

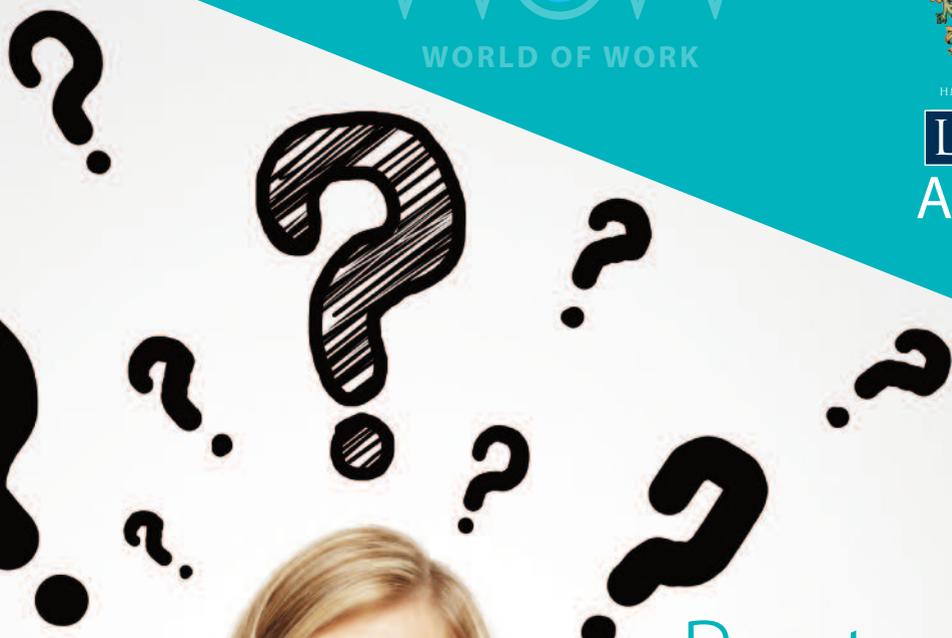
WOW  
WORLD OF WORK



PATRON  
HM THE QUEEN

LVS

Ascot



Routes to  
the World  
of Work:  
**Edition 4 -**  
**The**  
**Rhythm**  
**of Life**

# Contents

<b>CHRISTINE CUNNIFFE</b> What inspired "Routes to the World of Work: Edition 4 - The Rhythm of Life"? 1	
<b>RUTH CLEMENT</b> First career is not a life sentence! 2	
<b>VIV KING</b> It wasn't planned 3	
<b>NATALIE LANGLEY</b> Starting work at 18... alternative route from university 4	
<b>JO LAKING</b> Taking a Break 6	
<b>KATHRYN NEILSON</b> Three careers and more... 7	
<b>LEIGH LAFEVER-AYER</b> Taking an International Assignment: A Broad in Britain 8	
<b>A MUM WHO WISHES TO REMAIN ANONYMOUS</b> More than three careers? 10	
<b>KIRSTY HESLOP</b> Starting work at 18+ 11	
<b>SUE LIVINGSTONE-LEARMONTH</b> Giving up work for children - and starting again 12	
<b>MICHAELA GARTSIDE</b> Swapping a payslip for P&L Accounts 14	
<b>TOM TURNBALL</b> Starting Work at 21+? 15	
<b>TANYA ROBERTS</b> Remote Working 16	
<b>JARMILA YU</b> How joining the 'Gig Economy' enabled me to 'Side Hustle' 18	
<b>CAROL MILLIGAN</b> Redundancy and Second Career? 20	
<b>SHEILA FEATHERSTONE-CLARK</b> Decision to retire: how I felt about it and how I feel now 22	
<b>GEORGINA LINDSAY</b> Leaving work to become a parent for the first time 24	

## What inspired "Routes to the World of Work: Edition 4 - The Rhythm of life"?

### Christine Cuniffe

LVS Ascot Principal

**During our WoW group discussions, we have often talked about how we managed to get where we are - right now today - and what the future holds. Being of relatively the same age (give or take 10 years), most of us started our further education and career paths in the very early stages of the digital revolution. To us, the world of office was "mad men" and choice of careers was still very traditional.**

To give you an example of my early 1990s ignorance, as a mature student on a PGCE course in 1993, I went on a one-day course on how to type in www. into a machine and wondered what on earth it was about and how this would help me as a trainee teacher. We learnt how to record on four-track recorders as used by the Beatles in the 1960s and I was slightly stunned that an electronic keyboard could be plugged into a computer to make orchestral sounds. Music teacher....mmmmm

This was never, never, ever in my life plan. Although I was a passionate pianist and dreamed of fame and fortune (early brush with Opportunity Knocks didn't help), I saw my first career as a professional musician as a young-life crisis and one day would fulfil my dreams of becoming a solicitor. What made it even worse was that my mother

said I would make a wonderful teacher or police woman – I can tell you how that conversation went! Possibly how our teenage children respond when we suggest particular paths to their disdain and amusement.

