reviewed individually by our Store Director and we have just had our six-monthly review. He visits the store every four weeks or so and sees either one of us. Our behaviour and leadership styles are reviewed individually, but our key performance indicators are reviewed as a unit. We get separate written feedback which we show to each other. He and the Group HR manager were positive in our review and thought that it was working well. They asked staff for feedback and have had no negatives.

“The feedback our management team give us is that they don’t get any contradictory messages from us – we both say the same thing. When we are here we have energy and enthusiasm. Sometimes when you are full-time and you have a hard week this can get you down. We are fresh every time we come in and we are happy because we don’t feel our families are suffering for us coming to work. You are still able to carry on with your career; you don’t feel you’ve taken a backward step because you’ve had a family. That must reflect in our leadership. If you are happy and balanced you are keeping that level-headedness all the time. You also have someone to share and kick ideas around with, and to share any frustrations. The store manager role can be quite a lonely one; all the decisions fall to you and it is good to be able to reassure each other about things and get another opinion on something. Everybody wins – we win because we are getting balance in life and the company are getting so much more.



“Tesco benefits from our energy and commitment. It is a very, very challenging job. That energy really drives the business forward from a store point of view. Another advantage is having two thinking styles to move the store forward. Even though we are similar, we have our own individual strengths and weaknesses. If Laura had been awarded a job share role as a deputy manager, that would have been a waste of her talent, in that we are both capable of undertaking a bigger role.

“The store is open seven days a week. One of us is always in on a Saturday and between us we have to cover 13 Sundays and bank holidays. When we are not here, the personnel manager or a store manager ‘designate’ is accountable. If one of us is on holiday or off sick, the other will still be here, so from that point of view it is more flexible than with one store manager.

“We have our store manager’s meeting once every four weeks and we both attend. This is an overlap day, so for that week we only have four-day cover in the store. It is a full day meeting and it would be very difficult to report back in detail. Training and development often happens in that meeting too. We also have a group support team. If we were full-time then as individuals we would see more of the team, but as it is, we see them between us.

“We don’t do as much networking within our store manager team as we might if we were full-time. Because you are in less, you are so focused on what you are delivering in the store you don’t phone up many colleagues. We probably use each other more for support.

“We have an overlap once every four weeks, usually for a whole day, but sometimes for a half day. We do our budgets and forecasts and go through our key performance indicators and plan for the next period. We are not rigid. We try and do it once every period, but if we have had the store manager’s meeting we may have covered things there. The key to a successful job share is the matching of the personalities; if you get that right there shouldn’t be any fear about it. It is also important to set up how you are going to communicate on a day-to-day and week-to-week basis.

“There is no place for egos – we don’t compete against one another. We share the same goals and objectives and that has to be the priority in terms of making it work – we are quite strict about this. Neither of us would ever let one of the team know if there was something one of us had done that we weren’t happy about – we would have a discussion with one another about it. Traditionally in our role there can be quite a lot of egos. From a company perspective it’s about viewing it as being two people for the price of one. I can’t see any job that couldn’t be job shared. Two people that have different ideas come up with something different. The advantages far outweigh any of the disadvantages. It’s about retaining people within your business. After my second baby I would have seriously considered a move out of Tesco, and I wouldn’t have wanted to do that.

This is a big culture change for Tesco. It can be hard for some people to see these changes coming in and imagine how they will work. Managers who are nearing retirement age could also be attracted to a job share role. Some store managers have said ‘I hope this works because I would like to do it.’ The percentage of store managers who are female is on the increase and job sharing opportunities could help to increase this further. In our group there are only three females store managers out of 24. A lot of the store managers have told us that their views have totally changed in the time the job share role has been in place -so we have won them round. They weren’t very open to what we were doing to begin with, but now they are.”

That initial work, finding out if people are suitable to job share, is vital.

Case Study

Sara Halden-Evans



Sara Halden-Evans works for Britannia Building Society, which is part of the Britannia Group. She is based at the Head Office in Leek, Staffordshire, where about 2,000 people are employed. She is an Operational Risk Business Partner responsible for the training, support and management of eight risk champions. She works 30 hours a week, compressing these into three and a half days.

Sara comments: “I have worked for Britannia for just over 10 years, and over that time I have held a number of roles, including some on a part-time basis. I was working in a business team when I took eight months maternity leave, returning in May 2003. I was in contact with my manager throughout my maternity leave because we were going through a big change and I was coming back into a different role. I was clear with them that I would like to come back to work, but not on a full-time basis. At that time, nobody I worked with worked less than full-time.

“I don’t think my manager really knew how it was going to work. He said: ‘I have some reservations over somebody working part-time. What if something happens on the days you are not here?’ But he said, ‘come back and we will work through it – I am sure we can find the right balance.’ So I returned to a new project management and research role in Group Strategy, working three days a week.

“At the time the key issue was around communication and co-ordination – ensuring that people knew where I was. It helped that my manager understood my work ethic and how I work; he knew that I would make the best of it. At that time all my colleagues were men, but I don’t think they had an issue with it. I did feel I had to prove my worth – but that didn’t come from my line management or my colleagues – it came from me.

“I was conscious that I had been very focussed on my career and climbing the career ladder. It wasn’t that I wasn’t focussed on that anymore, but I think there is a view that if you work part-time you don’t take your job as seriously as somebody who works full-time. However, that was never an impression I was given by my employer. The company is now very proactive about getting people to come back and reduce their hours – but at that time it wasn’t so apparent. Britannia actively encourages men and women to use the Mutual Preferences policy to adapt their working patterns to suit, for example reduced hours, compressed weeks, late start and so on.

“If I hadn’t been given the opportunity to come back part-time I would not have returned – I wanted a work-life balance. The biggest advantage for me was the opportunity to continue with my career. The company have invested a lot in me over the years – I am a qualified financial advisor (and have a law degree). I continued in that role for two years, when I had another baby in June 2004 and took maternity leave again. When I returned in October 2005, I was working two and half days a week on a six month secondment within Compliance, I was asked to do this based on my knowledge of the business. After that, I wanted a change and I looked at the jobs available on the internal recruitment site on our intranet. There was a compliance risk specialist role advertised as full-time. I approached the team

manager and asked if she was willing to consider the role being carried out on a part-time basis. I had a number of conversations with her establishing what the role entailed. Then both of us went away and initially thought that it couldn’t work on a part-time basis – it would need to be a job share. The key thing is that you need to think creatively about how a particular job role could be done in a different way. In the end we worked it out and made it work on a purely part-time basis. At the same time I took on a one day a week role working for my business leader as a risk champion. Working half a day didn’t work for me, so I worked four days one week and three days the next, which worked really well – I felt that I did get the best of both worlds.

“I don’t think there were any disadvantages, but you have to communicate very transparently about what you are doing and what you are getting paid for – communication is the key. Everybody needs to know when you are in the office and when you are out and when they can expect to be able to contact you. I do say to people, ‘you can contact me on my day off on my mobile phone, or leave a message and I will call you back.’ I think that is reasonable when you have a role where sometimes decisions have to be made straight away. That is part of a two-way relationship. Britannia gives me a lot and I want to give them a lot back.

“I always knew that before I left on a Wednesday night I had to ensure that my trainees had adequate work to keep them going and that they clearly understood the objective of their work. If they had any issues with anything my direct line manager was available as a point of contact, or someone else within the team was available and they knew that they might get that call. You have to manage people’s expectations about when you are available and when you are not. There were benefits from the fact that I undertook two different roles at the same time. It enabled me to bring a different perspective to each of those roles, and I was disciplined with my time.

“During a recent restructure I was approached about an opportunity available in the operational risk business partner team – again it was advertised as a full-time vacancy. I had considered looking externally, but because of the benefits of the flexibility available here, I think I would be foolish to look elsewhere at the moment – Britannia takes it seriously. I see more and more women and men working compressed weeks and reduced hours. It is important – from board level down. The company actively promotes its policies and processes in place, known as ‘Mutual Preferences’, which make it very open and transparent.

“I approached the department manager and said I would be interested in applying for this role, but not on a full-time basis. They agreed to review how the role could work on a part-time basis. Again nobody else in the team worked part-time. I was successful in the interview process and then negotiated how it could work in detail with my new line manager. This is a more senior role for me. Yesterday was my first day and I am now working three full days – Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday from 8.15am until 5.30pm and Friday from 8.30am until 1pm. I chair a community art group and having Thursdays off is quite important to me.

Case Study

Carolyn Frost

“My role now involves the training and support of eight risk champions. I observe them, give them feedback, review their performance and how they are developing within their role. These are typical line management responsibilities although I am not responsible for their day-to-day management. If any major risks were identified I would approach their business leader to ensure that they understood the significance and would formulate ways of addressing them.

“There are currently two other people undertaking the same role as me, so there is always a point of contact within the team. My employer and my internal customers within the business benefit from the extended hours when they can contact somebody. I think you have to be more creative than somebody who works full-time. I think you need to understand what your employer is going to get out of it. If you are the right person for the job, then you shouldn't necessarily let the hours be a barrier. If I was required to do something on my day off then I am more than happy to do that and swap my days around. I think it's good if you can be flexible and contactable.

“You don't have as much time in your working week, but I will sometimes take a lunch break with colleagues from different areas, so I can keep a broad understanding of what is going on right across the business. Managers and business leaders do approach me to take on some of those additional things that give you an extra dimension to your work. You have to be realistic and sometimes I say no.

“Sometimes there is an expectation that you will do as much as someone working full-time, but I have never really seen that as an issue. I don't think people necessarily see me as a part-time worker, I know I am not here some days, but when I am away people still email me. You become creative about your use of time and you are much more efficient because you have to be – that is a benefit to the organisation in that it makes you more efficient.”

I did feel I had to prove my worth – but that didn't come from my line management or my colleagues – it came from me.

Carolyn Frost works for Royal Mail, a public limited company, employing over 200,000. Royal Mail is responsible for the mail collection and delivery service in the UK. Carolyn is a Customer Support Advisor in the Advice Support Department based in the Cambridge Mail Centre. She works a 27-hour week on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays.

Carolyn comments: “I have worked for Royal Mail for seven years. I assist the policy and procedures for managers and staff, who are classed as our customers. I help them with advice and organise and run appeals, and I help managers control and manage their long-term sick issues. I had another baby four and a half years ago and decided I didn't want to come back to work full-time. I returned in 2003 and worked from 9am until 1.30pm five days per week. I had a conversation with my manager and I said, ‘this is when I would like to work and should you need me at other times I am prepared to make myself available. Is there a possibility that I could do this?’ I didn't have to make a business case for it. I worked in recruitment at the time. We used to go out to our offices in the area and book our own appointments, for example to carry out psychometric tests. We were supporting the local offices. Royal Mail made some cuts and changed our role three years ago and we had to reapply for our jobs. I was assured that the fact that I was working part-time would not be held against me, although I had some concerns that it might. I got the job and that is when I changed to working three full days. This was a new job for everybody and I said that I would be as flexible as I could be.

“We have all been issued with laptops and mobile phones. I tend to leave my mobile phone on making myself available Mondays and Fridays which are usually non-working days, so I am always contactable. This isn't something I am expected to do, but I am quite happy with this – I feel that I should be available as I am the only one who covers Cambridge. I might switch my laptop on for the first hour and then again in the evenings for a short time on a Monday and Friday. If the phone is on all day it is my choice whether I take the call. If it is one of my managers I will answer it, because I feel I've been treated with respect and I am not pushed to do anything more than I do, I am quite happy to do more. The value of this job to me probably outweighs the flexibility it gives to me. Should I leave Royal Mail I would find it extremely hard to get the flexibility that I have here. The company probably do get more hours out of me than they pay for, but the flexibility is worth more to me because of my young family. It also means that because I have got young children, if they are unwell, I have the flexibility to work from home, which is worth its weight in gold. I have that flexibility, but it hasn't happened yet.

“If I'm requested to work extra times or swap days then that is the flexibility I offer the business. If there is a meeting on Friday, although I have no obligation to make it, I make it if I can. I am then free to choose what day I don't work. If I have to write a report for an appeal and I've



worked my three days, I will sometimes do that on a Friday afternoon. I don't have to, but that means that if I have nothing booked until mid-morning on Tuesday I have the flexibility to take my sons to school and I still feel very much part of their lives. My children are 20, 13 and four. When my 13 year-old son was younger there were no real policies; they wanted women to come back to work, but if you had to take a day off there was a lot of pressure about how you would be able to make this time up. There is no pressure now, Royal Mail accept that if I am off there is a genuine reason. My sickness absence is zero. I feel that Royal Mail respect me, so I am going to respect them as the employer. Should I feel unwell I will come into work, because they offer me so much. Another benefit to the company is that because they have offered me that flexibility, I am not looking for another employer and cannot see myself doing so in the immediate future.

"The demands of the customer do start early in the morning. The nature of the business is that it is an early start because of deliveries, but most finish by lunchtime. I make sure that my phone is on at 6am, to support staff and managers, although I may not come in to work until 8am or 9am. This is so my customers have a member of staff that they can ask about policy and procedure if they are unsure. My role is to make sure that I am contactable, that there are no delays and that they receive the information they require within a decent timescale. The appeals are a different sort of work. I organise when I have an appointment with an appellant. I also organise my own investigation into what has happened and I prepare the final report. That can be done at my own pace within a 90-day period. My other work is carried out when a manager needs me. They do need to contact me and I will often leave my phone on late, as there are also late managers and night managers who may need to contact me. I am not phoned late very often, but I am quite happy with this arrangement, because I offer that extended service and am considered to be doing my job. There's no, 'I couldn't get hold of Carolyn; she never seems to be there'. My customers don't necessarily know that I don't work Mondays and Fridays as most of the contact is by phone. I am the only one of 50 members of staff working part-time.

"The hours that I work have never been mentioned in my appraisal, it is always based on evidence that I give that I have done a good job. Recently there has been a re-organisation and new people have been taken on to do the same sort of job across Post Office Ltd and Parcel Force. I was asked to move wholly to work in the Cambridge area, but the Norwich manager didn't want me to stop working for him. I organise with the managers that the days that I work are the days when they hold their meetings. You need to use a bit of persuasion to get this to fit. I make it clear that these are my hours, but I can still be contacted on Mondays and Fridays. I get exactly the same opportunities as my full-time colleagues and I probably have to juggle my diary a bit more. I have to be more aware of what is happening in four weeks time than if I was full-time. Communication is the key. I book all of

my fortnightly meetings with my Norwich and Cambridge managers a year in advance. It takes a little bit more planning than if you were full-time, a little bit more juggling and a little bit more flexibility. You need to be very organised, but the reward is there for my family. I don't believe it has any detrimental effect on my promotion prospects. If there was a position that came up, I wouldn't think I can't apply because I'm part-time. There is no discrimination with me being part-time.

