

The Flex Execs Report

Profiles in Flex Success

A Flexibility Alliance Report

The Career Customization Profile Project

This Flex Execs report profiles a number of business leaders that have delivered significant value and ascended the career ladder while working non traditional (flexible) schedules. These individuals are all noteworthy for their success and their contributions to their organizations independent of their schedules. Yet their success on custom schedules is a powerful demonstration that schedule does not equate to commitment or effectiveness, and that flexible schedules need not take talent off track for career progression or leadership success.

These real world examples counter common misperceptions in the workplace that workers on flex schedules aren't committed, shouldn't manage teams or should be shifted into support roles. These success stories remind us that talent trumps availability, and encourage us to reward results not schedule. They force us to acknowledge that flexible career paths that include opportunities for significant responsibility, the management of an organization, and the delivery of significant value can succeed in our own organization - if we create an environment that allows them to. And they demonstrate how the success of our own organizations may be enhanced by offering these flexible career paths to retain top talent.

Most importantly these individuals' examples provide compelling support for career customization as a strategy for retaining talent in a tightening labor market. To the one, these key contributors – leaders in their field - said that they would not still be with their employer if their request for flexibility had been denied. Workplace flexibility will only become more strategic in the coming years as baby boomers reach retirement age and consider their options for easing into retirement, producing a historic labor shortage. The Conference Board predicts a 10M worker job shortage in 10 years. Another report commissioned by the Department of Labor clearly attests that increased retention of parents and retirement aged workers will be critical in meeting labor demands in the US economy over the next two decades.

As those companies that have created a work culture that embraces scheduling flexibility can attest, transforming your corporate culture is not a matter of policy alone - it requires leadership and a consistent investment in cultural change over years, not months. Forward thinking companies are strategically investing in becoming flexible workplaces today to maintain their standing as employers of choice in the changing labor market of the coming decade. As these stories attest, supporting key talent in demonstrating flex success in your organization is an excellent first step to creating a culture that values results over schedule and retains the best and the brightest to lead your organization. One Flex Exec signals to the entire organization that flexibility works, is accepted and embraced in a way that a policy never could.

An Additional Message for Individuals Seeking Flexibility

For years, career customization arrangements have been closeted, the product of secret back office deals that individuals and their management talked little about publicly. Management feared that if the word got out, their superiors would devalue the employee, or everyone would ask for a custom schedule. Professionals working flexibly feared the same loss of credibility or worse, the end of their arrangement if details of their schedule were made public. Thankfully, that atmosphere is changing. This report marks a milestone in that regard. These executives are sharing their stories openly to inspire you to create an authentic career that allows you to succeed at work and in life. It is a testament to their organizations and their credibility in those organizations that they feel safe in sharing their stories and in empowering you to succeed in a custom career of your own.

This report profiles a number of senior individuals (director level and up) that have succeeded on non traditional schedules. Though these individuals might be at a different stage in their careers than you are today, trust that their path to a custom career was as uncharted as yours. We hope their success will inspire you to believe that you can create an authentic custom career and stay on track for leadership. We also hope their stories can help you to evaluate your options and understand which model of flexibility will work best in your role and organization and make a compelling proposal.

As you move forward with your proposal for career customization, we highly encourage you to seek out other role models in your organization that have succeeded on a flexible basis to support your bid for flexibility. If like many professionals, your proposal will be a first in your organization or at your level, use these individuals' stories to support your proposal by demonstrating to your management how the model that you are proposing is working in other organizations and can succeed in your own.

A Note about the Temporal Nature of Interviews

These stories are a snapshot at a current point in these individual careers. All of these stories have been reviewed by the subjects and are accurate at the time of the interview and approval. However, these individuals' careers are fluid and their arrangement will likely change over time. We hope to tell these individuals' future stories. And yet, we feel these current profiles, though inevitably incomplete, demonstrate models for success, that are relevant today and tomorrow.

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Making a Successful Proposal for Career Customization

Succeeding in Your Custom Career

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Full Time Flexible Schedules

Beth Springer, Group Vice President of Specialty Products at Clorox, Flexes her Full-Time Schedule

As Group VP of Specialty Products at Clorox, Beth Springer reports directly to the CEO, and is responsible for a \$2Billion business comprised of some of the company's best known brands, including Glad® bags and wraps, Kingsford® charcoal, Fresh Step® and Scoop Away® cat litter, and Hidden Valley® salad dressing.

Benefits to the Company

Though her schedule may be unconventional, Beth Springer is clearly a world-class executive in every regard. Before being promoted to her current post, Beth turned around the troubled Glad business for Clorox, and led a corporate growth initiative focused on topline growth, new ventures and partnering, accomplishing some of this while working a flexible schedule.

Offering Beth a flexible schedule allows the company to retain this talented resource through her daughter's infant years. The company also benefits from the diversity Beth brings to the Executive Committee, and the engagement of others who realize the company is committed to retaining talented parents.

Motivation for Flex Career

Beth's motivation for flexing her schedule is similar to many parents: She needed to set aside time to spend with her infant daughter and husband when they started their family. Beth is married to a high-tech executive with a similarly demanding career, so it was necessary for both of them to rethink their work lives to accommodate their new family responsibilities.

How it Works

Beth works a full-time-plus schedule and handles full responsibilities in her role. She is generally home by 3pm on weekdays to spend several hours with family, then works from home in the evening and on some weekends. To ensure that her peers and employees have the access and face time that they desire, Beth now tends to emphasize face-to-face meetings even more heavily during her hours in the office. And she is always flexible about her schedule, adjusting her hours in the office for important early morning or late afternoon meetings and occasional travel.

Because she works full time, Beth receives a full-time salary and benefits. Interestingly enough, she's convinced that her boss, the CEO at Clorox doesn't remember that she has a non traditional schedule. They've only discussed it once in passing, and it simply hasn't warranted further discussion. "After all", Beth is quick to point out, "we're

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only talking about a couple of hours that are shifted to later in the day. We have to keep in perspective that it's really not that significant of a change."

Company Culture

Clorox's culture is very supportive of flexible and part-time arrangements including job sharing to attract and retain a diverse talent base, although Beth admits that there is always room for improvement. Over 10% of the Marketing organization at Clorox was working some form of a part-time schedule at the time this profile was written. Beth came to Clorox out of business school and started as an Associate Brand Manager, working her way up to her Executive position. She joined the company with a long career in mind, selecting Clorox not only because the company is a good fit for her skills in marketing, but also a good fit for her values. She feels that Clorox has exceeded her expectations in terms of their openness to her flexible arrangement.

Advice for Others Interested in Proposing a Flexible Schedule

Beth offers the following advice to others interested in proposing a flexible schedule to their employer. "Be flexible. Flexibility really has to go both ways. I wouldn't be successful in this arrangement if I were rigid about my scheduling." Beth also suggests that you dig deeper if you meet with resistance in proposing a flexible schedule initially. "If you really enjoy and are good at what you do, and you think a flexible arrangement is in the best interest of the company, feel a sense of entitlement to create an arrangement that works. If your boss doesn't feel comfortable with you working flexibly initially, try to get to the root of the concern and address it. Do they think you won't get the job done, that you'll miss important meetings, or that you won't have adequate child care coverage while you're home? Discuss the concerns and address them to get past any initial resistance."

Jody Miller, President and Founder of the Business Talent Group, Flexes her full time Schedule. Previously, as a Part Time Venture Partner with Maveron she worked a 50% Commitment, Remotely.

As the Founder of the Business Talent Group, Jody is Building a Business around Flexibility, Placing Senior Talent in Interim Executive and Consulting Opportunities with Leading Companies and Non Profits

Benefits to the Company

In her 7 years with Maveron, Jody Miller participated as a senior member of the venture team and oversaw one of the firm's largest investments in Capella, a leading online University. She played this senior role working a part time schedule, remotely from Los Angeles. Though part time arrangements are rare in the venture capital world, Jody was one of three women who were able to work part-time at Maveron over the years. And she felt that the role lent itself well to part time and remote work.

Through these arrangements, Maveron was able to attract seasoned talent like Jody to the firm and in her case, to expand their reach to California. Though she was working part time, the firm gained the benefit of Jody's full network of opportunities, and her arrangement freed her to sit on several corporate and non profit boards all of which enriched her network. According to Jody, "In venture capital your value is fairly clear. It's transparent whether you are bringing in good deals or not, growing your portfolio companies or not, more so perhaps than in other industries. I think the nature of venture capital work is ideally suited for part time."

Now, as the founder of The Business Talent Group, Jody Miller is building her new business around flexibility. The Business Talent Group places senior talent with leading organizations for consulting projects, interim assignments, board positions and occasional long term placements. According to Jody, "The pace of senior jobs has accelerated steeply in recent years. With men and women both feeling that they want more control over their professional lives, a lot of senior people like myself are trading their 60-80 hour a week corporate jobs for more flexible alternatives. The Business Talent Group is capitalizing on this opportunity by supplying the best talent to the best organizations."

As you would expect, Jody and her partner are also building a culture at the company that embraces flexibility. According to Jody, "We consider our culture a strategic advantage. The work of staffing a new organization is really the same whether the team members are working 20 hours a week, 40 hours a week or 60 hours a week. The only difference is the number of people you hire. There is an incredible demand for the type of senior, well paying flexible position that we are offering, and very little supply, so we are able to attract amazing people. In that regard, being flexible is making this aspect of a start-up much easier."

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Motivation for Flex Career

Jody was running a company when she had her first child and soon realized that she would need to adapt her schedule and work style to make time to be an involved parent. After she restructured the company, Jody passed up a number of traditional full time job opportunities in favor of an offer from a long time friend to join Maveron as a Part Time Venture Partner. The position with Maveron offered the right combination of people, challenge, opportunity and flexibility to entice Jody to the firm. She has been a Venture Partner with Maveron for 7 years now.

After 7 years in venture capital, her daughter well into school, and her husband Matt Miller, now a Senior Advisor with a major consulting firm in a part time arrangement that allows him to balance his career with his interest in public policy work, Jody is ready to run a company again.

How Flexibility Works

At Maveron, Jody served a 50% commitment as a venture partner in the firm, working remotely from her home in Los Angeles. A full time venture partner at the firm generally brought in 2 to 3 deals a year, so on her 50% commitment, Jody was expected to do one to two deals in the same time frame. Appropriately, she was compensated on a pro rata basis in both salary and equity. She says her schedule varied between 25% and 80% time to meet those goals. Jody managed her own schedule at Maveron and freely admits that it took time for her to learn to keep her hours to her part time commitment. She had to train herself to focus on deal work and not take on as much of the firm development work and other activities that she naturally gravitated to.

Now, as a founder building the Business Talent Group, Jody is working closer to full time, and traveling more than she did with Maveron. But she often works from home, and her schedule is flexible, which makes all the difference for her and her family.