So, with a Common Professional Exam place secured at Reading university and articles training secured at a solicitors in Slough, I was four weeks from starting when I met Mr C and we decided to get married straight away, being slightly more mature in age than our counterparts in the mid-1990s. Suddenly, children were in my life plan and teaching seemed to be an attractive option....or rather July and August seemed an attractive option! I'm not proud of my revelation and I paid dearly for it in the first three years of my career in an extremely demanding school.

Who would have thought things would have worked the way they did and after the first couple of years, I realised, after the shock, that I had found my vocation and life- long passion in education. I'm probably one of few who are still in their second career and although no immediate plans to change....who knows what tomorrow brings (that's a good song!) - Maybe opportunity will knock.

The Rhythm of life....it's a powerful thing!



# First career is not a life sentence!

Ruth Clement

**Your first career choice is not a life sentence! For many people it is the beginning, the first step towards opening many doors, each one presenting new opportunities, each one revealing something new about who you are, what you are (and aren't) capable of, what will bring you a genuine sense of fulfilment and what won't. These doors often take you in directions you could never have envisaged whilst still sitting in the classroom.**

For many people, one career is not for life and one career is not enough. It wasn't for me and it probably won't be for you.

After school, I pursued my passion for languages and paired it up with a degree in Economics. I didn't know what I wanted to be, or how to get there. I had a vague notion that I would be working in the UN, but I knew that whatever I did, I would try to work in as many diverse cultures, using my languages, as I possibly could. After graduating, I began life as an import trader – the go between for the grocers (Tesco, Sainsbury's, M&S) and European cultivators of anything from oranges to lettuce, melons to capsicums. I loved it! It meant plenty of travel around Europe, negotiating deals in multiple languages, with a phone fixed

to each ear, sorting out the logistics of keeping every retailer and every store in stock of the fruits and salad which consumers expect to find freshly and continuously available.

Personal circumstances catapulted me in to a very different career, one which I ended up doing for the next 20 years – that of creating and managing brands. By 1997, I was leading multi-disciplinary teams on global brands.

Everything I have done in each role, along this journey, however seemingly disconnected one is to the other, has been a powerfully effective building block, enabling me to reach across functional divides and say, "you know, even though I am now head of brand marketing, I've also stood in your shoes, I understand your issues in supply chain, in planning, and or in finance". That's the power of change in a career. It makes you more agile, more in tune with the machinations of your sector. No mistake is wasted. No change of direction is unwarranted.

I now run my own business. I am my own boss. I can pick and choose the projects I want to be deeply involved in, and the ones I don't. I can choose to be the business manager or the creative, the doer or the strategist. And there is no Groundhog Day!

Good luck!! Ruth

*Ruth Clement is founder and director of Full Steam Consulting Ltd, a company dedicated to providing research services, strategy and deliverable action for leading brands around the world.*

# It wasn't planned

Viv King

**30 plus years ago school wasn't quite the same as it is today. I wasn't an academic student and I didn't do very well with my exams. I left school at 16 and went to Art College to study Graphics and Fashion. I loved it. I then applied to university to do fashion, probably because it was very cool, not because I really wanted to study it, needless to say I didn't get in.**

I didn't really know what I wanted to, I just knew I wanted to draw and get paid for it. I took two years out, did a one-year course at Chelsea School of Art studying Textiles, lived in Spain and France and worked in cocktail bars, bars and night clubs. It was great fun and I was offered Management Training in the Hotel and Catering industry, which I seriously considered.

However, my heart wasn't in it and I reapplied to study Retail and Exhibition Design and got myself a place in a small corner of St Martins School of Art (long before the London Institute had become a group). This was just at the time of the retail boom and goodness me, learning to draw on a computer!