"The only disadvantage to management would be if they couldn't get hold of me on Friday or Monday, but I make sure that I am flexible enough so that they can. I do have the sort of job that allows me to have that flexibility. I don't have a computer that I can only use at work, I have a laptop I can use wherever I am. Sometimes I do have to juggle what I am doing on a Friday with a clash at work – a last minute meeting. This is a very small price to pay and it happens perhaps twice a year. You may do more than you are paid to do, but you need to weigh that up with your work-life balance. You can't leave anything outstanding at the end of the day. It helps to be appreciated at what you do – I am appreciated for the hours I put in. I don't feel a second-class citizen because I am part-time."

The company probably do get more hours out of me than they pay for, but the flexibility is worth more to me because of my young family.

Case Study

Andy Grant

Andy Grant works for Morgan Stanley, a global financial services company with over 55,000 employees worldwide. He is an Executive Director in the Fixed Income Division, where his specific role is in foreign exchange prime brokerage sales. He joined Morgan Stanley in 1989 and has been in his current role for four years. Since 2004 he has primarily worked remotely from his home near Manchester.

Andy comments: “During 2003 my wife had applied to a number of universities to train as a midwife. This is a heavily over-subscribed course and after unsuccessful applications in the South of England, she was offered a place at the University of Manchester. After a lot of consideration, we decided to move and I planned to leave my job and look to retrain. However, when I told the company about my plan they decided that they very much wanted to retain my services. I had, by then, been with Morgan Stanley for about 15 years, so I had a wide range of experience. We discussed what would be the most appropriate way to keep me engaged remotely, in a role that would largely be outside of the office, and also the various things that would be required to set me up to work remotely. I started working from home near Manchester in early 2004 and at the time it was very much on the basis of ‘let’s see how this works’, for both of us. The firm was extremely flexible.

“Although I knew that the firm already had an established flexible working programme, I wasn’t aware that anyone else had moved so far from the workplace and continued working for the company. I was set up to work remotely with a business phone line, broadband internet connection and remote desktop access to my PC, which is still based in the London office. From a technology point of view I connect into my Morgan Stanley computer in exactly the same way that I would if I was physically present in the office. Five or six years ago, technology-wise I don’t think this would have been possible. Morgan Stanley also operates a thorough annual workplace assessment, so they check the facilities wherever you are. When we first set-up, I supplied photographs of my remote workplace and measurements to make sure that my desk space was adequate. The firm treated the health and safety aspects in the same way they would an employee in any of their offices.

“Morgan Stanley has a personal development programme for all their employees and I have goals and a development plan to make sure that my targets remain on track. Having the support of your manager is key to making this type of arrangement work. You also need supportive colleagues. A lot of my work was performed with clients using the phone and computer anyway and I work in very much the same way as when I was based in London. In the three years I have been working in this way, I have never had a client say to me, ‘your phone number doesn’t look like a London number.’ Provided you are offering the same kind of service to the client I believe they are indifferent to where you are based. Managing your time is the biggest issue. Initially I had a fixed contract to work on a part-time schedule of five hours every day. I did not know how this new way of working was going to work out in terms of balancing things at home but over time we found we were able to adapt my role, and I was able to manage my time effectively, so I am now working to a full-time schedule again.

“The main benefit for Morgan Stanley is that they have been able to retain an experienced employee; the arrangement has been mutually beneficial. Recruitment and training is an expensive process, especially if it involves replacing a senior person with considerable experience. Giving me the opportunity to stay engaged with the firm in the way I have, has made me more focused and committed to giving something back and making it work. I very much appreciate the fact that I am being retained in this way.

“Visibility is an area you certainly need to focus on. You have to make certain that you are in regular contact with your colleagues, in particular senior management. Effective communication from a remote location is a challenge. You have to be conscious of this and work a bit harder than you would if you were in the office. The only other minor issue is that should you have any computer problems you are dealing with the provider yourself, rather than the Morgan Stanley support desk. But that has only happened on a handful of occasions.

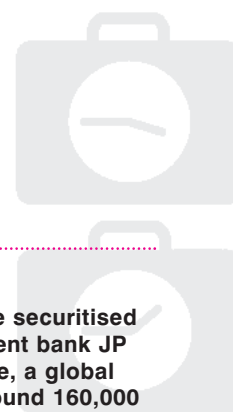
“I have regular telephone calls and face-to-face meetings with my manager. On a weekly basis we have a catch-up to go through what I am working on and progress towards the goals I have been set. It is pretty rare that we go a day without having some form of communication, either by phone or email. On the occasions when I am down in the office (three to four times a month) we will have a sit down and a catch-up in person. Sometimes it can be two or three weeks between visits, other times I can be down twice in a week. “It largely depends on clients, but it is regular and frequent. I have a number of colleagues with whom I work across different disciplines and different divisions. Depending on who I am working with, they may not know that I am working remotely. I haven’t had anything other than support from anyone who does know what I am doing. You are judged on your output and if you are not performing, it soon becomes apparent, wherever you are based.

“I do not have anyone directly reporting to me, but I have somebody more junior who works very closely with me on client-related work. I have frequent telephone calls and face-to-face meetings with them when I am in London. I have the same personal development planning as anyone else. It’s mainly about ensuring that you are meeting targets and making progress. The firm is a meritocracy; if you are achieving you will be noticed and rewarded. I don’t feel adversely impacted at all by the fact that currently I am working remotely, and that is the message I have had from my manager as well. The firm are very much looking at progressing my career, as opposed to it sitting still because I am not based primarily in the office. I don’t think my promotion prospects are adversely affected by the arrangement. The firm is very focused on training and development, you can access in-house training through online courses, and there are a whole series of external courses you can apply for and can schedule for a day when you are in the office.

“My involvement with the organisation is still as strong as when I left London. I have frequent conference calls and participation

Case Study

Jane Herring



participation in meetings with both colleagues and clients. I still participate in industry events and conferences. You have to work a bit harder to remain visible, but with hard work it can be achieved. I don't feel that anything really passes me by because I am not in the office. I still feel as connected as I did when I was working there full-time although that might be different if I didn't have any trips to the office at all.

"There are lots of advantages to me of working in this way, but I think the family one is the most important. It has given my wife the opportunity to train at university and it has given me the ability to continue with my career progression. Another advantage not to be underestimated is that I don't get as many distractions as I would in the office. I have the opportunity to think without distraction; in a busy office environment that can be difficult.

"Working in this way is easier than it would have been a few years ago because of the technology. The only disadvantage is that occasionally it would be nice to speak to a colleague in person rather than having to pick up the phone or drop an email. Having said that, it is such a global company, and in my role I am dealing with colleagues and clients in different locations, so I need to be on the phone a lot anyway. My direct counterpart is based in New York and I have a lot of interaction with her on a daily basis; we spread the load geographically. My client-base is London and Asia and my colleague in New York deals with those in North America. Contact with my clients in Asia tends to be on the telephone and if I am in London I will time a visit based on a client's requirements for a meeting. I have really not had any issues from the client perspective.

"I don't think you can go into an arrangement like this half-heartedly. You need a tremendous amount of discipline and you need strong organisational skills to be able to manage your time effectively. You have to be very focused and dedicated to the company, and to the role that you are undertaking. Above all, I think the most important thing is that you need the support of your employer. Morgan Stanley have been extremely supportive from the moment we started, both in setting up the infrastructure for me to be able to do this and equally importantly, supporting me personally on an ongoing basis. Without that it would undoubtedly fail."

Five or six years ago,
technology-wise I don't think
this would have been possible.

Jane Herring is a managing director in the securitised products group for the European investment bank JP Morgan, which is part of JP Morgan Chase, a global financial services company employing around 160,000 people worldwide.

Jane joined the company in 1998. She currently works a minimum 35 hour week over three to four days.

Jane comments: "Before my first child was born in May 2000 I was working in the credit markets business in a client-facing marketing and structuring role. After four months maternity leave I returned to work full-time in a very similar client-facing role. After a few months I took up an opportunity to work in the same product area, still managing a team, but in a less client-facing, more internal role.

"When my son was 18 months old I realised that I wanted to spend more quality time with him. I spoke to my immediate manager and negotiated a four-day week on a trial basis. I said that I would like to reduce my hours and take Fridays off, but that I would be available if necessary.

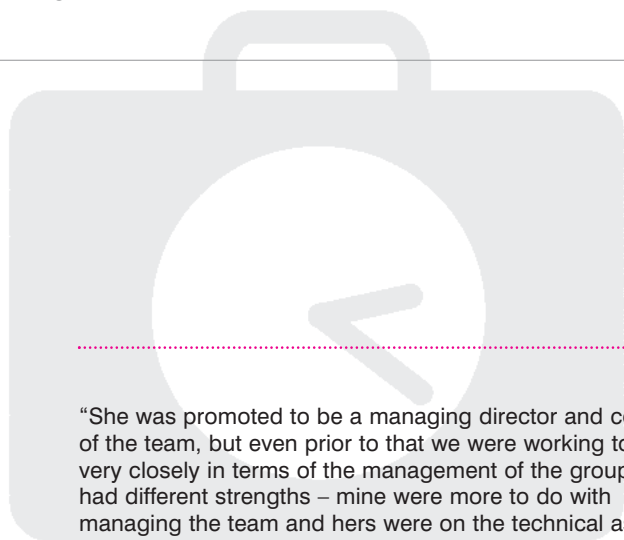
"This was all subject to direct reports, as well as senior management, being happy with the arrangement. My manager was extremely supportive and I worked in this way for about 18 months. It worked well and I never felt that there was anything other than a supportive atmosphere.

"The support of your direct reports is key. I had a small team of about five people, who knew me very well. I've tried very hard over the last few years to grow and develop my team, especially direct reports. I have probably accelerated their growth because I realise that I need to 'let them go' and have the possibility of managing groups themselves.

"One important aspect of flexi-time work is the need to have a very good assistant managing your diary who has a good sense of what might be a priority.

"Over the years, I have developed open communication with my assistant. The result is, things that might be extremely important are communicated appropriately to me, so that if something cannot be missed I will come in to work on Friday. It is also the manner in which things are communicated to others that is important. I think I have also improved my own handling of my reduced working week.

"In January 2003, I returned from my second maternity leave to the same role which I had left. I was growing the team and someone (also called Jane) who had a lot of experience in the role had been working for me in a part-time arrangement for some time. Originally I was her manager; however, over the next couple of years what evolved was more of a job sharing arrangement, but not in the traditional sense.



“She was promoted to be a managing director and co-head of the team, but even prior to that we were working together very closely in terms of the management of the group. We had different strengths – mine were more to do with managing the team and hers were on the technical aspects of the product. It worked very well and even though we were not doing exactly the same things we were able to cover for each other. Although it was never a formal job share, a lot of people recognised it becoming an informal partnership arrangement. It meant that there was someone who knew when things were important and when to say ‘we really are going to have to call her’.

“More recently, there was an opportunity to extract myself from the group to undertake something slightly different, but within the same overall structure of the securitised products group. One of our direct reports had strong management skills and I proposed that he co-lead the group with Jane and this is what has happened. I have taken on a new venture with a small number of people working for me and I am now growing this team.

“When my son went to school in September 2004 I had wanted a little more flexibility and it was agreed that I could reduce my hours to the equivalent of a three and a half day week. The four day week had been a success and I had reached the point where I wasn’t sure I could manage the job and my home life, as I was by then pregnant with my third child. I took my third maternity leave in December 2004 and returned to work at end of April 2005 to the same working arrangement.

“Working partnerships with peers are very important. I am not a trader, but my new team works very closely with the trading desk and it will be very important that the head of trading understands my schedule and feels that he can make contact with me. I work very hard at engaging peers who are particularly important in terms of partnerships and also my key direct reports. I spend time communicating my schedule. I send out an email to my key partners and direct reports saying for example: ‘for the next few months I am expecting to work between 8am and 4.30pm, four days a week plus a few hours at home’. I also explain that this may vary from time to time in particular circumstances and I give them my telephone number. I then tend to stick to a routine, which is essential in that if people know what to expect they can deal with it.

“There has to be a high degree of discipline on my own part and on the part of those responsible for managing my diary and for covering for me in any capacity. I have three direct reports at the moment and this is growing. You can grow businesses when you are working reduced hours, in fact because you rely so much on delegating you tend to be keener to grow and develop people.

“Communication and working in partnership with peers is very important when there is shared responsibility. Thus, if there is something specific and critical which is scheduled during my time off I will come in, but in a lot of cases there are other people who can be referred to.

“The key benefit to the firm is retention. There is no doubt that with three children under seven and another one on the way I would have very reluctantly left the bank by now if this arrangement had not been available. Although the bank has lost my efforts in a frontline marketing role, they have gained an experienced person in a more internally focused role.

“I am fairly realistic about the types of job I can do. I would probably still want to be in a frontline marketing job if I wasn’t doing this. In a part-time arrangement, you have to remember that you can’t have everything. The ability to delegate is extremely important and you do have to be realistic about your career development. Instead of going up and up and up on the escalator you have to accept that you are probably on the travelator going across the corridor for a while, but you are getting a great work-life balance and when the time is right you can perhaps step back on the escalator again.”

I work very hard at engaging peers who are particularly important in terms of partnerships, and also my key direct reports.



Case Study

Janet Hull



Janet Hull works for the Institute of Practitioners in Advertising (IPA). The IPA is the professional institute and trade body for advertising agencies. Janet is Consultant Head of Marketing and Reputation Management. She is the IPA consultant in charge of the external marketing programme, with the objective of promoting the value of IPA member agencies and, more specifically, their contribution to business in terms of organic growth and intangible asset value creation. Janet works on an annualised hours contract, with 10 weeks off during school holidays.