Advice for Others Interested in Proposing a Reduced Schedule

Jody recommends being clear about your priorities, and then not being afraid to put them on the table with your employer. “Don’t undervalue your talents and your network. People have more leverage than they think. Take the initiative to figure out how a part time or flexible arrangement could work and then ask. Make it a priority.” Once you are working part time, Jody offers a different set of advice. She emphasizes the importance of being disciplined to maintain your balance. “Hold yourself back. Don’t try to lead everything. You have to let go of something to cut back. Focus on the most important aspects of your job, what they are really paying you for, and let the other activities take a back seat.”

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Jody also emphasizes that your partnership with your spouse is equally important in making life and career work. Though she admits that it can be challenging for two spouses to be very successful at the same time, both she and her husband agree that their careers often complement each other, helping to drive the couple to greater individual success. For Jody and Matt, planning travel is the biggest challenge in managing their current careers. The couple sit down once a week to negotiate their travel schedules, they set the bar for travel high, and then each of them makes compromises in their schedules so they both win.

Judy Biviano Lloyd, Former Regional Representative for the U.S. Department of Labor, Tele-commuted and Flexed her Schedule as a Political Appointee

Judy now serves as the Vice President of Business Development for Altamont Solutions, Inc. where she works a flexible schedule. She continues to be a champion for offering flexibility in workers health plans and their daily scheduling and is also a candidate in 2008 for California's 15th Assembly District.

Benefits to the Department

Judy's superiors at the U.S. Department of Labor and her constituents in her region both felt that her flexibility allowed her to bring much more to her position than she could have offered spending 9 to 5 in the Department's Regional offices in San Francisco every day. The head of one major Chamber of Commerce in Silicon Valley commented that before Judy came along he didn't know that the Regional Representative position existed. Judy's flexibility and willingness to travel to her constituents provided a much better working relationship with constituents and the Department of Labor on key issues that impacted businesses and workers. Most importantly, Judy is considered a visionary and dedicated public servant. To the Labor Department's credit, they recognized the need to offer a work solution which would allow them to attract this highly talented resource.

Motivation for Flex Career

Judy, who served as the Special Assistant to former U.S. Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole and to U.S. Agriculture Secretaries John Block and Richard Lyng during her tenure in Washington D.C., had left her posts in government after her son arrived in favor of a career with more time for family. She had run a successful wedding planning business when her son was an infant, and was running a successful event planning and public relations consulting business when she was approached for her appointment at the Department of Labor. At the time, she thought hard about whether she could accept the political appointment, making telecommuting and scheduling flexibility requirements for taking the position, so she could spend more quality time with her constituents and her family without the hassle of crossing San Francisco's Bay Bridge every day.

Judy's motivation for telecommuting and flexing her schedule was clear - she knew it would allow her to do a better job without asking her to sacrifice her family. Judy who is well known as a perfectionist and dedicated public servant, knew that to handle this position right would require early morning and late night meetings and a great deal of time on the road. By working from home several times a week, she could put the more than two hour round trip into the office to better use, spending more of that time with her constituents and by flexing her schedule she could justify more morning and evening meetings by carving out time to participate in activities at her son's school.

Responsibilities

As the Department of Labor's Regional Representative for District IX, Judy represented the Department of Labor in California, Arizona, Hawaii, Nevada and the U.S. Pacific

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territories – of the 10 regions the Department covers, this region has more water and more time zones than any other. She was responsible for educating constituents in her region on the White House’s labor and employment initiatives, and representing the region’s status and needs to Washington. Judy was hand selected for this position by the U.S. Secretary of Labor Elaine L. Chao – one of the most powerful and accomplished women in politics. Judy’s appointment was approved by the White House. Though she has finished her tenure with the Department of Labor, she currently holds an appointment by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger as an alternate member of the California Coastal Commission, and is a board member of several leading statewide women’s organizations – the California Women’s Leadership Association and the California Elected Women’s Association for Education & Research.

Company Culture

The public will be happy to know that the U.S. Department of Labor helps to promote progressive policies on flexible work arrangements including telecommuting and job sharing. But Judy’s arrangement was still rare at her level, and her proposal was considered carefully before it was accepted. Judy’s situation was also unique in that all of her superiors including Secretary Chao are very dedicated working women, many of whom have working spouses and several of whom have children, so Judy’s management chain was familiar with the challenges that many driven women face in balancing a demanding and fulfilling career with a fulfilling family life.

Advice for Other Flexible Workers

Judy’s best advice to others interested in proposing a similar arrangement is to “Understand that flexibility requires you to be flexible too. I wouldn’t have been nearly as successful if I had set rigid rules about when and where I did my work. Flexibility goes both ways. I worked more in this arrangement than I would have working 9 to 5 in the office, but I wouldn’t have had it any other way. I was still able to be there for important inter-departmental meetings but also more available to the constituents we served at the Department. This arrangement allowed me to do the job to my exacting standards without sacrificing my family and benefited our constituents as well.” She also advises that any candidate for flexibility must do their homework on the position before making a proposal. Ensure that you will be able to deliver on the requirements of the position, even do more in a flexible arrangement than you would otherwise. She feels that the onus is on the groundbreakers in this arena of workplace flexibility to ensure that we are shining examples of how valuable flexibility can be for both the employer and the worker.

Judy felt the key to negotiating flexibility in her position, was her reputation and the support of her past colleagues and references. Looking back on how she won support for her arrangement, Judy says, “I think the key to the Department’s accepting this arrangement was that each of my references said ‘Judy always gives her work 110% and gets the job done right. She’s the right person for the post.’ In the end I think that gave the Department confidence that that my proposal for flexibility was motivated by a desire to give more to the position, not less, and made those I worked with more comfortable that where I did the work was less important than the result.”

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Heidi Locke Simon, Partner at Bain & Company, a Leader in the Firm's Customer Strategy and Marketing Practice, formerly Part Time, now Flexes her Full Time Schedule

Heidi Locke Simon, a partner in Bain's San Francisco office has taken advantage of a full range of flexible options, including an overseas transfer, a leave of absence and two part-time arrangements. She currently balances her full-time schedule to accommodate the needs of both her family and clients.

Benefits of this Flexible Arrangement to the Company

Bain & Company's approach to work/life balance has helped attract and retain top talent like Heidi, and maintain a diverse workforce. The firm boasts of being one of the first consulting firms to start offering part-time options for greater balance. The program was designed almost 20 years ago to allow consultants who have been with Bain for more than one year the option to work part-time — spending 50 percent of their time doing client casework and 10 percent of their time doing personal and professional development. The program began as an effort to retain women who were leaving the firm to raise families and foster a greater work-life balance.

Heidi, who has been with Bain for more than 14 years, feels strongly that the company's flexibility and support for her interests outside of work has helped keep her motivated and able to sustain a rewarding career in a demanding industry. By maintaining a rich life outside of work, she feels she brings a lot more to the firm in helping her clients achieve results.

Motivation for Flex Career

Heidi's motivations for flexing her schedule have changed over time. Her situation is an excellent example of how a custom career path may vary over time to balance changing business and personal needs.

Heidi first explored her options for flexing her schedule after the birth of her first child. She and her husband were both managing demanding careers and juggling travel schedules when their daughter was born. Luckily Heidi's husband worked from home when he was in town, and could be very involved. But to best manage the early months, Heidi chose to take a leave of absence for 4 months and returned from that leave to a part-time arrangement for the following 4 months. She was promoted to partner in the year of her return and transitioned back to a full-time schedule for several years while her daughter was young.

When her daughter turned four, Heidi requested another part-time arrangement to have more time at home. Heidi had also wanted to carve out more time to work with a local non-profit organization. After a year on this part-time arrangement Heidi realized that

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her ambitions were such that she was going to invest a significant amount of time in having an impact in the world, whether she was working full-time or not. And that her daughter wasn't suffering from having such an involved mom. Heidi also realized while working part-time, that at her level of experience, and employing new skills in prioritization and time management, she was able to carry a full-time load with her clients on a schedule that would work for her personally. So Heidi decided to return to her position at Bain full-time, but this time with a commitment to flexing her full-time schedule, to optimize time for work, family and community service. She's been thriving on this model ever since.

How it Works

Heidi is a full-time partner in Bain's San Francisco office, but she takes advantage of her experience to shift and flex her full-time schedule to make the best use of her time. She serves on and advises the boards of several non profits and drops off or picks up her daughter from school several times a week. She is clear that this time does not come at a cost to her clients. She is still a high performing partner at Bain, delivering as much value to clients and the firm as other partners.

In an average week, Heidi spends 2 to 3 days with clients, some of this via phone, 1 to 2 days a week in the office and on average one day working from home. She optimizes her time with clients by scheduling multiple meetings with one office on a single day to reduce travel time. And she takes full advantage of technology, holding teleconferences with clients on a regular basis, and frequently working from home in the morning and evening. She often shifts her schedule to take early morning calls with Asian, European or East Coast based clients, allowing her to spend time in the morning with her daughter before school and then resume her day. Alternatively, she picks up her daughter after school and then finishes up her work day from home in the evening.

Responsibilities

In addition to her role as a partner in Bain's San Francisco office, Heidi also manages client development for the West Coast offices. As a mentor and role model for women at Bain, Heidi leads the women's program in Bain's Bay Area offices. She also plays major roles in both recruiting and global training programs.

Company Culture

Bain & Company has had formal policies in place to support flexible work arrangements for almost 20 years. Just as notably, Bain's formal policies are underscored by a culture that makes utilizing flexibility an accepted part of a career path at the firm.

Approximately 30% of Bain staff have opted to go part-time at some point in their careers to help manage the balance between their business and family life, and most of the firm's women managers and partners have chosen this option. These short- or long-term opportunities provide flexibility for individuals to pursue their interests outside of work, whether it is spending time with family, volunteering with community

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organizations, or pursuing life-long dreams. Most importantly, these options offer balance without jeopardizing a career, as advancement is based entirely on merit.

Advice for Others Interested in Proposing a Reduced Schedule

Heidi has several valuable suggestions for anyone interested in pursuing a reduced schedule. The first is to work with your management on an objective measure for valuing your results and contributions, rather than putting the emphasis on the number of hours in your schedule. Heidi also suggests that you invest in learning time management and prioritization skills. These skills were invaluable to Heidi while she was on a part-time schedule and have continued to provide returns allowing her to optimize her full-time schedule. She also suggests that part of learning to prioritize is to learn to set boundaries. For Heidi, she's had to learn when to harness her passion for pro bono work. By setting clear priorities, she knows where this work fits in to her overall goals and it's easier to ration her time.