I left on the Friday and started work on the Monday as an Assistant Designer for the Simpson Piccadilly Group. I had a fantastic career designing some amazing things and being part of teams building amazing buildings. The Printworks in Manchester, UCI in Bydgoszcz (Poland), Maidenhead and Greenwich. Marks and Spencer in Westfields along with numerous concessions in the UK, Europe and Worldwide. We even won a design and Leisure Award.

I felt strongly about writing this piece because my path did not go as planned. My heart has always been in the Arts and as a creative person, it's tough in an academic world, you think differently, perhaps aren't as efficient with your time but are very passionate about what you produce: but believe in yourself and you never know it may just work out!

# Starting work at 18... alternative route from university

**After completing an AVCE in business studies, alongside my A-Levels, I knew I wanted to work in finance. So, like everyone else, I visited various universities and submitted my applications. But that was before I realised that I didn't need a degree to become an accountant and having worked part time since the age of 15, I was used to a regular income and was keen to increase this.**

I applied for two trainee accountant positions, one at a top 20 audit & accountancy firm and the other, a local independent practice. Both interviews focused on the small business we'd ran as part of the AVCE syllabus, my part time jobs and my hobby at the time, Tae Kwon Do, all of which I enjoyed talking about, so it helped settle my nerves!

Looking back, I don't suppose I understood half of the job descriptions for either of these trainee positions – I had a rough idea on the word accounting, but 'auditing', what would that entail?

Fortunately, I was offered both jobs, so I was able to weigh up the pro's and con's of each. Both provided full study support and a similar salary, so I considered the practical points. One job was a 10 minute drive, the other 35 minutes on a good day! The larger

organisation may offer more variety and progression, but in the early days, I would be one of many – a small fish in a big pond. At 18 years old, my priority had to be training and support on the job, as well as college, so I chose the small local practice.

I started the job in September 2006 and began my ACCA studies in 2007. Having never studied accountancy before, I found the first few months on the job really tough. I needed to ask questions, but at times felt like I didn't even know what question to ask? All of a sudden I was working in a professional organisation and by the nature of the job, accountants and auditors are quite often, 'head down' working independently. However, when I enrolled at college and got chatting to fellow trainee accountants, I found I was not alone and over time I began to piece together the puzzle.

Over the next four years, I worked on audits, prepared management accounts, VAT returns and year-end accounts, attended stock takes and assisted with personal and corporation tax. All of which supported the topics I would come across during my ACCA studies. With this experience and exposure under my belt, I decided it was time to specialise in one particular area of accounts and applied for a job in a top 20 firm as a management accountant within their outsourcing department.

## Natalie Langley

Licensed Trade Charity Financial Controller



It was there that I became a qualified ACCA accountant and managed a portfolio of clients. Some of which treated me like an employee of theirs and I gained an insight in to working in industry.

This insight encouraged me to step away from practice and look for a job where I could make a difference to the finances of my employer. I didn't have a particular industry in mind, but I was keen to find a job description that offered variety and long-term progression and working for the Licensed Trade Charity has enabled this.

I started at the Charity as a management accountant and over time, I gained responsibility for reporting on their SEN schools. This then expanded to their large independent school and lettings business, whilst managing the Finance Team. Acting as a management accountant doesn't necessarily make you a good manager, but with the right training and support from colleagues, I completed levels 2 & 3 of the Institute of Leadership & Management courses.

After 4 years with the Charity, I'm now the financial controller, where I continue to manage the finance team and the five accounting functions within the organisation. I also oversee the Charity investment and

treasury portfolio. Some may say I'm lucky to have always found the job to fulfil my next step in life and to be fair, that's probably true. But, I've always worked hard to make sure it's the right decision for me and my employer.

Studying ACCA for five years was by far my biggest challenge. I spent many days staring at the white board, or reading my textbook, thinking 'I can't do this!', 'when will these exams ever end?' and as a result, I failed a handful of papers. However, when Friday 8th February 2013 came, I knew that qualifying would always be my biggest achievement.

