

Jill S.

[Landing page]

Jill's two daughters know she works. They even catch her doing it occasionally. But on the whole, they only know because she tells them. Jill arrives at ABC around 9 or 9:30. She leaves by 1:45. And on Wednesdays, she doesn't work at all. She's had to make some trade-offs to work like this, but she wouldn't have it any other way.

Jill's Story

Jill started working full-time at ABC eleven years ago. But after two years, she had her first daughter, and she knew she didn't want to come back to work full-time. "I sat down with my partner and talked about it. We agreed I'd work 75 percent of a full schedule." She understood that during busy season that would be 75 percent of a lot of hours. But other times of the year, the load would be more manageable.

Because she had reduced her hours without reducing her client load, Jill's schedule was tough for a long time. Nonetheless, until just over a year ago, it was entirely worth it. But as her children grew older, Jill realized she needed more—not less—time with them: Whereas when they were very young she could rely on a great babysitter to fill in when she was away, now they were starting to be involved in sports and classes, and she wanted to be there. She considered quitting her job and realized that was not the answer.

"I can't imagine not working. I've always worked. I like the income, I like my friends here, I like using my brain!" says Jill. Instead, she went to her partner and asked to cut back further. This time, she suggested that her actual workload be reduced, telling him, "These clients I want to keep, these I want to let go of." Except for one important client, whom her partner insisted she hang onto, he agreed to the plan. Today, Jill works 60 percent of a full-time schedule.

Making It Work

Early on in her years of working reduced hours, Jill had to spend a lot of time proving herself. For all the work she did, it sometimes felt like she would never get a promotion. She was a senior in [division] at the time, and for a long time a senior she remained. But eventually her partner came to realize that her part-time schedule had nothing to do with her accomplishments and she was promoted to manager.

Today, no one seems to have a problem with Jill's schedule—including her clients. Everyone has her cell phone number and knows how to reach her when they need her. During busy season, she focuses on work and gets it done "no matter what it takes." But, says Jill, "Six months out of the year my family is the most important thing. My kids are my most important priority."

The Bottom Line

Perhaps Jill's only regret is that she can't spend more time with her staff, just to show how much she appreciates them. "I'd like to take them out to lunch more, to thank them for their work," she says, "But they always know they can call me."

The Bottom Line

Perhaps Jill's only regret is that she can't spend more time with her staff, just to show how much she appreciates them. "I'd like to take them out to lunch more, to thank them for their work," she says, "But they always know they can call me."