Heidi also suggests that it's very important to know yourself and explore your goals as you consider restructuring your career. She suggests that you explore what success means to you personally, and what you are really trying to achieve over the course of a career and a lifetime. Of course ideally, you want to gain as much clarity in these areas as you can before you make a proposal for career customization. But you may find, as Heidi did, that you will learn more about yourself and where your career fits in your goals as you try working flexibly. "In the end," Heidi suggests, "if flexibility is important, just be positive and try something. Your first attempt doesn't have to be a permanent change. Test out a new schedule for six months and then reevaluate with your boss and adjust as necessary."

Reduced Schedules

Jane Doe, President and CEO of CDLP, has Lead the Organization to Success on a Reduced Schedule

As the head of CDLP, Jane Doe (both pseudonyms) runs a highly successful East Coast community development and leadership program whose fellows include top area executives. Jane has lead the organization to success on a 66% to 80% schedule.

Benefits to the Organization

By all accounts, The Community Development and Leadership program (CDLP) has thrived under Jane Doe's leadership. Under the leadership of this former VP of Marketing for a major news outlet, this well regarded non profit leadership and community development program, has recruited top fellows, doubled its budget and staff and achieved all of its strategic planning goals. In the non profit world this is a trifecta, and particularly notable, given that Jane has orchestrated this success in an economic environment in which many non-profits have faced budget shortfalls and downsized their efforts or merged to cut costs.

CDLP's success is all the more impressive when you realize that Jane has had two children during her tenure at the organization, and almost two years ago reduced her schedule at CDLP to 2/3 time to allow her to spend more time with her family. Though support for her arrangement has fluctuated with changes in board leadership, the board overall is very pleased with CDLP's leadership and accomplishments. They recently rewarded Jane with a promotion from Executive Director to President and CEO of the organization along with a sizable raise. Even so, Jane's experience also highlights the importance of managerial support for custom career arrangements. Despite her objective success, she occasionally feels significant pressure to increase her schedule.

Motivation for Flex Career

Because of the nature of their work with a volunteer board and fellows, many CDLP activities naturally occur before and after normal work hours. As a result, Jane's day often starts early in the morning and continues to late evening meetings. Her motivation for flexing her schedule is similar to that of many working parents, she needed to restructure her time to create more time to parent when she started her family and later needed to reduce her stress to manage fertility concerns when the time came to have her second child. But Jane was also motivated by professional success. She was hoping to stave off burnout from her non profit schedule and wanted to pace her self so she would be in a position to successfully lead CDLP further into the future.

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How it Works

Jane originally reduced her schedule to two thirds time, but advises that in her line of work she has to be flexible. Which two thirds of the week she works changes from week to week. She credits a large part of her success with this flexible arrangement to strategic staffing. Before she had her second child, she lined up a strong COO to bring into the organization as a part of her proposal to reduce her hours. Jane and her COO were not officially a job share. But effectively, their partnership offered CDLP the organizational capacity to thrive through her maternity leave and support her reduced schedule on her return. Jane has recently increased her commitment at CDLP to 80%.

Jane also relies heavily on technology, an excellent nanny and supportive husband. She carries a Treo and is often accessible from home. But she does draw certain lines at home to keep her commitments close to her reduced schedule and to make her life as a mother work. For a year while she was nursing, Jane couldn't take early morning meetings, a challenge with a non profit board, most of whom work during business hours. So she has gladly re-opened that part of her schedule again.

Responsibilities

As President and CEO of the CDLP, Jane leads the organization in achieving its strategic and operational objectives including, recruitment of fellows, fundraising and program efforts.

Company Culture

CDLP's internal culture is very supportive of family. Jane credits much of her staff's support for her schedule to a culture of support for employees and their families that predated her arrangement. CDLP has historically offered paternity leave and other benefits generally reserved for larger organizations.

But Jane's situation also demonstrates how manager dependent support for custom career arrangements can be. As the President and CEO of the organization, Jane reports to CDLP's board, and a board chair that rotates every two years. With a boss that changes regularly, Jane admits that support for her reduced schedule has varied over time, generally quite slightly. Recently she has felt a great deal of pressure from the organization's new board chair to return to a full time schedule. Luckily for Jane, other board members sensed the change in tone, and have neutralized the pressure at least for the present moment, but not without a strain to Jane.

Advice for Others Interested in Proposing a Flexible Schedule

Jane offers the following advice to others interested in proposing a flexible schedule to their employer. "Don't be afraid to bend some of your own rules. I think as women there are times that we follow the rules to our own detriment. When the time came for me to propose my reduced schedule, I knew that the success of the arrangement depended on

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hiring our COO. She was incredibly well qualified and more importantly, as a fellow of our program, she knew the organization intimately and had a wonderful working relationship with me. Normally I would have posted the job publicly and gone through an extensive interview process. And frankly I was torn about deviating from this rule. But in this case, the rules weren't appropriate. Breaking my own rule was critical to the success of the organization." She also advised that you not be afraid to hire a team that makes you less necessary. Jane had to build the organizational capacity at CDLP before she could cut back her contribution to the organization.

Jane also emphasizes the importance of finding good quality, flexible childcare. She highly recommends paying a good nanny slightly more than the going rate so there is no risk of losing them and they are more motivated to support your schedule. She advises that you work with your partner to understand their professional limitations and craft a team plan for responding to the inevitable unpredictability of parenting. Jane feels the greatest challenges in succeeding on a reduced schedule are training the organization, and in her case managing the unpredictability of the non profit schedule. Jane has certainly demonstrated that both can be done well, and that 66% to 80% of the right person can be exactly what an organization needs. Unfortunately as Jane's current situation demonstrates, not all managers can naturally do that math. Her story also illustrates that organizations needs to be prepared to catch and correct for shortsightedness on the part of individual managers if they want to retain the best leaders in today's dual career workforce.

Jodi Bricker, now VP of Women's Merchandising for Levi's, Opted Back into her Career after Two Years as a Stay at Home Mom to Help Build Old Navy's Online Business on a Reduced Schedule

Benefits of this Flexible Arrangement to the Company

By all accounts, the Gap's offer of a flexible work arrangement was critical in re-attracting Jodi to the company. In fact, flexibility was a key factor in building the leadership team for their Old Navy Online business. Jodi and her boss the original VP and GM of Merchandising for Old Navy Online, simply would not have returned to work when they did without the offer of flexibility. Over their 5 year tenure with Old Navy Online, Jodi and her boss Dawn built one of the Gap's highest growth businesses and trained more than 100 people, all while working part time, so clearly the investment paid off. As a result of the Gap's creativity they were able to double Jodi's tenure with the company to a total of 12 years.

The success of Jodi and Dawn's arrangements also seems to have influenced the corporate culture at the Gap. They supported a number of team members in creating flexible schedules of their own. And the company eventually instituted a formal flexibility program to retain and motivate other talent through similar arrangements.

Motivation for Flex Career

Jodi's motivation for working a reduced schedule is familiar. Both Jodi and her husband were working full time in demanding careers when Jodi became pregnant. Jodi's original role at the Gap handling merchandising for Old Navy stores had her traveling more than one third of the time. Recognizing that they needed to create more time for parenting while their children were young, the couple decided that they couldn't support Jodi's travel schedule in the near term, and so Jodi chose to stay home for some time.

Jodi wasn't looking to go back to work two years later when the President of Gap Direct contacted her to offer her the job with Old Navy Online. But when the offer of an interesting job with a 66% schedule, and manageable travel requirements was presented, she couldn't ignore it. Admittedly, Jodi did miss her career and the creative stimulation of work, and accepted the position because it offered her the best of both worlds - the opportunity to succeed in her career without sacrificing her family.

Over time, as their careers have progressed and their children have grown Jodi and her husband's motivations and their choices for balancing their careers have changed. Eventually Jodi accepted a VP Level position with the Gap and chose to return to full time, and her husband chose to stay home with their children for a few years. Once she was back to full time, now as a primary bread winner for her family, Levis was eventually able to entice her away from the Gap with an offer of a new business challenge and a return to her product development roots as their VP of Women's

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Merchandising. The couple now views their options for balancing their careers as much more fluid and plans to evaluate their options again in a few years.

How Jodi's Part Time Schedule Worked

Jodi's schedule changed progressively after her return to the Gap. After two years at home with her first child, Jodi originally returned to the Gap 66% time as the Director of Merchandising for Old Navy Online. In that initial arrangement she worked three days a week, one of those days from home. Interestingly Jodi took on full responsibility for the function on her 3 day a week schedule, and simply hired stronger direct reports and delegated more to deliver the full time responsibilities of the job. She always left the office at 5pm, but often worked in the evening and early morning to finish up work and get a head start on the next day. As Jodi's children grew older and her team at work grew, she migrated to a 4 day a week schedule, with three days in the office and one day at home. Eventually she moved to 4 days in the office. When she was promoted to VP of Merchandising for Old Navy Online (the position previously held by her boss Dawn part time), she chose to return to a Full Time schedule.

Now in her position with Levis, Jodi works full time as their VP of Women's Merchandising. But Levis as a company offers workers Friday afternoons off, so Jodi is in the office 4.5 days a week. She highly values that extra half day with her family. And she says that her years flexing have encouraged her to be much more fluid with her work and schedule even on a full time schedule. She relies much more heavily on technology today, protects her creative time, and is still ruthlessly disciplined to ensure a focus on the highest value investments at work.

Responsibilities

Jodi was responsible for Merchandising for Old Navy Online, a new business when she came into the role. In her ultimate role as VP/General Manager of the group, Jodi oversaw a team of 60 individuals responsible for design, marketing, merchandising, planning and web production for the brand's Online store. Old Navy Online was one of the highest growth businesses at the company during much of her tenure.

Company Culture

When Jodi accepted her part time position, she was the second of only two senior individuals at the Gap working part time, and she was working for the first. So flexibility was certainly not typical at the company at the time. Partly as a result of the success of these two executives' arrangements, the Gap has since introduced a formal workplace flexibility program and flexible arrangements are more common at the company today. Over their five years working flexibly, Jodi and Dawn supported a number of individuals on their teams in creating flexible work arrangements. When she left for Levis, 4 of Jodi's team of 60 at the Gap were working part time schedules.

Advice for Others Interested in Proposing a Reduced Schedule

Jodi felt a strong obligation to succeed in her part time role and to never make excuses. She highly recommends this approach. She feels it is incumbent on the flexibility innovators in every company to over-perform to present the model in the best possible light. And she warns that no matter which reduced schedule she was on, she always worked slightly more than her stated hours, generally in the evenings and mornings. She insists that you have to remain flexible to make these arrangements work. And she reminds that we all generally work more than 40 hours when we are full time, so it's nothing new. She felt strongly that the flexibility and additional personal time were well worth the extra effort.