# Taking a Break



## Jo Laking

**Almost a year ago to the day I left the company that I had been working at for almost 10.5 million minutes, 7300 days or to put it more succinctly nearly 20 years - whichever way you put it, a very long time. I joined when the Spice Girls and Madonna were in the top 10, Tony Blair was our Prime Minister and I was still dreading my 30th Birthday (oh why did I bother dreading it!). I hadn't had my children, got married, nor had I lost a brother and both parents – lots of life had happened in the 20 years!**

I would love to tell you I had “a light bulb moment” and “a moment of clarity” (more about hoping for them later) or other such things I had often read about that drove me to leave... Nope, for me, what really forced the decision in the end, was I doing two jobs and the company said that I had to do the one that I didn't want to do, or I could leave... and that, as they say was that.

In truth though, I was pretty burnt out, the company was changing, sometimes not fast enough, creating lots of pressure and between that and an intense period of bereavement my capacity to cope was severely diminished. They say life generally gives you what you need – well this time it definitely did – I needed a break.

I started the break thinking that I would be off for about 6 weeks or so, I'd chill out, work

out what I wanted to do next and do all the jobs that I had been putting off for ages... actually, I ended up being off for 9 months, still wasn't totally clear what I wanted to do next and didn't get around to some of those jobs that I had been putting off! So what did I do? Well, lots of dog walking, listening or reading books, went on holiday, more cooking (I was never the chef in our house) met friends and I also did a Systems or team-coaching course, which feels a lot more than it did at the time. And so what did I learn...?

Time is precious, but you don't have to cram it full to have value. We really underestimate how important allowing ourselves space to think is, both to be able to think clearly and also the value of not thinking much. Epiphanies or light bulb moments don't happen just because you want them to. Sometimes not knowing what's next is ok, answers can come out of trying things and liking/not liking them.

Making time for family, friends, hobbies is REALLY important and getting better balance in any job does not mean you are less committed, it means you are in for the long term. We talk about investing in houses, cars etc. – investing in ourselves is key.

So, no big lightbulb moment, a few things learnt that I endeavour to keep remembering. Don't fear time off, actively look for it if you can, don't just leave it for holidays.

# Three careers and more...



## Kathryn Neilson

**1976 - “What?”.....I said to my mum at the age of 13, “choose a selection of subjects to study that will be the foundation to building my future”!!**

I remember feeling totally over-whelmed at the thought. I had absolutely no idea what I wanted to do for the rest of my life. I wasn't capable of choosing my own breakfast let alone choosing a vocation that I would have to stick to for the rest of my working life.

It didn't help that many of my friends making the same decisions were totally focused on their career path and knew exactly what subjects they wanted to study at GCSE and A level.

As it happens, I needn't have worried. Since leaving college in 1982, I have changed my career four times. From Music teacher in a school to Facilities Manager in a large blue chip technology company to Compliance and Safety Officer for the world's largest cruise line to Director of a Maritime Training body.....4 different careers paths, 4 different industries.

The days when the subjects you chose were the basis for your future career are changing. The days when a career was for life are changing. There are so many more opportunities open to everyone looking for new opportunities and that making a career change is no longer viewed as unusual. More and more companies are recognising that their employees needn't be “pigeon holed” into specific roles. Companies are giving their employees opportunities to grow and

develop and to take on more responsibilities. They have realised that retaining the best skill set and securing employee loyalty are key to company success. They are now offering on-line training courses, time out to attend college courses and the option to study through distance learning.

With advancement in technology becoming more and more evident in the work place, it's key to ensure there is not a shortage of skills globally. The freedom to retrain is key to ensuring companies have the right skill set to manage the new challenges they face in the future.

So what advice would I give a 13-year-old today looking to make subject choices to frame their future?

1. Don't panic
2. Choose subjects to study that you enjoy and are good at and if you don't have what you need to get you to where you want to be, go and get it.
3. Be open-minded to changing your career path to accommodate whatever opportunities are presented to you.
4. Success is unique to each of us

Remember:

***“What lies behind you and what lies in front of you, pales in comparison to what lies inside of you.”***

Ralph Waldo Emerson

# Taking an International Assignment: A Broad in Britain

**In today's global business environment, many companies offer opportunities for international assignments. While on the surface this sounds glamorous and appealing, it can also be a difficult decision. Professionally, it is an excellent way to advance and fast-track your career but it isn't easy to 'up sticks' and move thousands of miles away from your family and friends.**

I was faced with that choice a few years ago when I decided to apply for a promotion. I moved to Nashville, Tennessee after university to start my graduate career and had been promoted several times. I knew that to advance to the positions I aspired to that I would need to leave Tennessee. But, I always thought that would mean staying the USA.