Janet comments: "I negotiated my new working arrangement on entry back into the organisation in 2003. I had previously worked for the IPA for five years, and was away for three years. The Head of Marketing and Reputation Management post was newly created and I was one of a number of people approached because I was already known to them. I said that I would be really enthusiastic to take on the role as long as I could do it in a particular way. I knew that for me it was really important that I had holiday time with my children and I asked if they would consider allowing me school holidays off as part of my contract. I explained that it had been a tension for me in previous jobs and I didn't feel I could achieve to my full potential if I didn't have the opportunity to spend that time with the children.

"I explained that I would not have a problem working flat out in term time and that in my opinion, the times that I wanted to be off were the quieter times for marketing anyway, so I saw no reason why it would not fit in with their plans. At first the response was cautious, but after a conversation I had a very sympathetic response. The person I report to has four children himself. He discussed my proposal internally, reported back to the Council and it was agreed. We decided that I would be treated as a consultant rather than have employed status. He negotiated with me on the basis of a daily rate, excluding the weeks when I was going to be out of the office. We agreed an annual contract on that basis and it started out as 52 minus 13 weeks. But then after a while, when I tracked how much time I did have off, we reduced it to minus 10 weeks. I fill in time sheets and we calculate the number of weeks I am working and then divide it by twelve for a monthly rate. I sometimes work three days a week and sometimes five days, so there is flexibility. I also work some evenings from home or late in the office to make sure that I deliver against the agreed plan of activity. It is a very objectives-driven role, rather than needing to be there from 9:30am to 5:30pm.

"I liaise with lots of people, either collaborating on projects, working on outsourced activities or teaming up within the organisation. The most difficult thing about me not being there full-time is managing the expectations of other senior colleagues with ad-hoc needs. In the marketing office I have two graduate assistants, who provide project management, research, report writing and administrative support. They have learned to adapt to my working style: from their point of view it would be easier if I was always

there, but they are understanding. On balance they are positive and the fact that I am not always there does give them the opportunity to take more responsibility. Even though initially they found that scary, ultimately they find it satisfying. I believe that they progress more quickly than if I was always there; my first assistant has just left after two years to start an excellent job as a strategic planner at one of the IPA's leading digital agency members and I like to think her experience working for me enabled this. I manage their work in terms of projects they are working on – again an objectives-driven approach. I offer a point of view on their appraisals and their promotion prospects, but it is always in combination with the person I report to, given my position as a Consultant. We have status meetings to review what we've done and what we are planning. I allocate responsibilities so people know what projects they are responsible for. I am in the office a lot anyway, but we are regularly in mobile and email contact and they know they can get in touch if they need to. In the school summer holidays I am off for up to five weeks at a time, but because I tend to go to one place they know they can email me. During my agency career I was always taught to 'be part of the solution not part of the problem', so I always say to them: 'try and solve it yourself'. But before I go away I'm careful to arrange to whom they should speak about particular projects if they do need help.

"Most people in the office know that I have children, and there are odd occasions when I simply have to bring one or other of them into the office. My colleagues have always been very accommodating about this. One, in particular, is now in regular correspondence with my daughter and they share an interest in Beatrix Potter! There are a number of key after-hours business events and dinners, and networking is important in my role, so there is a pressure to be there some evenings, and this can obviously cut across family time. However, overall I would say that we enjoy a family-friendly culture.

"A couple of the directors work four days a week and one or two work from home quite a lot – it's a way of affording and retaining high calibre people who are at a 'portfolio' stage of their careers, or simply seeking the optimal work-life balance. Within the IPA I think we are good at flexible working, but we are a trade association rather than a commercial organisation so we have slightly more opportunity to operate in this way than if you work in a mainstream agency, which is really responsive to client demand. Having said that, we can act to a degree as a role model for our members and demonstrate how a more flexible approach can benefit all concerned.

"I am not a director, although I am equivalent in experience to the others in the senior management team – influence is more important to me than status. My role is influential and while it doesn't have the badge of director status I am quite happy to compromise about this, because I've had a number of posh agency titles already, and I think both I and the IPA get a very good deal. When I am working for them I am very motivated and I do deliver. I wouldn't be delivering

Case Study

David Itcovitz

more if I was doing the job on a standard full-time basis, but I get the work-life balance that I am looking for. What I want with my children is quality time, when we can relax and unwind, and go adventuring together.

"I have an annual assessment – because my contract is renewed on an annual basis – three months in advance of when it expires and during this we cover my delivery against expectations.

"I am also a visiting lecturer with Regents Business School at Regents College. I lecture in subject-matter that's related to my IPA role – international media management and corporate brand management and in term time I run modules in these subjects, totalling 10 hours a week. On Monday I am there from lunchtime until 6.30pm and then on a Friday in the morning until 1.30pm. The college has two 12 week terms rather than the more conventional three terms. In term time my life is very busy, but there is still the opportunity during their holidays to catch up with work or plan other things. Monday morning I go to the IPA to attend their weekly Management Meeting and then go on to College. I am working three and a half days at the IPA during those periods. I find both jobs mutually beneficial. Lecturing helps me consolidate my thinking and test out new ideas. Explaining what I know about the business in a teaching context makes me a better communicator. And of course indirectly this benefits the IPA.

"I feel that the advertising industry still suffers somewhat from 'presenteeism'. You have to be seen to be there in order for people to believe you're working, although I think it is changing slowly. One key factor driving this is the increasing ability for people to use broadband connections to access the network from home or other locations. The saving in commuting time means a big increase in effective working hours for the employer and the lack of travel hassle improves the quality of life for the employee. There are positive signs of change and many agencies now offer flexi-time to cope with the commute. Quite a few agencies offer sabbaticals after a certain number of years' service. And there is evidence of job sharing even in client-facing roles. There is also recognition that part-time working can be a more attractive proposition for senior people than being laid off. So at a strategic level people are beginning to look to hire back in people who have a solid number of years' experience. Young people dominate our business – 48 per cent of IPA agency employees are under 30. But now there is a recognition that a combination of senior strategists and junior planners and implementers can work well. Even young people these days are raising quality of life issues in interviews. So there are signs that working culture is changing in favour of a work-life balance."

David Itcovitz works for Shell International Trading, which is the part of Royal Dutch Shell which handles their global trading businesses – crude oil and oil products. The UK Trading office in London employs 650 staff. David took a three year career break from 2002 and returned to work on a part-time basis, usually working between 15 and 20 hours a week. His current role is Products Trading Business Development Manager.

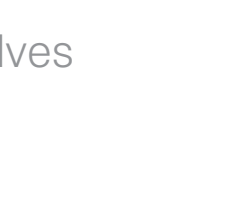
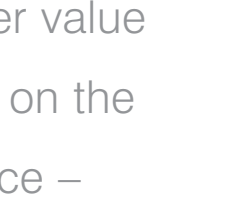
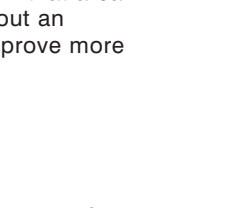
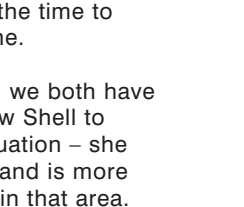
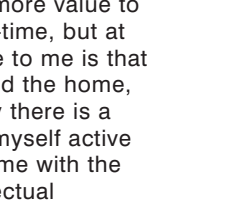
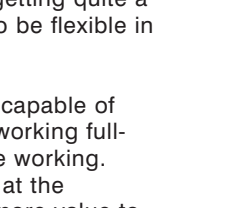
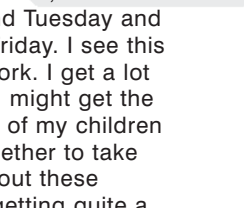
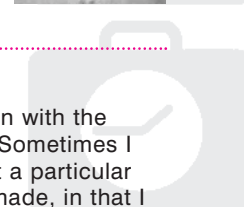
David comments: "I've worked for Shell for nearly 30 years and my main jobs have been in trading. I am part of a dual career couple and my wife also works for the company. During my career break I was the home carer and looked after our three children, who are now 15, 13 and 10. Between six and three months before I was due to return from my career break, I discussed details of the return with both my line manager and Human Resources about my desire to return on a part-time basis. We talked about how it could work and what flexibilities were needed, and agreed that we would give it a try.

"Like many others I would like flexibility to work when I can and the company would like flexibility when the work needs it. I try and work more hours when the work demands it and less hours when the family needs me. I try and balance the two and so far we have managed it – there haven't been any major conflicts of interest to date.

"When I suggested I work part-time the reaction was better than I expected – there was a constructive dialogue. They were quite happy to try it – there was no negative reaction. I'm paid on a standardised basis, but I work around that average and some weeks I will work more and some less, depending on the workload.

"I have changed the type of work I am undertaking at the moment, and am involved in business development. This uses the skills I have acquired over time as there are not that many people who have been around in Shell's oil trading business for a long time, as turnover is higher than in most Shell businesses. Because I have been in trading for so long I also know many of the business structures and a lot of the people worldwide. This is very useful when we are setting up new businesses.

"I use my own computers at home, and Shell has provided all the software and paid for some required incremental hardware. The company also pays for business calls. I work based from home as much as I can, and go to the office when I need to. I try to go in once a week for meetings and I arrange as many meetings as I can in one day. The rest of the time I work from home or I am travelling on business – which I do only occasionally. But it might be difficult to run a frontline trading job on that basis. The big plus for the business is that they have retained me! If they had said 'no', I would have had a dilemma, 'should I come back full-time or do I leave the company?' I didn't have to cross that bridge and they didn't lose a long-term resource. Secondly, because of the flexibility that I can



give them, there is probably no downtime. In most jobs there is a busy period and a slack period – I don't really have slack periods. The slack periods are when I am not working. So it is probably a cost-effective way for them to employ me.

“That's where the flexibility also comes in – I try to make myself available. I'm set up for work at home and I check my messages regularly. I can log on in the morning to check for urgent messages even if I'm not intending to work that day, and my work mobile is always on. By being flexible in the hours and days I work, people can contact me when there is something major going on. The periods when I am most available are the periods when a lot of things are happening. There are of course days when I am doing something specific with the family – but so far there has not been a problem. It does require flexibility on my behalf. For example, I don't take the approach that 'it is 5pm Wednesday so now I'm not available'. We have been talking about increasing the number of hours I work as there is more work than I can manage in the time available at present. Since starting to work in this way I have also become better at managing my time and more organised. It's a learning curve; I've got better at managing my interface with others and I am more pro-active in setting things up with people. I now tend to be the pro-active person in getting things resolved, because other people can do things at short notice, whereas I have to be more planned.

“The other learning is that there is a limit to how much you can do by email. I now put a much higher value on conversation, either on the telephone or face-to-face – real-time interaction solves many of problems. I thought you could do a lot more by email, but it takes a much longer time. So as time progresses I am spending longer on the telephone and less on emails. In my work we are sometimes talking about very complicated issues and sometimes you simply need to get the whiteboard out. On occasions you have no choice but to get on a plane and arrange a whole series of meetings while you are there.

“There are no barriers to accessing any training or personal development because I am part-time – my training needs had already dropped off anyway. As regards career prospects – they are more hampered by our personal choices as a family and my wife's career path, rather than the fact that I am working part-time. We have found it difficult as a family to run two high-flying careers. We managed it for a long time when the children were young, but as the kids got older we found it harder. This arrangement suits me very well at the moment and I haven't met any negative reaction. Sometimes people forget that you are only working a couple of days a week and there can be a tendency to expect that you are around all the time. Some people I come into contact with don't know I am working part-time. There is a mentality that people are working five days a week, because people always do.

“The only disadvantage for me is frustration with the number of hours I have available to work. Sometimes I think I would rather work five days and get a particular project finished. It is a choice that I have made, in that I haven't said I will only work on Monday and Tuesday and then switch everything off Wednesday to Friday. I see this as part of the give and take of making it work. I get a lot out of it, so I have to be flexible in return. I might get the odd call when I am standing watching one of my children play a football match and I can choose whether to take the call or not. You are either very rigid about these things or you are not. I can see that I am getting quite a lot from the company and I am prepared to be flexible in return. I see it as a win-win situation.

“The downside for Shell is that I would be capable of delivering more for the company if I were working full-time in a role more appropriate for full-time working. They are getting value for money from me at the moment, but I would probably be adding more value to the company if I was working for them full-time, but at least I'm still with them. The big advantage to me is that I am continuing to manage the children and the home, whilst still being in employment. Obviously there is a financial incentive, but I am also keeping myself active intellectually. I found the three years at home with the children rewarding, but I missed the intellectual challenge of the work. This now gives me the time to balance that with the children and the home.

“Because my wife also works for Shell and we both have senior careers, this arrangement does allow Shell to extract value from the other side of the equation – she has worked for Shell for as long as I have and is more senior, so my arrangements support Shell in that area. I would urge people not to be negative about an arrangement like this. Give it a try – it can prove more successful than you might think.”

I now put a much higher value on conversation, either on the telephone or face-to-face – real-time interaction solves many problems.

Case Study

Bronwyn Kunhardt

Bronwyn Kunhardt works for Microsoft, a multinational computer technology company employing about 2,000 people in the UK, based in Reading and London. Bronwyn is Director of Citizenship and sits on the Microsoft Board. She is responsible for directing the organisation's approach to citizenship, managing its public perception and providing leadership for its diversity initiatives. For about four years she has compressed her working week into Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.

Bronwyn comments: "I have been employed with the company for about 11 years, and in 2001 I was given this role which covers all of our eight business units, including the internet business. I probably work on average about 45 hours a week, excluding travel and times when I am away on off-site meetings. Between Tuesday and Thursday I arrive at about 7am and I will leave about 7pm or 8pm – the days do tend to be quite packed. I think this probably suits my personality very well as I can carry out intense concentrated periods of work. In general I am at home on a Monday and Friday.

"Following maternity leave with my first child I returned to work part-time in September 2000. I reduced my salary by 40 per cent and stayed at home on Mondays and Fridays to look after my daughter. I chose to do that because my husband also went part-time and we co-parented – we still do. After about eight months, it was clear to me that I was delivering a full-time role in three days and missing 40 per cent of the salary. I totted up how much I was working and looked at the quality of my work. I went to see the director and said that I thought I deserved a full salary for the three days a week. She happened to be very forward thinking and agreed to it, and it's been like that ever since.