Jodi credits several factors with her success on a part time schedule and offers them as advice. First and foremost was the support of her manager, and the choice of an appropriate role. She recommends that you not underestimate the importance of a supportive manager in making these arrangements work. It is critical. She feels strongly that trying this type of arrangement in a company or management structure that isn't supportive or in an inappropriate role is simply self defeating. The second key to her success, was time management and discipline. Jodi says she learned to be a ruthless prioritizer in her new role and asked her team to do the same. She focused her time and attention on the highest priority, highest impact and highest risk projects and refused to be distracted by the rest. She also purposely hired and developed a stronger team, delegating more, and offering them more opportunities for exposure and advancement. She even allowed key members of her team to handle meetings with the President of the Company on her days off. The result was a very successful, loyal and happy team.

As a manager, Jodi was often sought out by individuals interested in transitioning to a flexible role after a return from maternity leave. Those that were most successful sought her out for lunch early to express their interest and stayed in touch while they were out on leave. She highly recommends this proactive approach. By understanding their intentions early, Jodi was able to keep these individuals in mind for opportunities, and on several occasions was able to hold jobs for them as they came open.

Lisa Nicolini, Partner at Deloitte & Touche, LLP, Leads the Firm's Northern Pacific Not for Profit Practice on a 75% Schedule

Benefits of this Flexible Arrangement to the Company

Deloitte and Touche's flexibility has allowed them to retain this key partner, who in her 25 year plus tenure with the firm, has helped them to grow their Northern Pacific Not for Profit Practice into the envy of other firms. Like many of the executives we've interviewed, Lisa feels strongly that Deloitte's support for her custom schedule is an important reason that she is still with the firm.

Lisa's visibility as a partner at Deloitte & Touche has also helped the firm to demonstrate its commitment to supporting flexible schedules and custom career paths in a way that a policy or brochure could not do. Lisa's example demonstrates in a very real way that a custom schedule need not impede your success at Deloitte or take you off of the career track at the firm. And Lisa's arrangement has inspired a number of others to customize their careers at Deloitte in ways that have allowed them to contribute to Deloitte's success for the long term.

Motivation for Flex Career

Lisa's motivation for working a reduced schedule will be familiar to many. Both Lisa and her husband were working full time when they had their second child. Recognizing how quickly their first child had grown, the parents didn't want to miss out on their children's childhood entirely. They decided that one of them needed to create more flexibility in their work schedule while their kids were young.

Deloitte had recently rolled out a comprehensive Women's Initiative that included a workplace flexibility program, and Lisa decided to look into her options. Though she originally intended to reduce her schedule for only two to three years while her children were young, Lisa later decided that the time with her children was valuable at every age, and she and Deloitte have continued her 75% arrangement for the past 11 years.

How it Works

Lisa is a full partner at Deloitte and Touche and works a 75% schedule, which means that she is accountable for 75% of the billable and non-billable hours targets that are set for similar partners. Consequently, she receives 75% of her full-time compensation.

Lisa generally takes Mondays off and takes a few other hours throughout the week. But she notes that she is flexible with her schedule. She has been known to take important meetings on Mondays. And she often shifts her time off to other times of the week to attend key events with her children. In addition, for her practice, the month of July is

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generally very light. So for the past 3 years, she has taken most of the month of July off to spend with her family as vacation.

Lisa credits the nature of audit work, and advanced planning with making her reduced schedule work. All of the firm's partners carefully plan and forecast their workloads, which is an important task for planning for a reduced schedule. Lisa chooses the clients that she will personally work with based on their audit timing, to avoid crunch periods as best as possible.

Responsibilities

Lisa leads Deloitte and Touche's Northern Pacific Not for Profit Practice, leading a team that advises a wide variety of charitable entities including arts, conservation, philanthropic and health and welfare organizations on financial and business strategy. In her 25 plus years with the firm, she has developed this practice into the jewel of the industry, attracting a host of impressive clients including the Salvation Army, San Francisco Ballet, and the David and Lucile Packard Foundation among others. She has, substantially increased the size and profitability of the practice, while increasing Deloitte's support for community organizations in the region.

Company Culture

In response to challenges many years ago in retaining top female talent, Deloitte and Touche has invested heavily in a progressive Women's Initiative that was lead from the very top of the company. One of the outcomes of that initiative has been progressive support for workplace flexibility for all employees at Deloitte, both female and male, parents and non parents.

Most recently, Deloitte has introduced two new pilot programs in support of custom career paths. The first is a Mass Career Customization program that is asking all employees in pilot divisions to think through their current needs and goals on 5 key career continua and work with their management to customize their career to suit their long term goals with the company. The second, called Personal Pursuits, allows high performing employees who have chosen to take time off from their careers to maintain close contact with the firm through training, consulting opportunities, alumni programs, and a re-recruiting program. Deloitte's hope is that this small investment will help them to re-attract these valuable contributors back to the firm when they are ready to return to their careers.

Advice for Others Interested in Proposing a Reduced Schedule

Lisa recommends that others that are interested in proposing flexibility to their management "Do their homework and make a water-tight proposal. Think through all of the details around how the arrangement will work. Don't leave your boss with concerns or ask them to take on a lot of work to accommodate your request." When Lisa made her proposal, she went to human resources in advance to understand exactly how part time

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partner compensation was calculated and how other partners handled their arrangements. She planned her schedule and talked in advance with her staff and clients to arrange for others to take the clients that she wouldn't be able to accommodate. When she finally made her proposal, she left no question unanswered, and her initial two year arrangement was approved in that meeting. 11 years later, she is still succeeding on the same reduced schedule.

Lisa also recommends using examples that demonstrate that the arrangement that you are proposing will be successful. When Lisa made her proposal, she didn't personally know other partners in her firm that she could seek out for advice. But she certainly knew that there were other partners at the firm that were successfully working reduced schedules, and using those examples helped to add credibility to her proposal.

Alison Tucher, Partner at Morrison & Foerster, Made Partner with the Firm while On an 80% Schedule

As a Partner at Morrison & Foerster, Alison Tucher handles complex commercial Litigation for some of the firm's top clients

Benefits of the Flexible Arrangement to the Company

By all accounts, Morrison & Foerster's reputation for supporting flexibility was critical in attracting Alison to the firm, though she didn't have children at the time. When Alison, who had clerked for the Supreme Court and worked as a trial attorney in the District Attorney's office, selected a firm from a number of suitors, an outstanding commercial litigation practice and the ability to participate fully on a flexible schedule were two key criteria. It's also clear in talking with Alison that Morrison & Foerster's commitment to her flexible arrangement has been instrumental in retaining and motivating this top litigator. Having been promoted to Partner while she was on 80% time, Alison is not only one of the firm's top litigators, she's one of their biggest champions. According to others at the firm, Alison's situation and others like hers are motivating for the entire staff, as they send a clear signal that valuing family is not a barrier to success at Morrison & Foerster.

Motivation for Flex Career

Alison's motivation for working a reduced schedule will be familiar to many. With two small children and a husband who is also a top litigator (working a full time schedule), she needed to create more flexibility in her schedule to spend time with their children. Alison felt that 80% time would allow her to participate fully as a litigator, successfully handling meaty projects, while offering the quality of life that she needed for her family.

How it Works

Alison is a full partner at Morrison & Foerster, but works an 80% schedule, which means that she is accountable for 80% of the billable and non-billable hours targets that are set for the firm's partners. Consequently, she receives 80% of her full-time compensation.

Because of the nature of litigation work, Alison doesn't manage an 80% schedule on a daily or weekly basis, but keeps to 80% over the course of the quarter or the year. And with the unpredictability of litigation work, she readily admits that it is a constant challenge to maintain balance in her schedule. She credits technology with offering her a great deal of flexibility even in meeting pressing deadlines, by allowing her to head home for dinner and then access her files and work from home after her children are in bed.

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Responsibilities

Alison handles complex commercial litigation for a number of Morrison & Foerster's top clients, at the trial and appellate level. She has defended high-technology companies in major patent litigation, represented a satellite television company pursuing antitrust claims, filed briefs in the United States Supreme Court, and freed a man wrongfully convicted of murder.

Company Culture

In a profession that is working ever harder and ever longer hours, Morrison & Foerster stands out as a leading firm that offers career opportunities to keep their part-time associates on the partner track. Alison believes the firm's experience with reduced schedules made it much easier for her. She wasn't paving a new path. In fact the conversation about reducing her schedule was a very short one and her request was approved days later.

In an industry of workaholics, you might think that the firm would pay a price for this flexibility. But on the contrary, Morrison & Foerster is a highly successful firm with \$687 million in revenues for 2005, and they continue to perform well by both qualitative and quantitative standards. The firm was named to *The American Lawyer's* A-List as one of the nation's top 20 law firms. Morrison & Foerster was also named to *FORTUNE* magazine's 2006 list of "100 Best Companies to Work For".

Advice for Other Attorneys Interested in Proposing a Reduced Schedule

Alison recommends that other attorneys who are interested in flexibility down the line consider the issue in advance, and choose a firm based in part on its reputation for promoting attorneys that are on a reduced schedule. "If you know you are interested in part-time options, it is something you should ask the recruiter and friends at the firm before you commit." Alison also suggests that attorneys consider working at least a 75% schedule when career advancement is important to them. And she says that it's important to remain flexible: "You have to consider the nature of the work. As a litigator, you're not going to be able to stick to a reduced schedule on a daily or weekly basis. Sometimes not even on a monthly basis. But you can have a successful career on a reduced schedule on a quarterly or an annual basis. And in the end this has made all the difference for my career and my family."

Alison Berkeley Wagonfeld, Executive Director of Harvard Business School's California Research Center, Works a Reduced Schedule

As the Executive Director of Harvard Business School's California Research Center, Alison Wagonfeld leads Harvard's Business Case and Research Paper Development with West Coast Companies, on a 4 day week

Benefits to the Organization

Harvard Business School has long recognized that offering flexible schedules offers them an edge in attracting top talent. As a non profit, Harvard can't compete for talent solely on the basis of compensation. Offering custom schedules has offered the University the edge in attracting a number of top alumnus to positions with the Business School. To Alison, the former Sr. VP of Marketing and Business Development for Greenlight.com, and a Harvard Business School graduate, the flexibility that Harvard offered coupled with interesting work was a very attractive combination, and ultimately more attractive than her former high tech salary and stock options.

Motivation for Custom Career

Alison, who is now a mother of three, had recently had her first child when she took her position with Harvard. Her husband, also a Harvard Business School alum, was on a fast track career with an Investment Firm. And though she wasn't interested in staying home full time with her children, she knew that she needed to reduce her 70 hour a week + travel schedule to make their family life work. Alison's theory is that between both parents, a family can support a combined 90 hours or so a week of work. With her husband's demanding schedule, Alison was actively exploring options to cut back to 30 hours a week when she was offered the position at Harvard.