## A Partnership Approach

I have always been an anglophile. The first time I visited London, I thought that I could see living here in the future; but now I had a husband who was a musician and Nashville is nicknamed Music City USA. How would he feel? Luckily, we discussed relocating a lot. I was always clear that I probably wouldn't want to stay in Nashville forever and he was very supportive. Because we had ongoing discussions about relocation and had a

partnership approach, it made the decision to apply very straightforward even if it was in another country.

## Embrace the Difference

We had travelled in Europe more than most Americans. However, my husband's first trip to England was on our home finding tour. I had a friend ask me what the average four-bedroom detached home on an acre of land would cost in the UK; the key word here being average! We were prepared for the differences. We found a home that was built in the 1860's; ancient by American standards but we embraced the difference.

## The First Week

We arrived in the UK on Boxing Day and set up temporary residence at a local hotel. I picked up my company car and did lots of test drives to work. Driving on the opposite side of the road from what you are used to is not easy. I know a lot of people that have procrastinated in this area - don't it makes it harder.

My first day at work, I had an interesting exchange with a junior employee that sat outside my office. When I was walking to my desk from a meeting I heard him whistle

## Leigh Lafever-Ayer

Enterprise Holdings, HR Director UK and Ireland



Yankee Doodle Dandy. On one level, I was taken aback but then I thought he was just trying to be funny so I decided 'you can catch more flies with honey than vinegar'; note to self, colloquialisms may not be understood. So I introduced myself. I also noticed on the first day that people eat lunch much later in the day.

As we moved into our home, my husband found it challenging to find some of the items we required. At that time, online shopping wasn't a thing yet. We were used to being able to go to Walmart or Target and find nearly anything we needed; seven days a week, twenty-four hours a day. We discovered local shops and while it always wasn't as convenient, it was interesting. It took me years to discover that saltine crackers were really Doriano Italian crackers.

My husband was also surprised we could pay bills quarterly – how were we going to budget?

## Separated By a Common Language

It is said that Americans and Brits are separated by a common language and it's true. The first time someone told me that they would have a report to me in a fortnight; I had to ask them to clarify. However, I was thrilled the first time I heard 'reckon' and 'hose

pipe' used on the BBC. In the US, these words were definitely Southern words.

I found a British culture book that I found useful. Being from the South in the US, I knew that I had to be aware of my language - colloquialisms. I had to take care as many of the phrases I used might be misinterpreted. This is especially true with colleagues where English is not their first language. Recently, I was in a meeting where someone asked 'will that make the boat go faster'. I saw my German colleagues confused; it took them a moment to understand that we were speaking about improving performance.

My daughter was born in Surrey and her accent is definitely different from mine. My husband and I laugh and have a list of words and things we never said as a child that she says. But the reality is that we are happy that we took the challenge of an international assignment. It is a once in a lifetime opportunity to experience new work, culture and lifestyle. I don't have any regrets!

# More than three careers?

## A mum who wishes to remain anonymous

**How many different careers do you think you will have in your lifetime? Many more than you might expect. Research by LinkedIn (2015) shows that today an average worker holds between 12-15 different jobs within several careers. This is predicted to rise quickly over the next decade to a minimum of 20-25 jobs in a lifetime.**

Earning a lot of money immediately after college is becoming less likely, given the pressure on the job markets. Experts now encourage you in your twenties to build your experience and to learn about the world. As Business Insider UK (2017) magazine says 'Take whatever will keep you afloat, network, volunteer, invest in new skills!'

I left college with a good degree but no direct career path. A friend mentioned that I should go into advertising, because it was 'fun'. Reader, it was the 1980s – sexist, corrupt (think 'Mad Men'), and highly competitive. I started at the bottom, wearing shoulder pads and heels, needing to fit in.

I watched, I learnt, and I made a lot of coffee for men. Do the first two. You are at the bottom and you must learn.

Then I worked in product design, designing chocolate bars and alcoholic drinks (more 'fun'). I started to earn. Here I learnt: what happens when a product doesn't exist? how do ideas become real? who will buy them? How can they be packaged? I worked with brewers in

Dublin, Cuban distillers in Miami, marshmallow makers in Holland. I learnt that people need you to speak the truth. Do not try to be someone you are not. You will be found out, or you will be very unhappy, or both. After this, I worked in corporate branding, specifically branding organisations after mergers or demergers. This was usually about untangling a mess. Clarity of thought, developed at school, is well paid.