"Because I have been in the company for so long, and I am well networked, I have a good instinct for what I can ignore; and for how long. So I tend to be quite brutal about prioritisations and what I get involved in. In my area I can be called in quite randomly to a number of things that affect reputation. You have to be open in order to engage with people. Having the discipline of not working on a Monday and Friday is healthy. It's amazing what disappears when you don't answer an email for a couple of days. I have talked to other people, particularly other women within the Microsoft organisation, about undertaking what I am doing and their biggest fear is: would they be able to deal with the tension of other people's disapproval? I can take it because it's worth it to have those days at home. I am pretty established in working like this now. One thing I did realise very early on was that as soon as I stopped apologising for not being in on a Monday and Friday the more people started accepting it. In fact I stopped sending 'out of office' messages. I was carrying out a full week's work where I was and how I was working really didn't need to be advertised to external partners or anyone else. A lapse of a day getting back to somebody, if that's what it took, is really not that bad. There is a pace enforced on you which is not really necessary.

"I am directly responsible for four people, and there is a cross subsidiary team of about 22 people who work on citizenship.

They are embedded in the different parts of the business, but they roll-up into my division. We innovate on new ideas that come from the business and then try and put it back into the business for execution. They are pretty self-sufficient. When support is needed they know they can call me at any time. I have tended to employ people who prefer to be left alone to get on with it. They all know when I work, so I tend to get most of my work coming through on a Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. There are times on a Monday or Friday when I will take a call from somebody. I think that I have some luxury in having a strategic horizontal role where my thoughts are sometimes more important than what I do. When I see the other directors on our executive team travel so extensively, I realise it is very hard for them to be present for their team anyway.

"It's a fluid thing, but the business and the family have first principle needs. My family is the most important thing on a Monday and Friday and work knows that on those days I am not going to be physically present. I probably won't be on email much, but I can always be texted, so there is an unspoken adult agreement. The technology is incredibly empowering. We all have free telephones and broadband at home so we are enabled to work very flexibly. Our customers and partners are based throughout the UK; very few people work centrally.

"The best benefit is the time I get to think strategically because I am not 'doing', and reacting to email and phone call after phone call. On Mondays and Fridays, and the weekends as well, I do spend a lot of time thinking about what I have done during the week. The emails I send on a Tuesday are better quality – more thoughtful and brighter than they would have been if I had done them as they came in. I think there is more of a risk of getting institutionalised if you are at your desk nine to five, five days a week. I think I bring a lot more context of the outside world into my three days in the office than I would do otherwise. I see new walls around me, see different things and I talk to different people, which is particularly important in my area.

"It ties in with the freshness that I feel. I feel less defined by the company, which means that I am able to take the decisions that I feel are right and not that I think the hierarchy is after. I feel in a more powerful position than a lot of the people who seem to be working 80 hour weeks who are never at home. I am probably better able to survive. The culture is pretty all-consuming and I think it becomes everything to people quite quickly; especially when people are working such long hours and not seeing their families.

"I receive my scores, my evaluation, my bonuses and my promotions on what I produce. The way I work has never come up on a review form and there is no indication for me that any of my reviews have been bad – they have all been really good. I do need to be sensitive to the needs of the business and at certain times of the year I may need to re-look at my working pattern and possibly re-negotiate how I work. Ultimately I believe there is no reason why senior managers cannot be more flexible in terms of the way they work; it fosters creativity and responsiveness.



“A couple of years ago when I worked at MSN we carried out a flexible working pilot. I had special anomaly status for a while, but I think the whole concept has become a bit more mainstream since then. My way of working is less of an oddity now and more of something people are interested in as a model although not everybody is rushing to do the compressed week option – it’s really hard work. But there are people who would like to explore some of the other options and I think those conversations are becoming easier with managers. As a business the story we want to tell around technology is that it frees you up and gives you choices, so we need to look at flexible working as an employer brand.

“There was a lot of backlash when we did the original pilot here from younger men, but as the years went on more of them started to have families and the whole culture changed. Suddenly it was ‘where was that flexible working thing that you did?’ It’s very time specific and there are also those who are looking after aged parents. There still seems to be this slight machismo about ‘I do an 80 week’. It baffles me because it doesn’t seem to be very smart. I am sure we can all be productive on normal hours. So the long hours culture is absolutely there, but at the same time it’s a bit of a paradox.

“It can be really hard jumping from one environment to the next. I find it takes me a while on the train home to decompress on a Thursday and go back into the four days of being mum and not a manager. I can afford to be more sensitive at home, whereas I have to be very sure about the decisions I am making at work because I have to get so much completed in a short period of time. I couldn’t have done the co-parenting with my husband without the flexibility, and that was really important, and it works for us; my husband also works compressed hours. I now have two girls aged six and four.

“A key business goal for Microsoft is to be a great place to work. I have no doubt that if organisations want to retain the best possible talent and be responsive and innovative they have to take a more forward thinking approach to how and where their people work. The way that I have been able to work in the company has certainly helped retain me.”

(Bronwyn has now left Microsoft to pursue her own business in the field of social media and social impact.)

I tend to be quite brutal about prioritisations and what I get involved in.

Case Study

Annette Magnus and Angie Emms

Annette Magnus and Angie Emms share the job of Customer Service Manager in the Wisbech Branch of Lloyds TSB. Their role involves managing frontline staff within the branch and ensuring customer service is of a high standard. The branch employs 20 people, many of whom work part-time.

Annette has worked for Lloyds TSB for 25 years and Angie for 29 years. Annette worked full-time until her first child was born in 1995. After maternity leave she wanted to return on a reduced-hours basis, but as her previous role had by then been filled, she started to job share the role of Assistant Manager at another branch.

Annette explains: "I job shared at the Kings Lynn branch for about two years and it worked well. Angie was working full-time as Assistant Manager at my local branch in Wisbech and when she came back from maternity leave after her first child she wanted to reduce her hours, so we started to job share our current role in 1999.

"We cover a full working week between us. I work all day Monday and Friday, also Tuesday morning and most of Thursday, a total of 21 hours. Angie works all day Tuesday and all day Wednesday, totalling 16 hours. To start with, we didn't have an overlap other than in the evenings in our own time, but I have now increased my hours slightly so we have a couple of hours paid to do the overlap on a Tuesday morning, when we share ideas and talk about problems. This level of communication is key in ensuring that our customers receive a seamless service, which is essential to the success of any job sharing partnership as it ensures continuity and professionalism. For the bank, the busiest days are Monday and Friday, therefore we try to keep administration to a minimum as Angie knows that I have to react to the volume of the footfall in the branch on those days. Angie understands that I perhaps don't get so much administration done on my working days as they are busier days for customers.

"We are very different people, very different characters, and we react to things in slightly different ways. Our strengths aren't necessarily the same, but they are compatible. Where Angie is stronger in one area I am stronger in a different area, but the balance is good. We are quite telepathic now and can predict how the other one would have reacted to things or what decision the other one would make. Sometimes, when we are at a meeting, we say the same thing at the same time.

"We report directly to the branch manager, and there are nine members of staff who report directly to us. We have a mutual understanding on how we want staff to be treated and we have split the team between us – I am responsible for five reports and Angie for four. We each carry out the performance management for the staff who report to each of us, but we do talk to each other about this. We work from the same desk and use the same tray; we leave notes for each other and tell each other

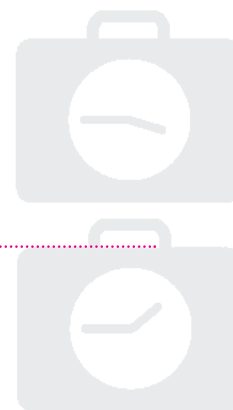
what is going on. We are both effective at communicating, and there's not a lot that goes past us. I will come in on a Thursday and our boss will say, 'how do you know about that when you weren't there?' I think the staff are sometimes surprised about how much we know about what has happened on days when we weren't there. We do talk to each other at home and we are good friends now, although we didn't really know each other when we started. Occasionally, someone will try and slip something past one of us, and say, 'so and so agreed that', but we are quite wise to it now. Because we are quite intuitive, I would know if it was something that Angie wouldn't agree to. We know how each other would deal with things. Most of the staff adapt to how we are. I am quite a laid back sort of character and Angie is quite hyperactive and full of energy; the end result is good.

"In general we deal with whatever happens on our days in the Branch, but we have a weekly team training session every Wednesday morning and as I don't work on Wednesday Angie knows she has to do this. Also, Angie takes the lead in health and safety issues, but if there were an issue on a day when I was there, I wouldn't just ignore it. I probably have more involvement on the sales side of the branch as that's more where my interests lie naturally. Angie has a fantastic attention to detail so we do play to each other's strengths, but we don't leave things for each other on purpose. It is all shared fairly and we understand each other quite well.

"We have never had any negative comments from customers. Our well-known customers tend to use the bank at the same time each week. The cashiers are the first face that the customer sees in the branch.

"I think the bank gets more from us together than the 39 hours a week we are paid for. We both take things home and talk to each other at home, and sometimes pop in on our day off. We also have a very wide range of skills between us, which you wouldn't necessarily see in only one person. Whatever strengths either one of us has is a positive; if one of us is weak in one area then the other is good here, and from the bank's point of view this is a bonus. Another advantage is that if one of our staff members naturally gets on with one of us better than with the other, they have got a choice of manager to support them. There are more part-time than full-time staff in the branch and most of them understand why we do what we do. I think they have respect for us being able to keep it all going.

"I feel that we more than compensate for any lack of continuity that people might see as a potential disadvantage of a job share, although our manager might say that is harder for him to make sure that we are both aware of initiatives and new policies. I have had times off with sickness, for example when I had a bad car accident. If I had been full-time, the bank wouldn't have anyone fulfilling the role, but as it was a job share they had Angie whilst I was off. Our manager also sees



the benefits we bring – he has two happy and motivated members of staff with complimentary skills carrying out the same role. Whilst Angie and I cover for him during his holidays, he doesn't have to worry about who picks up our work when we are away as we never take the same holidays, a win-win situation for all!

“For us, this way of working does give us a good work-life balance, and we are able to be as good parents as we want to be, supporting our kids as well as being able to keep a good career going in the bank at the level we were already at. Ultimately, the bank has trained us to be where we are and, together with ourselves, have put a lot of time and effort into reaching that level. Those skills are retained and we get to be the mums we want to be.

“I do find it hard to switch off on the days when I am not in. I would like to run my own branch at some point and I know that I am capable of doing that. I am very involved with the local pre-school and I have been chair of the governors of the local school for 10 years. I've also been involved in setting up after school clubs. What I have learnt from being involved at this level in community activities has also helped with my job.”

Angie adds: “I also find it very difficult to switch off. It is extremely difficult to remain totally up-to-date with all the information in two days, and to the standard I set myself. Part of me could happily work more hours, but this is where the work and family balance plays on your mind and also frustrates you. I think my present situation gives me the best of both worlds, and when you have made a choice you realise that to cope with it you just need to accept it and manage it.”

We have a very wide range of skills between us, which you wouldn't necessarily see in only one person.

Case Study

Michelle Mendelsson and Anita Harper

Michelle Mendelsson and Anita Harper work for Credit Suisse, a leading global bank which provides its clients with investment banking, private banking and asset management services worldwide. They job share as Directors, Co-Heads of the European Diversity and Inclusion Group. They are part of a Global Diversity and Inclusion Group which reports directly in to the CEO. They are responsible for all diversity and inclusion activity across the bank in the Europe, Middle East and Africa region. Michelle works Monday to Wednesday and Anita works Wednesday to Friday.

Michelle has been with Credit Suisse for six and a half years. Three and a half years ago she moved from working full-time to four days a week. Nine months ago, she began the current job share arrangement. Anita re-joined the bank for the second time nine months ago specifically to job share with Michelle. She had always worked in a full-time capacity prior to that.

Michelle: “After my second child was born, I decided that the best way of continuing in this role was to look for a job share arrangement. My next step was to think about how the job share could be of benefit to the bank. One of the things that I identified as missing from our current team was someone who had extensive front office business experience within the financial services sector. My own background had been in retail prior to joining the bank. I discussed my options with my global manager we talked about how we could make a job share work for me, my business area and the bank. The three key selling points for the bank were as follows: Firstly, a job share would bring in skills that were over and above those that already existed in the team. Secondly, they would be getting six days coverage with Wednesday as an overlap day in the role, rather than the four days previously. Thirdly, I felt that this change would give me a better work-life balance, which would in turn enable me to perform more effectively in my role. On that basis the bank was happy to allow me to go ahead and look for a job share partner.

“My manager was very supportive, even though it wasn’t something she had worked with before. We then raised it with other senior stakeholders to ensure that they would feel comfortable with that arrangement. People were unanimously supportive. I had a very clear idea of the skills I was looking for, and a clear job description. The bank had already shown support for flexible work arrangements. They recognise that in order to retain top talent they have to accommodate flexible working requests. Initially, we looked internally to see if there was a suitable candidate, but we didn’t find anyone who had extensive front office business experience. I found out that Anita, who I had already met on several occasions, had expressed an interest in looking at a flexible working arrangement. It was a complete coincidence that I heard about this. I immediately contacted Anita and we met to discuss the possibility of working together.”

Anita: “I had already made a decision that I wanted to make a change so the timing was excellent. I went for a number of interviews with all the key stakeholders, including my future line manager. I also had a number of informal discussions with Michelle.

Michelle: “Once I had met Anita, I felt very strongly that she was absolutely the right candidate in terms of her skill-set. It was then very important to get to know her on a more personal level to find out whether we were going to be able to work together effectively. We spent a lot of time seeing each other informally – understanding what our personal preferences were. We knew instantly that we gelled and got on, but we really needed to know where our strengths and weaknesses were, on a personal, as well as on a professional level.

“The experience we have had to date has been very positive and we both feel very strongly that we work extremely well together. We have quite similar personalities though we are from very different professional backgrounds and have different family circumstances. What we really do have in common is a very similar level of motivation, similar values, and similar levels of drive and energy, which are needed in this role. Neither of us have the need to be the one in the limelight, although we are both very driven.

“Right from the start, we have been open and honest with each other in terms of our styles. I think humour has been a huge prerequisite of the job share role, because it is at times very challenging. On the days that Anita is not here, I am very clear about what it is that I need to deliver, ready for Anita to come in on Wednesday and vice versa. There is a level of responsibility that you don’t feel as an individual. It makes you increase the quality and level of your input and output. The other thing that we are passionate about is handovers – detailed transparency in terms of not just being factual, but also of giving nuance, so our clients perceive us to be interchangeable.”