The combination of meaningful and challenging work, minimal travel and a reduced schedule that Harvard offered were ideal. The extra time allowed Alison to put her daughter in a playgroup and coop preschool like so many of her daughter's peers. It also offered Alison the freedom to join the board of Harvard's Alumni Association and other non profits - all while continuing to excel in a meaningful career, which Alison values and enjoys.

How it Works

Alison works 32 hours a week. She generally works 9-5 M, T, and Friday, 8-4 on Thursday and is off on Wednesdays. She is fairly successful at keeping her hours to 32 hours a week, but she is often flexible with her schedule to move projects forward and facilitate meetings with her staff.

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Responsibilities

Alison manages a team of case writers that develop and write Harvard Business School's cases and Research Papers with West Coast companies.

Organizational Culture

The Dean of Harvard's Business School has long recognized the value of offering flexibility to attract top talent. The job description for Alison's original position as the Associate Director of the program indicated that they were open to a flexible schedule. Once Alison was offered the job, it was an easy conversation to secure an 80% time schedule. Several of her team members work 50% and 60% time schedules.

Advice for Proposing a Similar Arrangement

If you're interested in working a reduced schedule, Alison recommends that you find a job that lends itself well to flexibility, one where you can really do excellent work in part time. Developing and writing business cases really lends itself to a flexible schedule. Alison still occasionally has to remind professors that she doesn't work on Wednesdays. But she compensates with the quality of her work. And she often finds that her working remotely makes her schedule less obvious. When you're not in the office, it's not as obvious that you don't work that extra day a week. They just notice that you're doing a great job.

Meg Holland, Vice President of Client Services at Epocrates, Leads the Company's Customer Implementations team on an 80% Schedule

Benefits of this Flexible Arrangement to the Company

Flexibility was critical in attracting and retaining this key member of the Epocrates team. Meg Holland joined Epocrates on a 4 day a week schedule and has been promoted from her original individual contributor role as a Client Services Account Manager to her current role as the Vice President of Client Services at the company, all while working the same 80% schedule. Meg had originally moved to a 4 day a week schedule while working at Accenture on their Health Care Strategy Consulting Team. She valued that flexibility so highly, that she simply would not have joined Epocrates if they had made a full time schedule a requirement. It is a testament to the vision of the management at Epocrates that they recognized that even at 80% time, Meg was the right person for the job.

In the course of her 4 years with Epocrates, a new manager had once asked Meg to return to full time, but she was resolute. At this stage of her life, with two young children at home, 5 days a week in the office is not option for her. And her advancement at the Company demonstrates that her manager has clearly come around. Though he would always welcome her to return to full time, Meg feels he recognizes that her arrangement is a bargain of sorts. She is fully responsible for her function, and highly experienced in the organization, and yet 20% cheaper than an unproven full time replacement.

Motivation for Flex Career

Meg's motivation for working a reduced schedule will be familiar to many. Both she and her husband were working full time when they had their first child. Though they both valued their careers, they were motivated to carve out more time from their work schedules to be involved parents. Accenture, Meg's firm at the time, was booming and had instituted a number of workplace flexibility programs designed to retain talent like Meg. Encouraged by a peer's success working a flexible schedule, Meg proposed a similar arrangement and the firm approved a 4 day a week schedule and agreed to allow Meg to manage her teams remotely to reduce the travel requirements of the job. At the time, Meg felt as if the perfect flexible arrangement had fallen into her lap without her really knowing what she needed. Now, Meg knows what works for her family, and she considers her 4 day a week schedule a requirement for staying at work. Without it, she says she would have stayed home during these years.

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How it Works

As the Vice President of Client Services, Meg is fully responsible for her function, but handles the role on an 80% schedule. She is in the office Monday through Thursday and off on Fridays. As a result, Meg is compensated at 80% of her full time salary and receives full benefits. Though she keeps herself fairly busy with family activities on Fridays to prevent herself from being drawn into work on that day off, Meg is widely perceived as fully committed to her role. She has a strong management team in place and is known to be accessible for critical issues. She carries a company provided Treo, and regularly logs onto email in the evenings, something that is a part of the management culture at Epocrates.

Meg did not start at the Company in her Vice President role. She was originally hired on as an Account Manager at 4 days a week, an individual contributor role. Her hiring manager, one of the founders of Epocrates was an acquaintance from business school. Meg was the first person at the Company working a reduced schedule at that time, and feels her relationship with her hiring manager, and her previous experience successfully working part time at Accenture helped to make her schedule a non-issue. As a result of her success in the Account Manager role, Meg was then promoted to a Director level position before being promoted into her current role as the Vice President of Client Services overseeing all client implementations for the Company's three business-to-business product teams.

Responsibilities

As the Vice President of Client Services at Epocrates, Meg leads a team of 20-25 account managers that manage customer implementations for the Company's business-to-business services. Those services are a significant growth area for the Company and include the implementation of health plan formularies, pharmaceutical clinical messaging services, and continuing medical education to Epocrates' network of physicians.

Company Culture

Epocrates was a typical start-up when Meg joined. When the Company hired Meg on a reduced schedule they didn't have formal workplace flexibility policies in place. They were simply motivated to attract her talent to the Company. They were nimble enough to seize the opportunity when the right person came along and visionary enough to reward Meg for her results over time, not letting her part time schedule stand in the way of promotion.

Now 175 people in size, Epocrates has not put formal workplace flexibility policies in place. Flexible arrangements are manager driven at the Company. But Epocrates' culture seems to be fairly accepting of part time roles for the right people. Meg is aware of at least 4 other part time workers at the company, 1 man and 3 women, and suspects there are more that she's not aware of.

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Advice for Others Interested in Proposing a Reduced Schedule

Meg has several pieces of advice for others that are interested in proposing flexibility to their management. The first is to rely on your personal relationships, your professional reputation, and successful flex role models to help make your case for flexibility. The second is to be clear in your requirements. For Meg, knowing that a reduced schedule was a requirement and not an option for her was key in securing support for her flexible arrangements at several points in her career.

Meg offers the following advice for making your flexible arrangement work. Meg schedules various activities on her Fridays off so she isn't tempted to spend the day working, and she recommends this technique. But as much as she protects her day off, Meg makes a point to de-emphasize her schedule at work - placing the emphasis instead on being easy to work with, and the quality of her work. She feels this is critical to avoid being perceived as less committed or difficult to work with when you are working a reduced schedule. Meg doesn't put an out of office reminder on her email on the Fridays when she is out of the office. Her colleagues don't expect her to respond on a Friday and her staff knows they can reach her for critical issues, so she avoids this public display. She also consciously doesn't explain why she isn't available on Fridays if a Friday meeting or deadline is proposed. She simply says she's available to meet or will be able to have that for you on Monday or Tuesday. And she is always willing to take an important call on a Friday, or deal with an important issue via email in the evening to demonstrate her commitment. By not making her schedule an issue, Meg has appropriately maintained the focus on her work, and been rewarded for the value that she delivers.

Kirstin Hoefler, Sr. Director of Product Management at Ebay, Leads the Company's Tailored Shopping Experience Product Initiatives on an 80% Schedule

Benefits of this Flexible Arrangement to the Company

The primary benefit to Ebay of offering Kirstin Hoefler a custom schedule was their ability to attract her to the company. Kirstin, who joined Ebay on a 4 day a week schedule, came from Excite @Home where she handled very similar product responsibilities on a 3 day a week schedule. The GM who hired Kirstin at Ebay was notoriously selective in hiring, and the Director opening that he originally hired Kirstin into had been open for 8 months before she accepted the job. Since then, Kristin has been promoted and grown her team to an organization of 19, all on an 80% schedule.

Hiring Kirstin, and her success at the company have also had the additional benefit of helping to evolve the work culture at Ebay. Though her arrangement was unique at the time, Kirstin feels that management at Ebay supported hiring her on a reduced schedule because they recognized that the arrangement embodied the spirit of what the company is, an organization that values talent, and works creatively to attract and retain the best in the industry.

Motivation for Flex Career

Kirstin's motivation for a custom schedule was not unique. She and her husband were both working full time in fairly demanding roles when they had their first baby. And the couple needed to restructure their work hours to create more time to be involved parents while their children were young. The two evaluated their options, and Kirstin's management at Excite @Home, which was downsizing and near bankruptcy at the time, was very open to working with her on custom schedule, so Kirstin opted to reduce her schedule to 3 days a week.

How it Works

At Ebay, Kirstin works an 80% schedule in 4 days a week, taking Fridays off to spend with her family. Consequently, she is paid 80% of her full time salary. Per Ebay's standard policy, because Kirstin is working more than 30 hours a week, she receives full benefits and full vesting of her stock options.

Kirstin is fairly disciplined about not working on Fridays, rarely rescheduling her day off to take a meeting. Rather, she and her team consider her Fridays out of the office a growth opportunity for the team, allowing her direct reports opportunities to handle senior meetings in her absence. Kirstin has reported to 3 different managers in her 4.5 years at Ebay, all of whom have been very supportive of her arrangement, helping her to build a strong team of direct reports that make it easier for her to delegate and keep her schedule in check.

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Kirstin started at Ebay as a Director managing a smaller team of individual contributors. While she welcomed organic growth of her team and responsibilities through an acquisition and hiring, Kirstin declined several promotion opportunities in her first few years at Ebay that would have had her take on more responsibility faster. After 3.5 years in her role, Kirstin did accept a promotion to Senior Director that brought with it greater responsibilities and a larger team. She now manages 4 direct reports and an overall organization of 19 product managers, 3 of whom are also working reduced schedules. She admits that the additional responsibilities had her feeling a bit stretched the first two quarters, as she worked long evenings on her 4 week days to keep up on her responsibilities. She is getting her schedule in check as she settles into the role, but plans to reevaluate her workload with her manager in another quarter and either delegate or restructure her part time arrangement to compensate her fairly for the hours required in the new role.

Responsibilities

Kirstin manages a team of product managers responsible for the definition, creation, launch and ongoing product strategy of Ebay's Tailored Shopping Experiences, which include such well known brands as Ebay Motors, Half.com, and Ebay Express, among others. These primarily non auction based markets are a strategic growth area for Ebay, experiencing between 26% and 356% growth in the last 4 years. Kirstin's team's product innovation, strategy and oversight has contributed to the exponential growth of these sectors of Ebay's business.

Company Culture

When Kirstin started at Ebay, reduced schedules at the Company were very rare. The General Manager at Ebay that first hired her championed her pioneering part time arrangement because he was convinced she was the right person for the job. That certainty was based partly on the strength of Kirstin's experience and partly on the strength of a recommendation from an ex-Excite @ Home colleague of Kirstin's that had also joined Ebay.

