

## Does part time working mean kissing goodbye to your career ?

Work life balance is a well trodden phrase – we now live in a society where we expect to enjoy a rewarding career alongside quality personal and family life. Few people manage to do this well and those who have been successful tend to come from companies with a supportive, positive approach. They are also people with significant lengths of service within their organisation.

The bad news is that the more senior your role is, the less likely it is that your organisation will agree to you part-time working. If you are considering making a request – check to see how many of your peers are working part time as this will give you a benchmark. People who effortlessly juggle their career and domestic life use a number of techniques you may want to adopt yourself. Here are a few tips:

Self contained or project roles are much easier for you and the organisation to manage on a part time basis. Moving to a different type of role could broaden your skills and perspective within the organisation and be more flexible for you too. Roles that encompass people responsibilities are a tougher nut to crack as most organisations struggle with the notion of a manager not being in the office. If this applies to you then ensure you have a solid deputy in place – someone the organisation knows and trusts to deliver.

Try to present your manager with a solution rather than a problem when making your request for part time work. Think carefully about how it will work in practice, the continuity of your workflow, who people can turn to when you're not there and what will happen if something urgent arises? See if you can trial part-time working before going ahead and you can always revert if you feel your reputation is at risk.

Carefully think through your rationale for your switch to part time work and if this is due to family commitments, understand what your priorities are as you will be constantly challenged! Many part timers find they end up doing a full time job in part-time hours and they also have to work doubly hard to maintain a presence in the organisation. In fast paced environments even a day away can be a long time!

So be kind to yourself – whatever your reason for going part time, don't try to do too much. It may be possible to "tread water" for a while and then re-charge your career on a full time basis when you're ready - bringing fresh focus and perspective to your job. Sometimes it pays to be the hare, sometimes the tortoise – what's right for your life now?

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