Anita: “When I go home on a Friday, I am conscious that Michelle comes in cold on Monday morning and I am not there. I write a detailed written handover each week and we have a follow-up phone call on Monday. We meticulously follow the same process every week. I start my handover document first thing Thursday morning and I keep it open at the base of my screen all of the time. As I go through the day, I insert headlines and complete it by the end of work on Friday.”

Michelle: “The first thing I do on a Monday is to read Anita’s handover and I make a note for myself of what I need to do in order to take things forward; that sets my priorities. I start an ‘Anita’ list as things are happening, so that when we both come in on Wednesday morning, one of the first things we will do is to sit down and go through this list. While other people were considered for the role, both internal and external candidates, Anita perfectly matched what we were looking for. The decision was made on a rational and considered basis.”

Anita: “It was helped by the fact that Michelle was very clear about what she was looking for. I do think that anyone who is going to embark on a project like this needs to be very, very clear and upfront, not just in terms of the technical competences, but in terms of the personal characteristics and career aspirations.”

Michelle: “It was really important for the key stakeholders to buy-in very quickly to the fact that I had a job share partner and



that we were sharing the job equally, particularly because I had already been in the role for five years. I think potentially that was always going to be quite a difficult challenge for both of us and for our stakeholders. I was very keen for Anita to go and meet the stakeholders on her own. We felt that was really important for her to establish her own credibility.”

Anita: “After the initial induction period, during which I shadowed Michelle for three weeks, we talked about how we would split the workload and manage the team.”

Michelle: “It was very important that we made these decisions together, rather than me saying this is how I want it to work. Anita also met the team in the interview process.”

Anita: “It was important for me that I felt comfortable with the team and indeed that they felt comfortable with me! We manage the team jointly. For the key initiatives and areas, one of us will take the lead, but that is only visible internally, not externally. The team knows who takes the lead, but the clients do not.

“We knew that one of the key areas for us to focus on was transparency – with each other, but also with the team – and therefore we have weekly two-on-one meetings with each team member. Despite the fact that we are both fairly strong personalities, we are confident that we can each speak on the other’s behalf.

“We have a bi-weekly global management meeting with our manager one-on-one and a weekly two-on-one meeting. The meeting is quite structured and we will agree who is going to take which point on the agenda in advance. We have separate appraisals, although we have the same key business objectives. It is absolutely crucial that for a job share role to succeed there is committed management support to the arrangement. The initial feedback about our job share has been extremely positive.”

Michelle: “Initially I probably underestimated the personal difficulty I would have in shifting my mindset to joint responsibility. It didn’t come naturally to use ‘we’ rather than ‘I.’”

Anita: “One of the biggest challenges for me was coming into a job share arrangement with an incumbent who is both long-standing and highly respected. It is very challenging if you are somebody who is used to being established in your own right. You have to build your reputation and credibility. I also knew that I would struggle to ‘let go’ for the days I am not in the office, as I had never done this before. That took a little time for me to learn, but is crucial to demonstrate trust in the partnership, which made it important to learn quickly! It has improved my quality of life immeasurably. “

Michelle: “From the beginning we carved up the areas of responsibility, so we are very clear who takes the lead on key initiatives. The next driver is the deadline or the day of the week. For example, I might start something and then hand it over to Anita who would do the next piece on it or finish it and deliver it. We acknowledge that there may come a time when one of us expresses an opinion or makes a decision which

the other disagrees with. You have to have the capacity to deal with that situation, and if you don’t then you shouldn’t be in a job share role. I think that is one of the biggest criteria that people may not think about too much. I think it would be very difficult to job share with someone who consistently has opposing views. We see one of our strengths as the ability to consistently reach similar conclusions although we may have taken very different routes to get to there.

“I didn’t have a financial services sector background, so bringing in Anita who does, has given me more confidence in aspects of the role where I have felt less confident in the past. From the point of view of the bank, apart from the very obvious skill-sets and knowledge aspect, the biggest advantage has been the quality of delivery. I think that the bank has two people who deliver to the highest standard. I think we have raised the bar on how each of us performs. I think they get much more out of us each individually, and jointly they get more than they would out of one person. I genuinely think that my personal quality of delivery has improved and remains at a very high level for the three days I work. When you put two experienced, driven, motivated people into a situation where they are working three days, the output goes up by default.

“Previously, if I was on holiday, no one would pick up the work. Now the most that the bank will not have coverage is two days. I think they also get diversity of approach. Previously there was one mind driving the strategy – now there are two you are going to get a richer pool of ideas and approach. There is something around the energy as well. If you have one person doing a job all the time it may be harder to sustain a consistently high level of energy. Because we each work three days, we are high energy all the time.

“Before going into the job share role, the two job share partners need to know what their personal desires, needs and aims are from a career trajectory perspective – if they aren’t equitable it could be challenging. We believe that our job share arrangement has the right level of intellectual challenge, whilst at the same time offering a unique level of personal support and development. In return, the bank has two highly motivated individuals bringing two unique perspectives to the one role.”

There is a level of responsibility that you don’t feel as an individual. It makes you increase the quality and level of your input and output.

Case Study

Amanda Morrison

Amanda Morrison works for KPMG, a global network of professional services firms providing audit, tax, and advisory services, with more than 10,000 partners and staff working worldwide. She is a Deputy Risk Management Partner responsible for setting the policies and procedures that the UK firm follows for their professional risk management. Amanda is also one of the UK firm's key interfaces with their international member firms, and sits on various international groups. She has worked four days a week since 1999, one of these at home.

Amanda comments: "I have worked for KPMG in London for 18 years, since I left university. I initially joined our audit practice where I qualified as a chartered accountant. I was with the firm for nine years and had reached senior management level when I had my first child in 1997. At that time, most private sector organisations didn't promote flexible working in the way they do now, but I came back to work in a similar role after eight months maternity leave on a three day a week basis. The partners I worked with said, 'We want you to come back, we value you. If you want to come back and work in school term time and have the holidays off, that is fine.' That was a fantastic confidence boost for me. It made it easy when I said, 'I would like to come back, but I don't know how easy I am going to find it, because I am commuting from Leicester and my child is still quite small.' I had flown through the firm up to senior management level and I was working with large, important clients.

"We didn't really have the concept of job sharing at that time and when I returned to working a three-day week, I wasn't totally satisfied from a professional perspective. The firm was fantastic to me and I was working on a large client base, but I wasn't leading on those clients any more (and this is what I had been used to when I was full-time). I did this for nine months because I then had my second child and took eight months maternity leave again. I came back on a four-day a week basis after my second child. I was still working for our audit practice and I had Fridays off. I was very happy doing what I was doing, and from a professional perspective I felt more rewarded than when I was working a three-day week. I was still seeing my children, who were very young at the time, on Fridays and at the weekends. My Fridays were sacrosanct – work has significantly impacted on them probably only a handful of times in the 10 years I have been working part-time – this says a lot about the firm. If on those very rare occasions I have to come in on a Friday, I will always try to have a day off in the following week to compensate.

"I then felt ready for the next-step change in my career and spent eight months on secondment, four days a week, working with a client very close to my home. When I returned to KPMG I was looking for a new challenge. One of our very senior partners approached me and asked if I would like to come and work in risk

management. At that stage I was promoted to director – the stage between partner and senior manager. I was promoted with the firm knowing I was working four days a week. The partner I was working for was very senior and very reasonable about working patterns. Once you have established trust and credibility with someone they are happy to listen to requests. He said he was quite happy for me to work one day a week at home, so then I was only travelling into London three days a week. This meant I could take my oldest children to school twice a week. That working pattern has continued. I had been a director for about a year when I had my third and final child, in June 2003. I took another eight months maternity leave and I came back in the same role four days a week working one day at home. In January 2006 I found out that the partner I had been working for was retiring and the firm had decided to put me through the partner admission process to act as a deputy to the new risk management partner. My promotion to partner was effective from 1st October 2006.

"I think that because I have been part-time now for almost half of my career at KPMG, it has never seemed like an issue for me. It was in the business case that went forward to the board for my partnership that I was doing a four-day week.

"I lead a very small team of four senior managers, one of whom works a four-day week, and another who works one day a week from home. We are a professional organisation and in that type of organisation, I believe that you must trust and have confidence in the people that work with you. You are working with people who you are empowering to get on with the job. They know that if they need to speak with me on a Friday, I have a Blackberry. I think working flexibly is easier when you are at a senior level. Whilst you drive the work agenda strategically, you have a team to help actually deliver the work. I am quite keen that things keep moving when I am away, so I will just forward a message to someone in the team and say, 'can you look at this, I think it needs dealing with.' It also means that when I come into work on a Monday I am not dealing with a backlog of emails. But this is only half an hour at a maximum on a Friday and I don't see this as very intrusive. If my boss needs to speak to me he knows that exceptionally he can call me, although he very rarely will. If he needs to speak with me he will ask if it OK to speak or he will drop me an email saying, 'is there a good time?' You can't expect never to be called on a Friday, but you can expect only to be called if it genuinely is important. I am lucky that I work in such a progressive organisation and that the people that I work with understand my situation. We work well together as a team, and it is give and take. I believe that part of the key to success in making it work is knowing who you are working with, knowing the boundaries, and being flexible on both sides.



“I have to be absolutely disciplined about my diary. You need the confidence not to be embarrassed to say, ‘I don’t work on Fridays.’ I tend to block out a day a week when I am working at home going forward for about three months, otherwise I find that my diary fills up with meetings. My secretary also works flexibly. She works five days a week, but two or three days a week from home. We never see each other but we communicate by telephone calls and the exchange of emails.

“I think that the way I work makes me more efficient. I have to be much more focused than if I was working five days a week. There is clearly a danger if you are working four days a week that you try and do five days over the four days. Getting that balance with your peers is sometimes a bit of a challenge, you can’t be all things to all people – I’ve recognised that. You tend to be a little bit more task orientated than if you were here five days a week. You don’t have the time around the edge for the socialising and finding out what everyone else is up to.

“KPMG encourages people to be socially responsible and active in the community, so working in this way has allowed me to become a school governor at my children’s school. I don’t think that working a four-day week has affected my promotion. What has slowed my promotion down is that I have had periods of maternity leave. Three days is very firmly seen as part-time, four days is different, because nobody expects you to be sitting at your desk five days a week- that’s not the way this firm works.

“If the firm didn’t permit flexible working, I genuinely don’t think I would still be here. Although my career is very important to me, my family is more important and being allowed to work flexibly gives me the best of both worlds. They have retained me and allowed me to flourish within the organisation and progress. I am happy and I believe my children are generally happy too. I think it is a win-win situation. From the organisation’s point of view they invest a tremendous amount of time in all their people, so not to lose that investment is sound commercial sense. If you want to recruit and retain the best people you have to be the best employer and have progressive ways of working. I am lucky in that I have an incredibly interesting and challenging job as well as a relatively normal family life.”

I believe that part of the key to success in making it work is knowing who you are working with, knowing the boundaries, and being flexible on both sides.

Case Study

Maggy Pigott and Judith Killick

Maggy Pigott and Judith Killick work for the Judicial Studies Board (JSB) – an organisation responsible for training judges, chaired by a Lord Justice and run by High Court Judges. They job share as joint Executive Director for the Board, which is an Associated Office now in the new Ministry of Justice. They head up the staff secretariat with 65 civil servants and a budget of just over £8 million. Maggy works Monday to Wednesday and Judith Wednesday to Friday.

Maggy and Judith comment: “We have been job sharing together for 19 years and this is our fifth job in the Senior Civil Service. Since starting in 1988, we have done seven job shares, covering very different roles, including legal, policy and operational work. We started this job in January 2006. Each job share has been organised in a different way. We always hold off making any quick decisions about who will be doing what for at least two or three weeks. In all the jobs there have been some things where we have split lead responsibility and some things we have shared. The balance has varied. We always share areas such as strategic and business planning, finance, and staffing issues. It is important for people to know, as soon as possible, which of us is leading on what and what is truly shared as staff can get a bit anxious if there is a lack of clarity concerning this.

“This, our Chief Executive post, has been the most shared job we have had. I think it is because when you are at the top of the organisation you need to have a view on everything, rather than just responsibility for different parts of it. We have taken lead responsibility in some different areas but it would have been very difficult to separate these out completely. We both attend important events, such as the main Board (which meets twice a year) and the Executive Committee as these are our key meetings. It would be possible for us to divide them, but we don’t want to. There is a view that two people can bring different things to the meetings and it can be worthwhile to have us both there. In deciding how to allocate some lead responsibilities, several of our judicial training Committees meet on a Friday, when Judith works, so that determined our decision – it was quite pragmatic. We adjust our hours and days to fit what is the highest priority area of work. That can be a benefit, as there have been occasions when there have been two important meetings at the same time and we might each go to one.

“We have a salary budget equivalent to 1.2 full-time posts and that has travelled with us over the last 19 years. We’ve always had an overlap on a Wednesday; we consider that to be important. At the moment we have five direct reports and we hold staff and any other important meetings, such as our Senior Management Board, on a Wednesday.

“On performance management, if I am dealing almost exclusively with one unit head then I would do their appraisal, but I would show my draft report to Judith, and get her input. Quite often we both have knowledge of the individual, and we would write the report jointly. In those appraisal meetings we agree that one of us will take the lead and the other will take a note and ‘chip in’ if necessary, otherwise it could be quite

intimidating. But there has never been a problem, and we do check. Typically we will each have one person who only works for one of us and the others will be shared. During the year we discuss management issues on a regular basis. This is an advantage, as you get the other’s perspective which can be of benefit not only to us but also to the individual concerned. It is where the ‘two heads are better than one’ comes in. We are wary of the possibility that someone might try to come between us or relate to one of us rather than the other, but we have not found that to be a real problem. People who know us really well occasionally call us by the other’s name – we answer to either – and we take it as evidence that the job share role is working!

“There are advantages to both the employer and employee. The organisation is getting two sets of skills and strengths. If there is a really difficult issue it is so helpful to be able to talk that through with Judith who will know the subject matter and will have an equal interest in solving the problem. It can often result in better decision making and perhaps more creative, innovative solutions.

“We are fresher and more energetic when we come to work because we have had four days off doing other things including, now, trying to keep fit. You are much more positive about the job, because you are not worn down. When you see the long hours that people are working, you realise the stress that people are under. Being able to have that time off affects how you perform at work. But we may well also think about our work whilst at home and that distance is useful for reflection and coming up with ideas.