Part time career opportunities, while certainly not commonplace at Ebay are much less rare now. The company now has policies and HR infrastructure in place to support these part time positions. But by and large, like at many companies today, part time career opportunities at Ebay are very manager driven.

Advice for Others Interested in Proposing a Reduced Schedule

Kirstin feels that building a strong reputation, and choosing the right manager are key to securing and succeeding in a part time, career track position. She highly recommends that you develop a track record of success that makes you the best candidate for the job even on a reduced schedule. Plan ahead as you are selecting a company and manager. And if your manager isn't supportive, use your network and references to find one that is.

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Kirstin also feels that coming into her position at Ebay 4 days a week, rather than trying to cut back from a full time schedule to a reduced schedule, was very helpful in setting her up for success in her position. She highly recommends that approach, where possible. If you do need to cut back in your current role, it can be done, but be prepared to specifically call out what responsibilities you are removing to get to 80% and potentially for some awkwardness in the transition as you hand off or delegate these responsibilities. Whether you are starting on a part time basis or cutting back to a part time basis, Kirstin recommends that you set clear expectations with your management and your team about how your arrangement will work.

According to Kirstin “In my own experience, as well as through the encouragement of a professional coach, I also recommend not being afraid to ask for what you want. Be very specific and paint a picture for how you personally, your manager, and the company will benefit by considering a flexible arrangement. How you approach this ask (strategically, with confidence, unapologetically, with details about what you want the reduced schedule for, and citing examples of others who have done it and how it can work) will have a huge impact on whether it is accepted. For those who fear even asking might not only have them denied, but then put on a “mommy track” – I’d really push on that.”

Kirstin also reminds that it will take some discipline to keep to your part time commitment. “It is very easy to let your hours creep up. And you will inevitably need to manage your workload and arrangement over time.” Kirstin checks in with her management and peers on a regular basis to make sure that her responsibilities and schedule compare appropriately with their full time roles. And she has been thankful that several of her most trusted management, peers and team have checked in with her at various times to let her know when she’s taking on more than she’s being paid for.

Job Sharing

Suzanne Sengelmann & Mary Jo Cook, Job Sharing VPs of New Business Development at Clorox

As VP of New Business Development, Mary Jo Cook and Suzanne Sengelmann jointly lead all new business initiatives for Clorox's Laundry and Home Care division.

Benefits to the Company

By all accounts these two women are a world-class team with highly complementary strengths and experience: Mary Jo is known as a product guru and Suzanne as a marketing whiz. Management at Clorox believes that, while both individuals are successful in their own right, as a team, one plus one clearly equals three. Together, they bring more to the role than either of them could alone.

Importantly, the job share arrangement allows Clorox to retain this key talent. Both Mary Jo and Suzanne say that the odds are high that they wouldn't be working if it weren't for Clorox's flexible work policies.

Motivation for Flex Career

Both Suzanne and Mary Jo have children. Both were working part-time schedules at Clorox before they initiated their job share arrangement (Mary Jo had been part time for ten years, Suzanne for five). Mary Jo had been running the New Business Group three days a week, but in the past few years, the demands of the job had grown too much to be performed on a part-time basis. Suzanne was working three days a week as a Director of Marketing at Clorox, so for her, the job share presented an opportunity for an attractive promotion.

Their motivation to work part-time was driven by a desire to achieve a certain balance in life, with time for children, community service, self, and a meaningful career. Working part-time has allowed each to achieve this balance (at least to some degree!) The motivation to job share came as each realized that she would have broader scope and bigger impact by being part of a "full-time team" than she could have as an individual part-time person

How it Works

Suzanne and Mary Jo each work three days per week, overlapping on Wednesdays. Behind the scenes, they communicate by voicemail and use a 2-hour window on Wednesdays to meet live, ensuring they are on the same page on big projects. They truly behave as one person. Their voicemail and email are shared, and they even go by one name – Sam (Suzanne and MJ).

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They each receive full benefits and, because the team is working a total of 6 rather than 5 days a week, they're compensated at 1.2 times a full-time salary.

Responsibilities

"Sam" are the innovation leaders for Laundry and Home Care, the largest division at Clorox. They have been partners for about a year, and in that time they have created the New Business Leadership Team, a cross-functional team of 8 experienced, talented individuals responsible for the development and launch of all major new products for the division. This team, and the people who support it, total about 100 employees all working on major new product initiatives.

In the past year, Sam has led the New Business Leadership Team in launching Clorox® Anywhere Hard Surface™ daily sanitizing spray a breakthrough sanitizing product for hard surfaces that is safe for use around children and pets. Working with this team, Mary Jo and Suzanne have developed a robust pipeline which should result in new product launches for several years to come.

Sam is also a member of the Laundry Home Care Leadership Team, the group that sets strategy and delivers results for the division.

Selecting a Job Share Partner

Both Mary Jo and Suzanne feel that selecting the right job share partner is key to the success of the team. The two women had known and respected each other for years, and talked about potentially job sharing several years before they finally struck their current partnership. They credit their respect for each other, complementary skills, and similar tenure with the company as the keys to their success as partners. They also note that they both have a similar world view – in fact, they often find themselves finishing each other's sentences. Though they will generally agree on the final solution to a problem, they get there in very different ways. Others at the company say that they can start a conversation with one partner on one day, and finish the conversation with the other partner on another day without missing a beat.

Company Culture

Clorox's culture is very supportive of flexible and part-time arrangements including job sharing. Over 10% of the Marketing organization at Clorox was working some form of a part time schedule at the time this profile was written. But part time is generally a privilege at Clorox reserved for high performers. For employees that have proven themselves, there are a number of roles that are considered part-time appropriate. And for all other roles, valued employees understand that job sharing may be an option if they need to cut back their hours, but don't want to change their focus.

Advice for Other Job Share Pairs

The team offers the following advice to others interested in job sharing: “Find an equal partner who has complementary skills to yours, and a similar world view. Choose someone that you respect a great deal and enjoy working with. And finally, check your ego at the door. There are going to be times when your partner is going to represent the team at a big meeting. More than likely you’ll be at the next big meeting. You have to be comfortable that it’s not all about your individual career and reputation, it’s about the success of the team.” Suzanne and Mary Jo claim that they value their work team so highly that this is not an issue. But they advise that if you aren’t comfortable sharing the spotlight, then job sharing probably isn’t for you.

Dana Meade & Paula Rivers, Job Sharing VP & GMs for Zoomerang at MarketTools, Inc.

As VP & GM for Zoomerang, Dana and Paula jointly run one of the leading Online Survey Services Businesses.

Benefits to the Company

By all accounts these two women are a world-class team with highly complementary strengths and experience: Dana is primarily responsible for Zoomerang Product Management and Support and Paula runs Product Marketing and Sales for the business. The team have been meeting and exceeding business objectives for the Zoomerang business since they formed their job share partnership. But their continued tenure despite initial skepticism from Executive Management, may be the clearest testament of their value to the business. The team's original job sharing proposal met with a great deal of skepticism from the Company's prior CEO. Fortunately he gave the pair a try, and couldn't argue with their results. Dana and Paula have been successfully leading Zoomerang for over 4 years since.

Motivation for Flex Career

Both Dana and Paula are married to husbands with equally demanding careers and had recently started families when they considered their partnership. They were motivated by a desire to strike a balance between their careers and being involved parents. Their decision to job share was partly influenced by a belief that each would have broader scope and bigger impact by being part of a "full-time team" than she could have as an individual part-time person.

Dana was running the Zoomerang business full time, when she was scheduled to go out on her first maternity leave. Dana and Paula had worked together previously, and Dana asked Paula to step in as her maternity leave replacement. When Dana returned from maternity leave, the two proposed their job share and both stayed on as partners.

How it Works

Dana and Paula divide their role functionally. Dana handles Product Management and Support, and Paula handles Marketing and Sales. They feel that by distributing roles they minimize overlap, and yet the distribution of work is balanced. Each of the two women work 20 hours a week in two and a half days, overlapping on Wednesdays. Behind the scenes, they touch bases once per day and set aside time on Wednesdays to meet live, ensuring they are on the same page on big projects. They rely heavily on technology including email, PDAs and cell phones.

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They each receive full benefits and, because they are sharing a single full time schedule are each compensated at 50% of the full time salary and incentive compensation for the position. But it is well recognized that the company is getting two heads for the price of one. And the two women share duties to cover roles for one another during vacations, sick leaves and maternity leaves, so the company nets better coverage for their position than for their full time counterparts.

Responsibilities

As VP & GMs of Zoomerang, Dana and Paula report to the CMO of MarketTools, and are fully responsible for running the Zoomerang business with Profit and Loss responsibility and ownership of product management and marketing for the service as well as all sales and support functions. They manage a team of 30 people, one of whom is working part time.

Selecting a Job Share Partner

Dana and Paula had worked together in the past and knew they were a well matched team. They had complementary skills and work styles, as well as a similar work ethic. And equally importantly, according to the team, they had “chemistry,” a strong relationship and a great deal of respect for one another which allows them to work together with ease.

Company Culture

Dana and Paula were certainly ground breakers when they first proposed their job share partnership. They met with significant skepticism from the company’s former CEO. Fortunately, they were hard to replace, and he agreed to give their partnership a try while he looked for a replacement. The two worked very hard to win his support during that trial period. And ultimately the CEO, won over by their results, kept the pair on. Thanks to their efforts breaking ground, MarketTools’ new CEO is much more receptive to their arrangement. And Dana and Paula now have one part time person on their team.

Advice for Other Job Share Pairs

Dana and Paula both feel that the right partner is the key to a successful job share. They suggest that you choose a peer that you know well and respect a great deal or interview candidates carefully to really get a feeling for their work ethic. “Complementary skills are very important, but you should also find someone that you have great chemistry with.” they suggest.

The two women also warn that keeping any job to part time is a constant exercise in self discipline. It is necessary to be flexible to make a job share arrangement work. And you certainly can’t set your schedule in stone. But they do recommend that you be disciplined in keeping your time somewhat balanced, after all you’re not being paid for full time in these arrangements.

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Hillary Mickell and Andrea Cutright, Job Sharing Sr. Directors of Marketing at Yahoo

Hillary Mickell and Andrea Cutright are the Company's first job share pair, and jointly lead all marketing initiatives for Yahoo's Network Products Group, a business that includes the Yahoo.com, My Yahoo and Yahoo Groups brands among others

Benefits to the Company

According to Andrea and Hillary, or team Mickright as they are known at Yahoo, the greatest benefits of their job share arrangement are greater coverage for their ever expanding set of responsibilities and more time for creativity. Because the position covers such a broad range of high visibility products, they both felt that too much of their time was taken up in meetings and reactionary work, and not enough in working one on one with their teams. Between her meeting schedule and balancing the demands of two children at home, Andrea also felt she was too busy to think as creatively as she liked. In recent years, those thinking moments in the shower or on the drive home that had always been her creative time, were increasingly occupied by practical concerns like whether she had enough milk in the refrigerator.