“I do think that productivity can be greater from people working part-time or job sharing. I work with a greater intensity on my three days than I could sustain for five. When I am starting to run out of steam on a Wednesday, Judith is there full of energy and enthusiasm. You are also conscious that you have less time so you tend to be more focused. You have to be organised and good at prioritisation as the deadlines are often shorter and you can’t afford to let things slide. It would be very easy for people to blame the fact that you are part-time or job share. One disadvantage is that you have less time for social conversations and events. We very rarely take any time off for doctor or dentist appointments – I think that is a considerable advantage. Also, if there is a crisis, rather than getting someone in who doesn’t have the knowledge and the experience, we can work extra days. There may also be part-time cover if one of us is on holiday or sick. Because there are two of us working in this way, and for a total of six days, our jobs tend to grow with us. In two out of the four previous jobs we have had in the Senior Civil Service, once we have moved on, we have been replaced by more than one person full-time.

“job sharing can give extra flexibility to the organisation. I think that as job sharers you do need to be prepared to be fairly flexible. Perhaps it’s easier for us as we are at a relatively senior level and are well paid so we could afford additional child care cover if required. Some people forget that we give up two fifths of our salary to work this arrangement – it doesn’t come free. One of the joys of working part-time is that the



organisation gains because they don't lose people, but on the other hand we retain our experience and knowledge. Many have said, 'it is wonderful to see people at your level doing this.' Junior staff are pleased to see senior women working flexibly. We have always felt it to be important to publicise what we do and why we do it. Supporting flexible working reflects on the organisation itself and aids recruitment. We feel we have been extremely lucky to be able to job share high profile, mainstream posts and this engenders loyalty and commitment to the department.

"How does it work? We always say to people they should speak to whoever is there and it is for us to deal with it. We regard it as our responsibility to know what's going on or to be able to find out, if necessary by contacting the other. Our PA is an important link in this. Since the use of mobile phones it's been easier to get in touch quickly although it's very rare that things are so urgent that they can't wait half a day or so. People forget that all senior managers are out of the office for some of the time. I could well be out of the office two days a week if I were doing this job full-time.

"If the other one has to pick something up and deal with it then we live with that, we don't unpick, we move forward. In reality we know enough about what the other is doing that we can deal with most problems. If one of us is not here one of our Heads of Unit might know more about a subject than the other one of us. This gives them the opportunity to take the lead and sometimes to attend meetings where one of us would have gone. You cannot job share if you are not prepared to delegate – fortunately you can't be a micro manager. This way of working means that people can seek and get added responsibility; it is empowering and they usually thrive, so it is good for developing your staff. Job sharing is, after all, a sort of team working in itself.

"On Wednesdays I update Judith orally – we try to have an hour together, sometimes over lunch. I don't have that on a Monday. We have had various ways of communicating over the years. The latest is that Judith usually records an update tape, which I listen to first thing or sometimes she uses email, if there's less to pass on. We also contact the other on their days off if there is something urgent and important that we feel the other needs to know.

"The whole catching up thing – it's not that easy. I arrive on a Wednesday, everybody is busy and I don't know what is going on. Sometimes we have to go straight to a meeting. Maggy has the problem that when she is trying to shut down on a Wednesday afternoon, everybody is in full swing. Sometimes the handover gets lost. I think that the people who get to the top are those who are used to managing everything quite tightly themselves, making sure that everything gets done. Sharing that with someone else is not an easy thing. Job sharing would not suit everybody; it is an option. I think we would find it quite hard if one of us were to retire. It would be a hard decision about what to do next.

"We are quite different people but we complement each other and have similar attitudes to work and management – we

wouldn't still be together 19 years on if we didn't. You have to be able to trust each other, that is crucial, and not be too possessive. When we come to our annual report at the end of the year, we quite often say 'we' did something and don't distinguish. It could be a problem if one of us wanted to claim sole ownership of our achievements, but we are quite happy to share the credit. Ultimately it makes the job share role a success and you both gain.

"We are appraised individually, but we always show each other our reports and feedback. We tell our managers that, which is helpful to them. We write our job objectives together at the beginning of the year and a lot of those are shared. There will be a few that will relate to one or other of us.

"I think we are now so much an institution in our organisation that people just take it for granted. With external customers and stakeholders it can be quite a unique selling point, because people remember you and are pleased to see job sharing working successfully. We have worked for several Lord Chancellors and other Ministers, for the senior judiciary and, of course, other senior civil servants and it has not been a problem. In fact quite the reverse as we have had positive feedback over the years about the success and value of job sharing.

"We would sum up the advantage to us as balance between work and the rest of your life. We have been able to have a career and undertaken hugely exciting and challenging jobs and at the same time, we have had four days a week with the family. Apart from physical exercise that Maggy mentioned, both of us have taken the opportunity to learn another language and have various other interests. Maggy is a member of an Independent Monitoring Board at a prison – a Home Secretary appointment.

"We both value our work-life balance very highly and we can see that with jobs at the next level that could be jeopardized. We like working closely with our teams; that's what we are good at. If you go to the next level, you tend to work with other people at that level. I don't think job sharing held us back. We were told that we came very close to getting our boss's job and that we had reached the standard for the next level. That suggests the department does not rule out the possibility. We haven't tested it, but in theory there isn't a glass ceiling.

"Because it gives you the full week cover, job sharing enables you to do jobs that aren't so suitable for part-time work. When we first started job sharing we deliberately went for jobs that had been carried out by a full-timer. We didn't want to be pigeon-holed into 'that's a job that could be job shared.' It does give you that scope which is the real advantage over part-time. That is its key advantage."

Case Study

Melissa Stark

Melissa Stark works for Accenture, a global management consulting, technology services and outsourcing company. Accenture employs professionals in the UK. Melissa is a Senior Executive in the Energy Strategy Group. She works with oil industry clients and specialises in business modelling, market and financial analysis, and decision support for investments and new market entries. She usually manages three or four teams at the same time carrying out different pieces of work. Melissa has a three-day week contract.

Melissa comments: "I joined Accenture in 1993 and have taken a couple of breaks, firstly to do my MBA and secondly, just over a year in 2003 to have my first son. I am now on maternity leave with my second son. When I took my first maternity leave I outlined what I wanted to do. I spoke to a couple of key senior executives (partners in Accenture are called senior executives) who I worked for about coming back to work part-time. I wanted to come back 50 per cent, two and a half days a week and they agreed. I returned in November 2004 on the new contract.

"I came back as a senior manager (the same level as when I left), managing one team. In this role you usually work very closely with a senior client, and your team could be between three and 10 people. You are still focused on filling the pipeline for the next project, but also delivering the work. At that time, Accenture didn't have an active programme for people working part-time. We did have a written policy, so you knew what you were allowed to do.

"I worked Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, so I was never gone for more than a day – this is what worked best for me. I talked to the team every day – even on a Tuesday and Thursday. I was very involved with my first son between 10am and 4pm. I found I could check in first thing in the morning and then I would turn my phone off and check in again after 4pm. If anything was urgent I would pick it up within hours – it was only a six hour window.

"I had a global role, and I feel that works really well if you are working part-time. If you have clients in Asia, America and Europe, then being there for a certain fixed period of time doesn't really matter. As long as you are scoping your activities to your 50, 60 or 80 per cent, you can get them done over seven days. I am flexible with people, so I don't feel I'm asking for that much for them to be flexible with me. You do need to check in every day, because the job that you do hasn't really changed. You can do it differently but the objectives are still the same. There is no new job that has been created for a part-time person. I want to stress that, because it's really important that we don't make up fake jobs. You are asking for a lot of flexibility on your client's part and your team's part, but that's OK as long as you give that flexibility back. Work is fine because they know I will do emails on my days off and work the odd half day at weekends. You try to give back what you are getting. The last tactical thing that has worked very well for me is that I have one 'to do' list – it has house things, kid things, meetings and my work things. I do it every Sunday night and I prioritise over a two week period. Finally, working 50 per cent was really hard. I was employed on a 50 per cent contract for two years, but I probably worked three days a week for most of it; I ended up working 60 per cent.

"There is a big difference between senior manager and senior executive, and only a very small percentage are promoted. To get

promoted, you have to have more projects, more clients, and bring in more business rather than just delivering a project. I was promoted in 2005 because I was doing more work and selling more. To begin with I worked by myself, then it became a team of three, then a team of five, then a team of 10. All of a sudden it was a lot of people and growing. You are promoted if there is a trend – it's the potential to create opportunities and to deliver projects. The difference between senior manager and senior executive is scale. You have to be able to do a lot more of it, which is a double challenge for someone who is part-time. I was promoted to senior executive in September 2005 working three days a week.

"Once I was promoted it was a waterfall of work, so much more of the people development side, leadership within the organisation and where Accenture is going, versus just selling and delivering client work. As a management consultant you are client-focused as well as people-focused because of your teams. As a senior executive, you probably have a full day of non-client facing work a week and if you are part-time you do not have a full day. The first year (as a senior executive) was great; somehow I found a way to make it work. I even got promoted to the next level of senior executive.

"One point I want to stress is that I think your staff can't perceive you as unavailable – you are a senior executive. You can train your staff in terms of what is urgent and what is not. When they are calling you in your personal time you should feel 'I'm glad you have called me today'. I was always available – I don't think I would ever have told anyone not to contact me on my days off. I plan things round my sons and my family on my days off, and calls would have to fit around my personal activities. My teams respected me and when they did call me on my days off, it was for something important. I think that as a senior executive you have a responsibility to be there for your staff seven days a week. Ultimately they may be responsible for doing the work, but you are the one accountable. That doesn't change if you are part-time. I had senior managers that I really trusted with everything. Each of them had their different projects and they dealt with them day-to-day. I did learn to be less hands-on on with the delivery – and did a lot more quality checking. The senior managers were completely invaluable and I couldn't have done it without them. I think that they respected the fact that I worked three days a week – I never felt any resentment. I am keen to show that someone can prioritise their family in this way and still be successful. In June 2006 I got a Leadership award and the 'winning' submission was about me as a role model. I think there is a positive vibe being a working mother. It impacts not just on other women, but also on the men as well – the balance is what everyone should be trying to achieve.

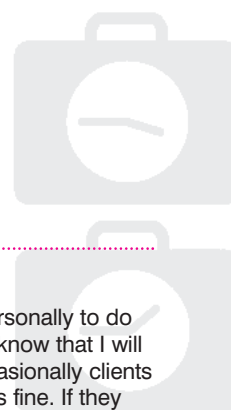
"I went on maternity leave again in September 2006, so I had a full 12 months as a senior executive. When I took maternity leave I had between 20 and 30 people working on three different projects. I received another small promotion while I was on maternity leave – so I will come back a little bit more senior than when I left.

"I will be returning on much the same arrangement. If I came back with a different proposal, I don't think the firm would have a problem.

"I have never been happier – as a mum, as a wife, as a worker in Accenture. The firm knows that the women who decide to come back are better than average, and as long as you give them the right roles and responsibilities it is economic."

Case Study

Julian Taylor



Julian Taylor is a partner with Simmons & Simmons, a leading international law firm with over 2,000 people worldwide. He works in the employment group where there are five partners and 15 other lawyers. He works 10 per cent less than full-time by not working on Wednesday afternoons.

Julian comments: “I was a barrister before I joined the firm in 1999. I became a partner in 2003, and I was working full-time at that point. I led a project on flexible working within our group, and this involved a lot of consultation, speaking to everyone in the group. The idea was to come up with a clear framework about how flexible working would operate. We rolled it out in 2005. I had never really thought about working flexibly myself, but undertaking the project got me thinking as I had concerns that I was working quite long hours. I had young children and wasn’t really seeing them that much during the week. I was on holiday when I had the idea of having half a day off a week. I think I’d always felt that two, three, four days a week wouldn’t be that easy because of the work pressures. But it’s not uncommon to be out of the office for half a day or even a full day a week, so four and a half days felt more feasible. I came back from holiday and within a week I had raised it as a possibility. Initially, I talked to the other partners in my group. I wanted to check that they were comfortable with my idea before taking it further. I had never wanted to do it without their support, and they were all completely fine. I then made the request. The head of my group (who was very supportive) spoke to the senior management of the firm. I think that from making that request I had my first half day off about three weeks later – it was incredibly quick.

“I explained that I didn’t see it being an issue because, if necessary, I would be available on that half day. So I don’t think it was seen as that much of a problem in terms of me managing my workload.

“Being a partner one of the key responsibilities is to manage the client relationships. I have a group of clients who will send in work. It is then my job to delegate and supervise that work. Beyond that, I need to manage those relationships generally, check that clients are happy with what we are doing, understand what is happening in their business and manage the delivery of the additional services that we provide. I also deal with our lawyers internally to supervise the work and ensure the client gets what they are looking for. That’s really the main part of the role. There are other aspects that come with being a partner, including management-type issues.

“Across our group, we work on a ‘client team’ basis, usually with several lawyers allocated to each team. So of the 15 lawyers we have in the department, I am working with them all at different times.

“Everyone knows about my half day, and I am keen to make sure that it is a fixture, rather than there be uncertainty as to when I would take it each week. So the clients I work with regularly know about it, as do the lawyers and other partners. In terms of clients it has been fine; they know that generally I am not around on a Wednesday afternoon. They are very

good at trying to ensure that if they want me personally to do something they avoid that time. Secondly, they know that I will make myself available if they really need it. Occasionally clients will ring me on a Wednesday afternoon, which is fine. If they have rung me, it’s because it really is something quite urgent. Similarly, the lawyers in the department know that I am not around, so if they need input from me on something, they are very good at coming to me on a Tuesday or Wednesday morning, knowing that I am going to be off later. Quite often they will give me something knowing that I can read it on the train on the way home on a Wednesday lunchtime. I will give them a ring the other end or send an email. Equally they know that if they need to speak to me they can ring me on Wednesday afternoon. But again that has never been abused. It’s more the occasional phone call, which I always expected. It is important that I am flexible and able to do that sort of thing.

“I leave between 12.45pm and 1pm. For a long time my son had a football lesson at 2pm, which was great because it meant that I had to leave on time. It is so easy to take half a day and leave at 3pm, but it meant I had to get out of the office by a fixed time, so that was useful.