Through their job share, the team now has better coverage for the growing responsibilities of the position. And both women feel they are more effective in the role than they were alone, with better coverage for meetings, more time to work with their team, and most importantly more time to think creatively. According to everyone in their ecosystem, the ideas are flowing. Their staff felt the results of the increased productivity of their new bosses first hand when their list of action items doubled in the first two months of reporting to the job share pair. When this was brought to their attention, Hillary and Andrea quickly reined in their creativity, recognizing that they may have doubled their thinking time, but they hadn't doubled their staff.

In addition, both women feel strongly that they are more committed to Yahoo because the Company is supporting them in this win win arrangement.

Motivation for Flex Career

Before they formed their job share arrangement, both Andrea and Hillary were working full time schedules as Sr. Directors in Marketing at Yahoo. Andrea had been handling the job that the two now share and Hillary had been handling a similar role for a different group at Yahoo. Both Andrea and Hillary have two children almost the same age, with both of their second children under a year old. They both also have working spouses. Clearly, time for their young families was a significant motivation for forming their team. But other motivations were equally important. Andrea whose husband has a more flexible schedule than she does, was perhaps equally motivated by a desire for a creative

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partner and an additional resource that could help her to cover a big and growing role with high visibility in the company. As a veteran marketer in Silicon Valley, Hillary came to Yahoo! accustomed to a collaborative environment and was used to teaming and bouncing ideas off of a creative partner. As she looked at ways to create the balance she was looking for, she was particularly attracted to the teaming and collaborative aspect of a job share arrangement.

How it Works

Hillary and Andrea each work 3 days per week. Hillary works Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Andrea works Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday. They chose this schedule in part because neither of them would be out of the office for more than one day in at a time. But they also wanted to make it clear to management that their motivation in this arrangement was not to create a four day weekend for themselves. Behind the scenes, they talk every night at 10pm to synch from the day, and they use their joint time on Wednesdays to host a joint staff meeting, and meet live, ensuring they are on the same page on big projects. They truly behave as one person. Their email is shared, and they even go by one name – Mickright (Mickell And Cutright).

As far as goals and objectives for their position are concerned, the team has coached their management that they share all goals and objectives for the team and want to be evaluated as a team, rather than each being held accountable for discrete objectives. This is particularly important to this team because Andrea had been in this job for some time, and they both want to ensure that Hillary is treated as an equal in the partnership, though she may not have the same history with their constituents. The two women have, however, discussed and set different personal career goals with management.

Hillary and Andrea each receive full benefits, including full vesting of their Yahoo stock options, a valuable component of their compensation. And because the team is working a total of 6 rather than 5 days a week, each of them is compensated at half of 1.2 times their original full time salary. According to the team, neither of them actually know how much the other makes because their compensation is based on their salaries coming into the team.

Responsibilities

Team Mickright is responsible for all marketing for Yahoo's Network Products group a business that includes such well known brands as Yahoo Groups, Yahoo 360, Yahoo.com, My Yahoo and the Personal Platforms that run across much of the Yahoo product suite, such as the personalization infrastructure. Team Mickright reports to the VP of Marketing at Yahoo and has dotted line responsibility to the Company's VP of Products. The team also manages 8 direct reports and 6 dotted line reports.

Selecting a Job Share Partner

Both Andrea and Hillary feel that selecting the right partner is key to the success of any job share team. The two women had known each other for years and though they always handled separate responsibilities at Yahoo, had sought each other out as a sounding board and creative partner since they had met. They were trusted advisors before they became a team. And they credit their mutual respect for each other and complementary skills as the keys to their success as partners.

Company Culture

Team Mckright's job share arrangement is the first at Yahoo. It's not clear yet, what the company's position will be on supporting more of these arrangements in the future, but so far management is very happy with the team's performance. There are also a handful of individuals at Yahoo working part time schedules in various positions at the company. Andrea and Hillary sense that there are a number of people at Yahoo that are interested in following in their job share footsteps but according to Hillary, "The what and the who of a job share are not trivial issues."

Yahoo did recently make a major switch from a head count model of managing human resource capital to a resource cost model. This cost model allows the company to stay in touch with the true human resources investment it is making in its various businesses. And though the switch wasn't instituted for this purpose, doing away with headcount eliminates a number of disincentives for offering flexible and part time work arrangements normally associated with the rigidity of headcount's whole units.

Advice for Other Job Share Pairs

The team offers the following advice to others interested in job sharing: "Find a partner that you respect and that shares your work ethic. And be sure to respect each other's opinions and thought process. A large part of the value in a partnership like this is the complementary skills and perspectives of the two team members. That means that you're not always going to think alike and that's a good thing. We are much more creative as a team than we could be alone, but it's a collaborative process to get there. For us to truly operate as a team, it was important to put our egos on hold, and be committed to sharing all of our projects, rather than taking on distinct individual projects. Part of that is because one of us owned this role previously and the other is coming in to the role as a part of the team. But we recommend this principle for any job share to reduce the potential for competition and make it about the team."

Consulting as a Flexible Career

Matt Miller, Part Time Advisor with Major Management Consulting Firm

Matt Miller's flexible arrangement with a major consulting firm allows him to have a successful business life while also serving as a think tank fellow, author, public radio host and regular Fortune columnist

Benefits to the Company

A prominent consulting firm's offer for Matt Miller to return to work with the company as a part time senior advisor allowed the firm to re-attract Matt after a dozen year hiatus. After working full time with the firm from 1989 to 1991, Matt had left to pursue his interests in public policy and writing. He served as an aide in the Clinton White House, pursued a writing career that included work for many national magazines, and the publication of the bestseller, *The 2% Solution: Fixing America's Problems In Ways Liberals and Conservatives Can Love*. He also joined the Center for American Progress as a senior fellow, launched and hosts a weekly public radio talk show, "Left Right & Center," and writes a regular column for Fortune. Matt's advisor status with the consulting firm is a terrific arrangement for Matt, allowing him the time and the independence that he needs to pursue his public policy work while thriving as well in his consulting career.

The arrangement allows the consulting firm to offer the value of Matt's judgment, experience and network to their clientele. Matt's "extracurricular activities" also enhance his contributions to the firm and its clients. His expertise and reputation help him address client challenges and let him add value to his consulting colleagues' efforts.

Motivation for Flex Career

Matt is married to a successful businesswoman and entrepreneur who also works a flexible schedule to juggle family, career, corporate board seats and community involvement. The couple also have one daughter at home. Matt's flexible schedule allows him to better support his wife's career and spend more time with family, particularly given his travel schedule. But equally importantly, his less than full-time consulting role allows Matt to pursue his passion for civic involvement and engagement with the public debate on key issues such as health care.

How it Works

Matt took a decade off from consulting to work in government and build his policy reputation. In that time, he wrote his book, "The 2% Solution", signed on to his fellowship and built his reputation as a radio show host and columnist, before opting back into consulting as an advisor with the firm.

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In his role as an advisor, Matt is a part-time contractor working with the firm and their clients. He works from home – itself an unusual arrangement for the firm -- though due to the nature of the work he is on the road often. The amount he works varies from week to week depending on the demand from clients.

The rest of Matt's time is spent on his policy and media work. Part of this is as a senior fellow at the Center for American Progress, where Matt is an employee, and receives health coverage for his family.

Culture of Flexibility

The major consulting firm Matt works with is trying to increase flexible work options in their business because talent wants it. Among other programs, the firm is offering more part time advisory roles to talent like Matt to allow the firm to offer their expertise to clients.

Advice for Others Interested in Proposing a Reduced Schedule

Matt's best advice to others seeking a flexible career is to, "Develop an expertise in something valuable, the more unique your skill, the better. Your value to the organization will help you to negotiate a custom arrangement." And he encourages you to be willing to live with ambiguity in order to pursue your passions - for Matt that meant walking away from consulting for years, and coming back to it on a contract basis.

Matt also believes that choosing the right partner is equally important to making your life and career work. It's certainly not easy to juggle two high profile careers and family, but Matt and his wife have made it a priority to support each other in their careers, creating the flexibility in each of their roles that allows them to have career impact while still putting family at the center of their lives. This support for each other's careers has allowed them to take risks over the years that have paid significant dividends. Jody was able to support Matt as he took the time to write his book. And now Jody has relied on Matt as she starts a new business. They recognize that they wouldn't be where they are today if they had chosen to put one of their careers ahead of the other. And they both work at home, an arrangement both credit with boosting their productivity (no time wasted in office "kibitzing"), freeing up enormous time otherwise lost to commutes, and assuring their availability to their daughter.

Robbie Baxter, Founder and Principle of Peninsula Strategies, Part Time Independent Consultant

As the Founder and Principle of Peninsula Strategies, Robbie Baxter leads a thriving Strategy Consulting practice on a Part Time Schedule

Benefits

For Robbie Baxter, leaving her full time position in high tech to pursue a career as a consultant has allowed her to find the panacea of the professional mother, a lucrative career that allows her to contribute at a significant level in her area of expertise *and* offers more time for family. Consulting has been so good to Robbie that she has been asked to tell her story and recommend this path to other MBAs seeking balance through Alumni Seminars at The Stanford Graduate School of Business, her Alma Mater and several other MBA programs.

The opportunity to consult with Robbie on a project basis is also advantageous to her clients, who highly value her expertise. Robbie's cumulative experience has made her a defacto expert in accelerating growth at technology companies through market-driven strategies and each subsequent project that she handles for a client increases her value to the next. Her consulting model while lucrative for Robbie, is a value for her clients, who only pay her for the value of each project that she delivers, rather than having to keep her on staff year round to gain her expertise when they need her. Occasionally clients become attached, and Robbie has gone as far as refusing to renew a contract with a client when she believes they are ready to take over a project and are paying too high a price for her services at that point in the project.

Motivation for Custom Career

Robbie is a mother of three. Five years ago, after the birth of her second child, Robbie left her position as the Director of Brand Management at MYCFO. In considering what to do next, she was in a quandary, she had been in a part time position at another company prior to her full-time role with My CFO, and had found it unfulfilling—and financially it didn't make sense. It seemed that her part time status had sidelined her into a "special projects" role. And she missed handling the strategic aspects of the Product Management role that she loved. A friend encouraged Robbie to try her hand at consulting, and five years later, she is now running a highly successful advisory practice and finds that it offers the combination of challenging, meaningful work, income potential and flexibility that she was looking for.