“Because of the way that partnership works, we don’t have a huge number of ‘benefits’. I have taken a 10 per cent cut in my earnings. The pay is quite interesting because in terms of the output that I generate it is probably not cut by 10 per cent. But I think it is very important that the reduction is there. One of the problems with flexible working can be resentment. If other partners saw I was having half a day off but was being paid exactly the same or virtually the same, I think, understandably, they would resent that.

“It sends out a good message to more junior lawyers that flexible working can operate successfully and at more senior levels. Retention is a big issue for law firms at the moment and one of the significant changes is around work-life balance. I think that in many law firms there is a perception that if you are going to succeed as a partner it involves a willingness to put work before absolutely everything else. From the firm’s perspective it is probably healthy for some partners to succeed and work less than full-time. It increases my loyalty to the firm, because I have felt happier since working with this arrangement. It has made me feel very positive about work and the balance I have between work and home. I can’t ever imagine me leaving here to go to another law firm.

“It feels to me like it has many advantages. The main reason for undertaking this was to see more of my children – I now have some quality time with them in the middle of the week. It has also had a psychological impact on me – I feel better about myself because I feel the balance is better.

“I was slightly concerned at the beginning that it might put more pressure on the other partners by me not being around, for example; that they would have to supervise things that I’m responsible for. But it hasn’t really worked out like that – they’ve been very happy to do this occasionally, but I don’t think it happens that much. This is partly because people seem to be able to arrange things so that they either get the

Case Study

Neta Tully

go or when I'm back in the office. If it's something I am heavily involved in they will ring me or send me an email while I'm away.

"In terms of clients there have been occasional small frustrations if I've not been around and the client has had to wait a bit longer to get something, but that's happened very rarely, and it's no different from the frustration they might have had if I had been in another client meeting on that day. I have certainly had no negative feedback from clients about the arrangement. On the contrary a lot of clients have been very positive about it. They tend to think it's a very good thing, and some of the clients we work with work flexibly as well, so it's been easy in that sense. In terms of the impact on other lawyers in the department generally they have been very positive about it. Quite a lot of them are people who one day might want to work flexibly themselves, so seeing me do it gives them encouragement and shows them that this is possible at a more senior level.

"I think I would find it really hard to return to working five days. I can work at home as I have a computer and a Blackberry – but I like the office/home separation. I could cut out the commute sometimes and work at home on a Wednesday morning, but I think it is important to be in the office at least for part of the day, so that's why I tend to come in.

"In some ways it might be easier to work flexibly the more senior you are. I think what's quite easy for me now would have been much harder six or seven years ago, when I was spending more time drafting documents. When you have more of a supervisory role, it's much easier to be a bit more remote. That's interesting because sometimes it's perceived as being the other way round.

"I think law firms and institutions in the City are accommodating flexible working more and more. Flexible working is sometimes equated with less working; I don't think it needs to be that way. People can work flexibly and work incredibly hard. There has been quite a change in the City over the past five years or so. There used to be a bit of a knee-jerk reaction that certain jobs cannot be done that way. Technology has helped a lot as well.

"The firm has a flexible working policy and also a working time preference project, which is being piloted at the moment. The idea is to try and have a dialogue with lawyers about how they want to work. Something I think is very important is that everyone should have the opportunity to apply to work flexibly, not only people with children. I still think there is a problem that the take-up is generally for child care reasons. This means there are still cultural issues about other people having confidence to come forward and say 'I want to work flexibly'. I think it's sometimes seen as not being justified in some quarters unless it's for child care reasons.

"It can be difficult for men to come forward and ask for flexible working because they might be seen as demonstrating a lack of commitment to the business. I certainly don't feel I've suffered from going down this route. And it's left me happier and grateful for the role I've got, so more tied into the firm."

Neta Tully works for Hewlett-Packard (HP), a technology solutions provider to global consumers, businesses and institutions. The company's offerings span IT infrastructure, global services, business and home computing, and imaging and printing. Neta is Marketing Director for the Technology Solutions Group, UK and Ireland, and is based out of the Bracknell office.

Neta comments: "I have worked for HP for nearly eight years. Back in 2003 I had my baby and at the time I was the Marketing Communication Manager. Having taken seven months maternity leave, I initially came back three days a week, taking holiday on the other two days. I then started to think about what I would do when my holiday ran out! I presented a business case to the then marketing director about how I would use HP's flexible policies to work for four full days a week, and that was agreed.

"Nine months later the marketing director moved to another role within HP, and I was one of the people included in his succession plan. I debated long and hard whether I should put myself forward for his job. I had quite a good work-life balance at that time, as I had one day a week when I was working from home, and working flexibly meant that I could work around my son. I didn't think it would be possible to continue to do this as a director, but I talked it through with the marketing director, and he felt that I would. Feeling confident that I would be able to do all the work that was involved in being a director, whilst working within HP's flexible working policy and philosophy, I decided to apply and got it. This was in 2004.

"As marketing director, my role is about directing the work and spending time with people. I have five managers who directly report to me. They each have teams under them, and the extended marketing team is probably about 50 people. When I come into the office I use my time with the team, or with my managers, or in meetings. I won't come into the office and sit down and do a piece of work. I'll do that at home, and it will take me half the time because I don't have any of the interruptions. I am just much more efficient in how I use my time. I think you can work flexibly as a director as long as you make sure you are managing the team. I am very clear about what I expect them to do. As a director I undertake much more customer-facing activity, which is not necessarily during the 9am to 5pm working hours, so I am often out entertaining customers on a Friday or during the weekend.

"I don't have a desk now in the office now. Only 50 per cent of the people in my team have a desk – everybody else is hot-desking. When we originally said we were going to create a different office environment, there were some people who were not happy with this. At first, I wasn't that happy not to have my own desk and my own things – but, I haven't noticed. There are enough desks and because of the technology we are a wireless building. We have set up some great coffee areas and if you need to have a quick meeting, why not have it in the coffee area with your laptop and your wireless connection and you can do whatever you need to do?"



I have an office at home and most evenings, once my son has gone to bed and we've had supper, I may spend a couple of hours working. I am not always checking my email. If I am going to work at home in the evening, it's to do a piece of work, such as a presentation or to prepare for a meeting. But I can then have part of an afternoon with my son to balance this. Sometimes it's hard to disentangle what is work and what is your own home life. At HP we do family things as well. If you are a mother, I think it helps you reconcile what you are trying to do with your work-life balance. HP is more to me than just work; I have friends there and a good support network.

"You have to be very organised and very disciplined – I am that kind of person by nature. You have to be very trusting as well – I trust my team 100 per cent to deliver. I have a fantastic PA and we work really well together; she works flexibly too.

"In my organisation I operate a flexible policy within the team but the team doesn't come to me or my managers and say 'I would like to work from home every Friday' - because it doesn't work like that. If somebody wants to work from home one afternoon a week or one day a week, it's fine, because you can always get hold of people on the mobile phone – as long as they always deliver. The work you do at home is no different to what you do in the office. There is still a view that if you are working from home, you are not working. If you are not working it will only take a few months for this to become clear. Because we are experienced managers, they will know if somebody isn't delivering or if they are not pulling their weight. If they are not, we would deal with it – we wouldn't shy away from it.

"We are encouraged to work from home if we want to. One key thing is that you have to give people the technology to do it. You have to set very clear objectives and it's an open, transparent, honest discussion that you have with the employer. I have a mantra that somebody set for me a long time ago that says, 'non-delivery is not an option'. How you get it done is down to you, and we will help. I will help anybody get to their objectives, but you have to do it – that's the philosophy.

"We have annual objectives set for us. I see my manager formally once a month for an hour and we regularly speak on the phone. Every year we have a formal appraisal, and probably every six months we will go through my objectives. I will do exactly the same with my team. It's about keeping in touch, communicating and creating that trust – in order for it to work you have to have trust in your team. I don't think anybody really, including my colleagues or my other directors, even realise I work flexibly – which I think says a lot about the company's philosophy; we're measured on our outcomes not our outputs.

"I can't see any disadvantages, and if I asked my manager I don't think he would see any. I have learnt to become more efficient – to prioritise and be more effective. There is a balance and it depends on the nature of the job. I have

learnt over the years that you must do what you say you are going to do. It's more about delivering on your objectives and I know how to prioritise. I have a reputation for delivering – I always do. You need to understand what is important to the business. The advantage for me is being able to work at a senior level. I want to be the marketing director and I have worked hard to reach director level. With HP's diversity and flexible working policy I have been able to achieve this without having to compromise my career ambitions.

"HP has a culture of diversity, our values are based around diversity and inclusion of all different types of people and we want to encourage that. HP promotes diversity, so we have to be able to attract and retain the right kind of people. The company wants to keep senior females and we are focusing on that at the moment. The benefit to HP is that we haven't lost a resource that we want to keep – a definite bottom line result; it's hugely expensive to train people."

I am just much more efficient in how I use my time. I think you can work flexibly as a director as long as you make sure you are managing the team. I am very clear about what I expect them to do.

Case Study

Louise Weir

Louise Weir is an Executive Director in the Fixed Income Division for Lehman Brothers, a global investment bank, employing over 4,000 people in its regional headquarters in London. She is in charge of 11 people who are responsible for the execution risk on sales, acquisitions and securitisation of mortgages plus the provision of warehouse financing to clients of the bank. She works from home one day a week and has arranged to work in the office between certain times on the other four days.

Louise comments: "I started working for Lehman Brothers in July 2001 and my son was born in September 2003. I took just under six months maternity leave and returned in February 2004 on a flexible working arrangement. It was my boss at the time who told me before I left for maternity leave that Lehman Brothers would be introducing Flexible Working Arrangements (FWAs) and suggested I think about it. Prior to his suggestion, I had assumed that I probably would be unable to combine my previous responsibilities with being the mother of a young baby but I hadn't really thought through the options. I was sent all the information while I was on maternity leave and having sat down with my husband to work out what we wanted to achieve as a family I submitted my request to the firm. My aim was fairly simple – I didn't want to cut down on my working hours but I did want to ensure that I saw my son at least once a day and with a commute approaching two hours each way the solution we sought was to cut down the time spent in the office. Accordingly, my request was for a later start on two days so that I could have breakfast with my son, an earlier finish on another two days so that I could do bathtime and bedtime and one day at home when I could do both. My husband requested the reverse from his employer so that if I was doing breakfast he would do bathtime and so on.

"I prepared the application as I would a business plan – trying to anticipate questions and concerns that may arise. To my delight my proposal was accepted, without amendment, and it has been successfully in place now for three years. Initially of course there were a few teething problems – I think I was the first person within my division (fixed income) to be granted an FWA and so there was a requirement on both sides to adapt accordingly. In the current technological environment, the shift is more of a psychological one than a logistical one as Blackberry and mobiles mean that I am more or less as contactable as I would be if I was in the office. My office phone is diverted to my mobile on the day that I work from home and so people don't even have to dial a different number. To be honest, I also found it difficult initially to walk out of the office on my early finishes – this is an environment in which I'd been used to working long hours and it was hard being the only person to leave early. But for me – having a young baby (as he was then) at the end of the commute was the ultimate incentive to make that step to leave. Gradually, over time, both my colleagues and I adapted to my new hours in the office, and it continues to work quite well.

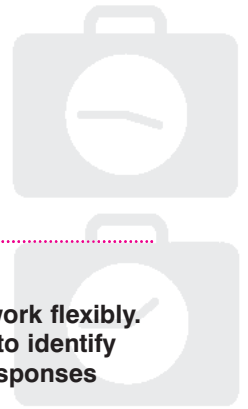
"The key to making an FWA work in my opinion is quite simply being flexible in its application as well as in its

construction. So for example, there are some Fridays where it is just not appropriate for me to work from home because a number of face-to-face meetings are required and so I come into the office. At times, I have had to stay late on the days that I am due to leave early but they are usually planned in advance and are definitely in the minority.

"I firmly believe that if we really want to retain people in this environment then flexible working is an option that we should utilise to its maximum advantage. I can only speak from my personal experience but whilst I was on maternity leave, I had two unsolicited approaches of alternative jobs because the people offering the roles had assumed that I would be unable to combine the demands of a new baby with a full-time role in the front office of a major investment bank. By offering a solution to that potential problem, Lehman Brothers has not only made sure that my 15 years of experience and knowledge stays with them but it has also recouped the initial investment that it made in me when I was hired. The fact that I have just returned to the same role after a second maternity leave is a further testament to the economic benefit of FWAs. I have also heard others express fears that if they apply for an FWA their career will falter or stall completely. Again from my perspective, in the time that I have been employed pursuant to an FWA, I have been promoted and have also established and developed a team in an area of the business that Lehman Brothers Europe had no prior experience. That team has grown from just one plus me in early 2004 to 11 plus me today. I do not believe that my career has suffered as a result of my FWA and whilst I cannot, of course, know what would have happened to my career if it hadn't been granted, I do know that it would be unlikely that I would still be working at Lehman Brothers. I love my job but I also adore my children – having a way to combine the demands of both would always be my ultimate aim and so far the both the firm and I have developed the method by which that aim can be achieved."

In the current technological environment, the shift is more of a psychological one than a logistical one.

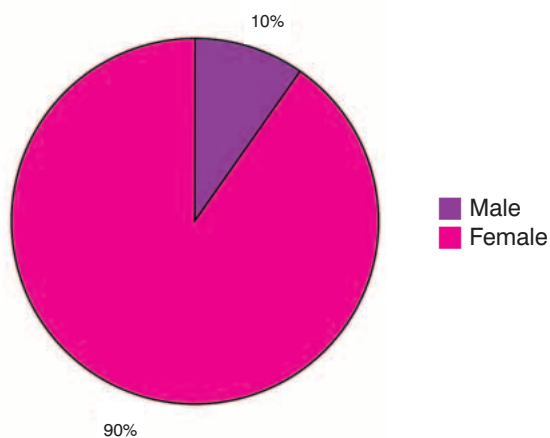
About the research



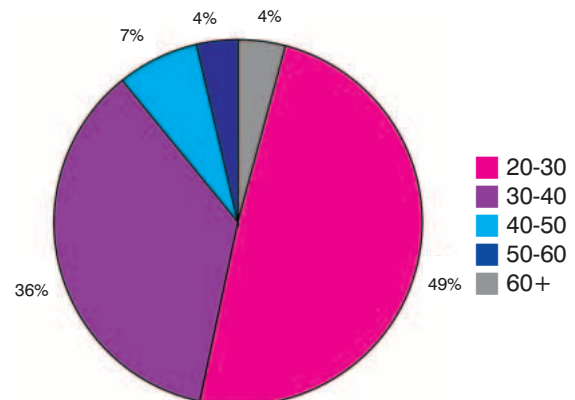
A survey was sent out to explore some of the issues facing managerial and senior staff who work flexibly. The survey was disseminated online to a selected group of managers, who were encouraged to identify appropriate respondents within their own organisations to complete the questionnaire. 193 responses were received. Responses were anonymous.

The findings are set out below. Where respondents were invited to add supplementary comments to their responses, or chose the option 'other' where no set criteria matched their individual situation, the responses were sorted into themes. The strongest of these appears as commentary next to these questions.

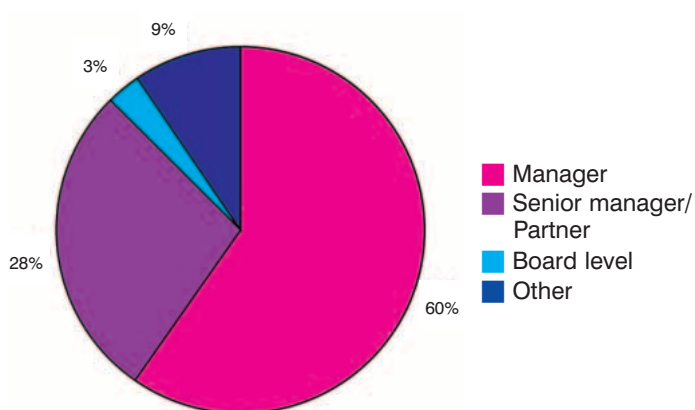
Gender



Age

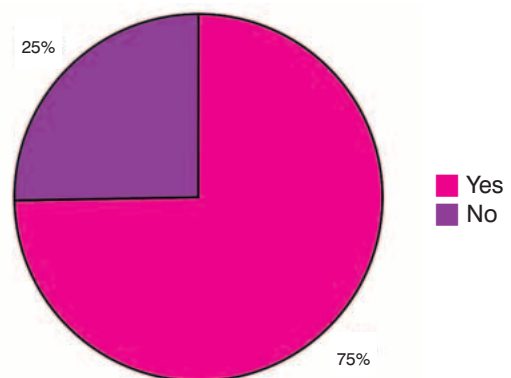


Organisational Role

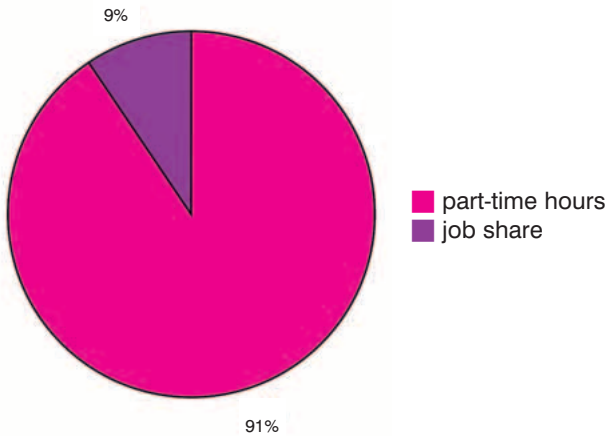


Do you work less than full-time hours?

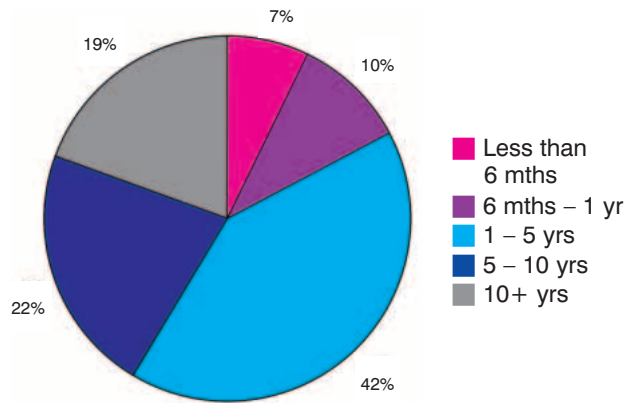
(however they are defined at your workplace)



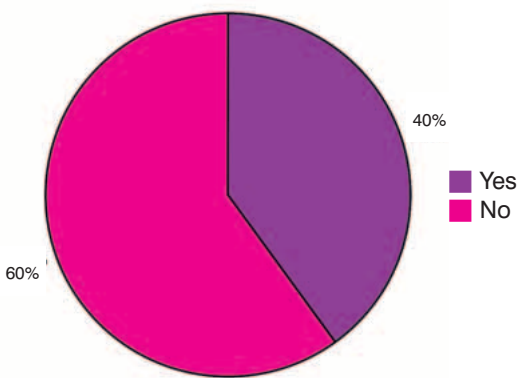
Of those working less than full-time



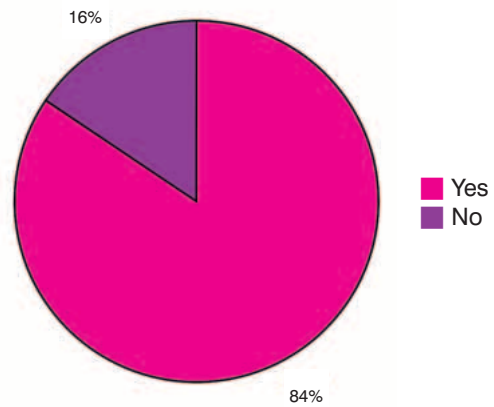
How long have you worked like this?



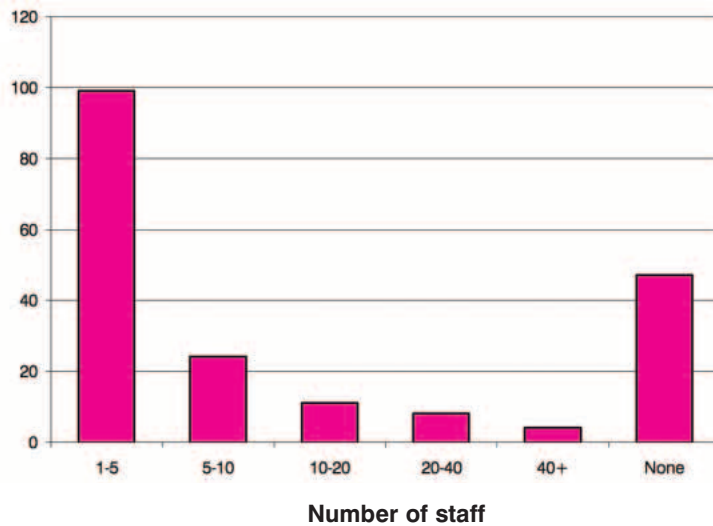
Do you work from home or remotely on a regular basis?



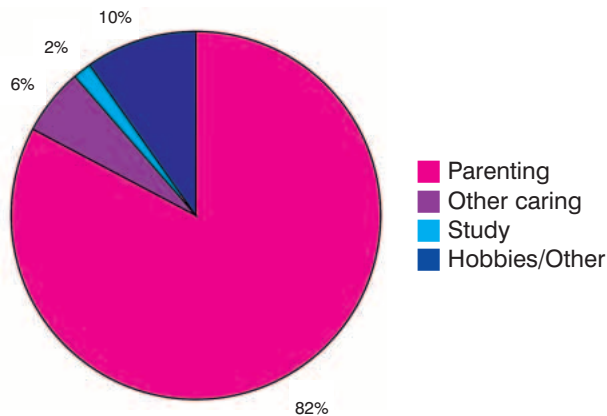
Have you got flexible start and finish times?



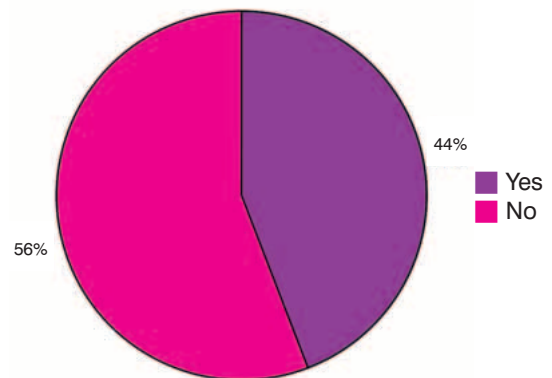
How many staff do you manage?



Why do you work flexibly?

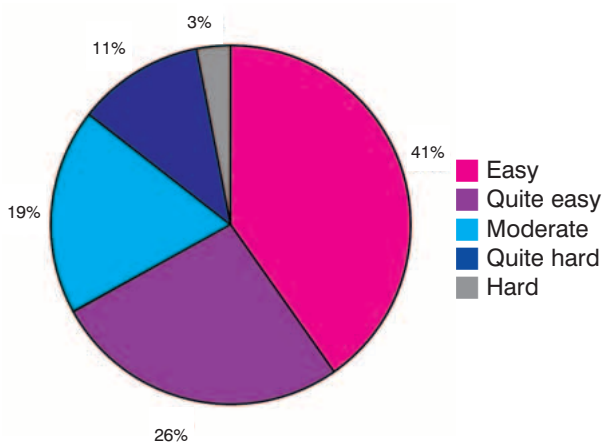


Has working flexibly negatively impacted your career?

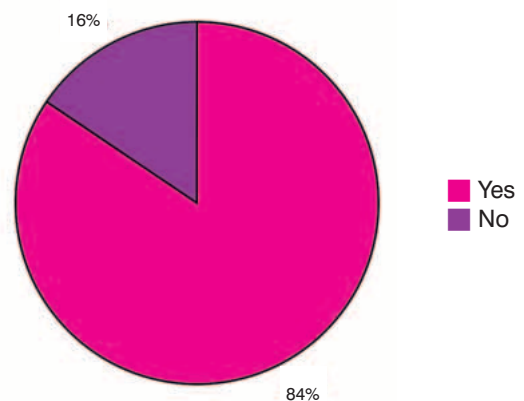


Comment: If answered 'yes' to this question, respondents could elaborate. The majority of remarks focused on a few areas: the lack of visibility in the workplace by being less than full-time; a perceived lack of commitment from the top (seen as 'opting-out' of career progression); not enough time to take on the work which builds reputation.

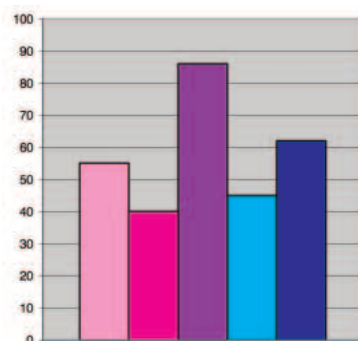
How hard was it to negotiate your flexible working pattern?



Are colleagues at a similar level supportive?



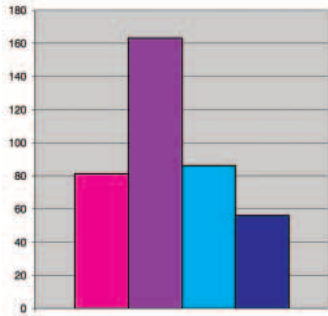
What do you think are barriers to senior level flexible working?



- Job impossible on a flexible basis
- Culture is anti
- Management responsibility
- Concerns about clients
- Other

Comment: Those answering 'other' concentrated their responses around issues of: perception that senior people should 'always be around'; no reduction made in workload even if hours are reduced; managerial attitudes; few role models at senior levels.

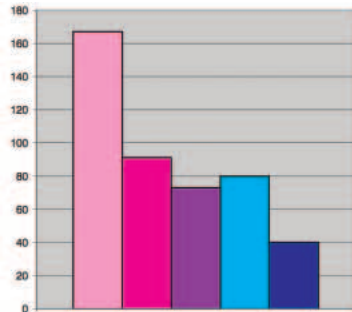
What are the benefits to you?



- Lower stress
- Better quality of life
- Better work performance
- Other

Comment: Those citing ‘other’ benefits primarily cited: more time to spend with family, especially young children; opportunity to get involved with their communities; less commuting and travelling.

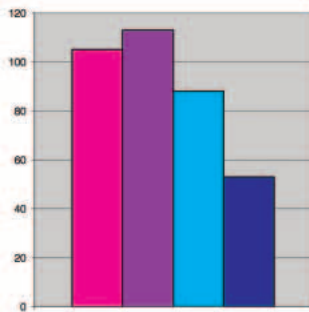
What are the benefits to the organisation?



- Improved retention
- Good PR
- Financial benefits
- Employer of choice
- Other

Comment: Respondents identified ‘other’ organisational benefits as: strong loyalty; enhanced personal performance; strong role modelling for other employees; increased motivation.

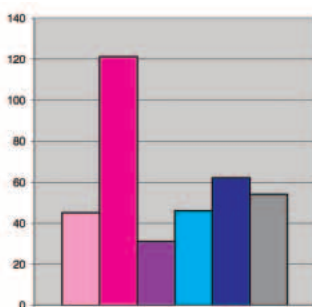
What are the disadvantages to you?



- Lower rewards (pay/bonus)
- Time constraints
- Promotion curtailed
- Other

Comment: ‘Other’ disadvantages identified included: workspill – working full-time hours but only being paid to work part-time; unrealistic expectations from managers of what can be achieved in the working time available; increased stress; career damage.

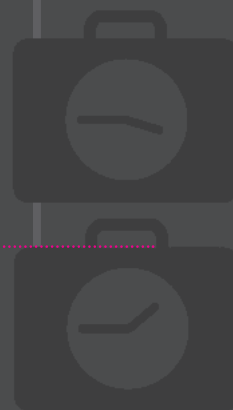
What organisational problems have arisen?



- Communication problems
- Attendance at meetings
- Increased admin
- Continuity problems
- Burdens falling on colleagues
- Other

Comment: Few ‘other’ problems were identified. Those that were included: backlog of work builds up while away; heavy reliance on IT which can fail.

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Shaping a Fairer Future

Conceived and written by: **Pam Walton**

Additional material and editing by: **Jonathan Swan**

Designed by: **MWA Design**

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Working Families,
1 - 3 Berry Street, London, EC1V 0AA
tel: 020 7253 7243
fax: 020 7253 6253
email: office@workingfamilies.org.uk

www.workingfamilies.org.uk