How Her Consulting Practice Works

In an ideal world Robbie would consistently work 30 hours a week. Her nanny coverage is from 8:15 to 4pm M-Th. And in an ideal week she spends 20 hours with clients, and 10 hours week on business development and business management. But as is the nature

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of consulting, her schedule is often unpredictable. It's not unusual for Robbie to have a month in between assignments, and a couple of weeks where several projects overlap and she is working 50 hours a week. Given the flexibility of the work, a supportive spouse and family in the area, she can schedule additional hours in the evenings or on weekends. Despite the peaks and valleys, Robbie tends to average about 30 hours a week, enjoying the work/family balance she was looking for.

Responsibilities

Robbie's specialty is in growth strategy and market assessments for new online businesses and applications. She has worked for companies including Netflix, Zoomerang Yahoo, Sun Microsystems and Oracle among others.

The Consulting Experience

According to Robbie, consulting is a vastly different experience than working in house. Clients consider you an expert in your field, a problem solver. And as an outsider, you are exempt from the politics of promotion which offers a great deal of independence. By its very nature, consulting can be much more flexibility friendly. A Friday spent with kids at the park need not be explained. It doesn't matter to your clients whether you are meeting with the CEO of another company or hanging out in the park with your kids—as long as the work is completed well and on-schedule. And many companies that don't offer part time positions are happy to hire consultants on a project basis, expanding the opportunities for interesting part time work.

But consulting also has its downsides. You don't receive benefits and the work can be inconsistent. Sustaining your business often requires a regular investment in selling your services. And depending on how much client interaction you have, running a one person show can be lonely, and require some back office paper work that you might rather avoid. But net, net, for successful consultants like Robbie Kellman Baxter, the consulting model offers a very lucrative career, with interesting work and the flexibility that they are looking for, and often couldn't find in house.

Advice for Starting your Own Consulting Practice

Robbie advises that confidence is key in starting and running a consulting practice. She hasn't seen a qualified, confident person fail at starting their own consulting practice, but it's certainly not for everyone. If you have the skills and you're interested, she encourages you to dip your toe in the water. She suggests that you give yourself 6 months and set reasonable initial goals. Robbie started her practice with a goal of securing two projects in a 6 month periods at a very reasonable introductory rate. If she could do that, she'd raise her rates and give it another 6 months. That was 5 years ago and she loves her work, is making more money than she did in house, and has more personal time, and control over her schedule.

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But she warns that you need to set aside enough time to be successful in consulting. Don't try to start your practice on 5 hours a week. She recommends that you need a minimum of 20 hours + of work time a week to run a successful business consulting practice. The other critical skill to hone as a consultant is to scope and price your projects accurately so you're not undercharging for the work you do. Robbie's advice is to stay focused on who your stakeholders are and use their vision to fully scope the project up front. She generally meets with the stakeholders 2 or 3 times before finalizing a proposal. Her questions include: "What do we need to do? How do we know when we are done? Are there any other deliverables?" The more accurate the scope of work and value proposition, the easier it will be to price and sell your services.

Robbie also recommends avoiding short term crunch projects if your goal is to keep your schedule to part time. Though you can often charge more for these high intensity projects, Robbie sends these opportunities to contacts that are happy to work the 60-80 hour weeks required.

Making a Custom Career Proposal – Best Practices

1. Consider Flexibility in Advance

Choose an employer based in part on their reputation for promoting others that are on a reduced schedule. And choose a manager that you believe will support you through all phases of your career. You may or may not want to ask the hiring manager this question in an interview, but at the very least ask the recruiter or other friends at the firm.

2. Be Highly Valuable and Hard to Replace

Develop an expertise in something valuable, the more unique your skill, the better. Don't undervalue your talents and your network. You likely have more leverage than you think. Your value to the organization is your best leverage in negotiating a custom arrangement.

3. Don't Underestimate the Value of a Glowing Recommendation

If you are hiring into a role on a flexible basis, whether it's a part time, flex scheduling, telecommuting or job sharing arrangement, don't underestimate the value of your reputation and the strength of an unconditional recommendation. The hiring manager has to believe that you are the best person for the job, even on a custom basis.

4. Be Clear About Your Priorities

It's very easy for ambition, career expectations, and just sheer momentum to cloud your perspective about your career priorities. Success can be very seductive, even in the face of a strong desire for balance. If you are over-stretched, or showing signs of imbalance in your career, take time to evaluate your priorities and adjust before you your career suffers.

Rank your priorities in all aspects of your life and objectively compare them to where you are spending your time and energies. If your time and your priorities don't correlate even loosely, then take the time to think outside the box and vision a career path that allows you to be authentic. When you bring your whole self to your career, you'll be much more successful.

5. Consider the Nature of the Work

Make a proposal that fits the nature of the business. In certain positions, clients or management won't be comfortable with the reduced coverage associated with part time schedules. In those cases, a job sharing arrangement or partnership with its increased coverage is a better approach. Many part time employees that I have spoken with that struggled to manage their part time schedules or felt sidetracked by their part time arrangement, have indicated they would definitely consider a job share over a part time position the second time around.

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In certain industries where the work by its nature has peaks and valleys, it is challenging to manage a reduced schedule on a daily or weekly basis - at times, even on a monthly basis. In those cases, a condensed schedule, where you work full time on peak projects or during the peak season, and then take compensating time off between projects may be received more favorably.

6. Work with your Management on an Objective Measure for Valuing your Results and contributions.

Putting the emphasis on results and not schedule first makes the hours you work and where you do them much less important. Coming to this understanding with your manager can be the key to negotiating flexibility in your full time schedule. But it is just as important for part time workers who commonly find themselves increasing productivity over time to a point where they are achieving the full time objectives of the position on a reduced schedule. If your compensation is tied solely to your hours, with no objective measure of the value of your results, then you won't be paid your full value in this scenario. Starting with an objective measure of your results gives you a tool for working with your manager over time to tie your salary to output rather than hours.

7. Working Remotely May Make a Custom Schedule Less Obvious

When you're not in the office, it's often not as obvious to the rest of the organization that you don't work that extra day a week. Colleagues may just notice that you're doing a great job. Managing remote employees requires a manager to value objectives and outcomes over face time, an approach that is valuable in managing flex schedules objectively as well.

8. Be Willing to be Less Necessary

Often times you have to create the organizational capacity on your team that makes you less necessary before you can safely cut back your contribution to the organization. Put the preparations in place that will allow you to cut back.

9. Do Your Homework

Go to human resources in advance to understand exactly how part time or flexibility options work, how compensation is handled, and how others at your firm have structured their arrangements.

10. Target Your Audience

Work backward from your manager's perspective to ensure that you are preparing the most effective proposal. Think through what your manager will need to do to make the job change that you are looking for a reality. And then ask yourself what would motivate them to take that action. Make sure you are addressing and emphasizing your manager's motivations, and not your needs in your proposal.

11. Make a Water Tight Proposal

Don't leave your boss with concerns or ask them to take on extra effort to accommodate your request. Make it easy for them. Spell out all the details on how the arrangement you are proposing would work, including how additional work could be distributed, how the arrangement would work and what benefits would accrue to your management and the organization.

12. Site Successful Examples

Use examples of others succeeding in the arrangement that you are proposing to demonstrate that you can be successful and valuable in this model. Using examples of others that have come before at your company or in similar roles at other companies will add credibility to your proposal and may help to alleviate any doubt or misconceptions on the part of your management.

13. Dig Deeper if You Meet with Initial Resistance

If you really enjoy and are good at what you do, and you think a flexible arrangement is in the best interest of the company, feel a sense of entitlement to create an arrangement that works. If your boss doesn't feel comfortable with you working flexibly initially, try to get to the root of the concern and address it. Do they think you won't get the job done, that you'll miss important meetings, or that you won't have adequate child care coverage while you're working from home? Discuss the concerns and address them to get past any initial resistance.

14. Be Prepared to Live with Ambiguity in the Beginning

If you still meet with resistance, consider proposing a 6 month trial period. This no risk arrangement may make management feel safer in trying something new, and may be easier for them to sell to stakeholders for approval. If the arrangement is working at the end of the trial period they are likely to grant you an extension. If your employer absolutely won't approve a custom schedule for your position, consider proposing to take on appropriate projects as a contractor. Many companies that value coverage highly in many employed positions are very open to hiring past employees for contract projects in hopes of rehiring them when they are ready to return to full time.

Succeeding in Your Custom Career – Best Practices

15. Hold Yourself Back

Don't try to lead everything. You have to let go of something to cut back. Focus on the most important aspects of your job, what they are really paying you for. And let the other activities take a back seat. Check in regularly with your peers and manager to gauge the workload and schedule of your full time equivalents, and ensure that your objectives and hours are appropriate to your arrangement.

16. Over Deliver in Your Core Function

Whatever your arrangement, ensure that you will be able to deliver on the key requirements of the position, even over deliver. The onus is on the groundbreakers in this arena of workplace flexibility to ensure that they are shining examples of how successful flexibility can be for both the employer and the worker. Your success will open the door for others in your organization.

17. Be Flexible & Disciplined

Understand that flexibility is a two way street. Make it clear with your boss that while balance is important, you intend to be flexible to keep business running smoothly. Then be disciplined to keep your time balanced on average. It is very easy for any part time job to creep up to a full time commitment. Remember that it's up to you to prevent yourself from working full time for part time pay.

18. Be Prepared to Train the Organization

If you are a pioneer in your organization, be prepared to invest in training the organization to work with your flexible arrangement. Have a thick skin as this can take time. Be flexible when it's important, and set limits when necessary so that you don't encourage bad habits. There are likely to be a few people that will be unsupportive of your arrangement. Outlast them. Never forget the value of the leadership that you are providing to your organization. And be prepared to be strong.

19. Choose the Right Job Share Partner

Find a partner that you respect and that shares your work ethic. Choose a peer that you know well and respect a great deal or interview candidates carefully to really get a feeling for their work ethic and reputation. Choosing a partner with complementary skills can help reduce conflict and create synergies, but finding someone that you have great chemistry with is equally important.

20. Be sure to respect your Job Share Partner's opinions and thought process.

A large part of the value in job share partnership are the complementary skills and perspectives of the two team members. That means that you're not always going to think alike and that's a good thing.

21. Truly Operate your Job Share as a Team

It is important to put your egos and individual career aspirations on hold, and be committed to putting your joint success as a team first.

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22. Find Good Quality, Flexible Childcare.

This may mean paying a good nanny slightly more than the going rate so there is no risk of losing them and they are more motivated to support your schedule. Or it may mean selecting a day care with flexible policies to help smooth scheduling issues.

23. Work with your Partners to Craft an Emergency Childcare Plan

Work with your spouse or partner, nanny or extended family to understand their professional limitations and craft a team plan for responding to the inevitable emergency childcare situations, a sick child, an emergency meeting, travel. If you and your spouse both travel for your jobs, make a date to sit down on a weekly basis to negotiate your travel schedules. Each of you will need to make compromises in the process so that everyone wins.