When my child was born, I wanted to be at home more. I worked part time for six years on the board of a NHS Hospital as a Non Executive Director. A job in public service! That was unexpected, but it used transferable skills of analysis, tenacity and consumer insight.

After six years your time is complete as a Non Executive, so what next? Having done some tutoring in my degree subject (Latin and Greek) I applied to train to be a teacher. A trip to the attic produced my degree certificate and I did a PGCE at Kings College, London. I was at least twenty years older than others on the course, but it didn't matter. I have been teaching for four years now. (Keep all certificates for decades: you can never predict what you will end up enjoying).

You are likely to have more than 20 different jobs in your lifetime. Recently, a teacher told me that evidence suggests that 40% of these do not yet exist.

Learn, then earn, and keep moving.

# Starting work at 18+

## Kirsty Heslop



My hope was to be in a better position in 3-4 years' time than if I had gone to university, both financially and with a higher-level qualification. It was also very important to me that I would be able to afford Sky TV and have enough money to purchase two Burmese cats. The dreams of a 19 year old!

Things that seem so simple now were hard at 19. The worst thing was getting up early and by early I mean around 830am (a mere fantasy for my now 36 year old self). I only lived 1 mile from the office but being a night owl I genuinely struggled in the mornings and always jogged to my desk trying to look as calm as possible at 8.59am. I felt ill prepared for the day in day out routine, with study courses in the evenings and at weekends and without the school holiday breaks that I'd been used to.

And oh the horror of being asked to make a cup of tea for an interviewee, or worse a client! How to know what goes in and in what order when you don't drink any hot drinks yourself. I remember nervously making my first cup of tea for someone when a colleague questioned if I had let the kettle boil completely. Obviously I answered yes and nodded confidently, but soon after I realised that I hadn't.

What I hadn't expected from work was the amazing camaraderie between the trainees and the established graduates' acceptance of me as part of the gang. They provided me with fantastic support and advice and actively

encouraged me to revise and socialise with them. And not because I was younger. They did this for graduates who joined after me. They had an urge to support others and make friends rather than compare performance and compete, which seemed strange to me as a fiercely competitive 19 year old. With hindsight, I assume that this maturity developed during their time at university, which I had missed out on.

An important lesson that I learned from the other trainees is that sometimes there just aren't enough hours in the day to do everything and so I gave up two of the four sports I played in order to fit it in more revision. But best of all, I made lifelong friends.

I found the first year of work and the professional exams a steep learning curve. I wouldn't have got through my traineeship without great support from peers, a lot of hard work and giving up a few things. I received my final exam results at age 23, passing all three finals first time. I signed up for Sky TV and named the cats 'Buster' and 'Muttley'.

My advice for starting work at 18+ would be to work hard, enjoy making new friends and ask someone to teach you how to make tea and coffee before your first day.

I say this was my first job. I still work (happily) at the same firm, 17 years later.

# Giving up work for children - and starting again

**When I was in my final year of school, I had no idea what I wanted to do. Or be. Like all my peers, I went to University and embarked on a Degree. On completing my degree, I took some Administration Temping work before taking a year out to teach English as a second language to students in Greece.**

Having enjoyed working with children, on my return from Greece I signed up for and completed a Postgraduate Diploma in Careers Guidance & Counselling whereupon I went on to work for 5 years in schools and colleges. Shortly after getting married, my husband was posted with work to Amsterdam. Despite being anxious about what I would do when I moved to join him, I soon found a job working for a recruitment company. After two years we moved back to the UK and I returned to my career in vocational guidance, but soon fell pregnant. I continued to work and returned to my employer after both my children were born. I had mixed feelings about returning, so my employers agreed to me job sharing my role, so I could work 3 days a week.

Now here's the thing: my husband earned a considerably higher salary than I did. And every time the nursery called to say one of my children were sick and needed to be collected, it was always down to me to dash

off from work to pick them up. This didn't sit well with my employers, especially now that I was in management. I wasn't keen to stop work. I'd always been anxious about being out of the labour market, worried that if I gave up work for children I'd find it difficult to secure work as they got older. I was concerned that I would lose skills and miss out on opportunities to people who had built up more skills and experience than myself. But, if I'm totally honest, my job was changing, and I didn't like the way the role was being steered. Perhaps taking time out of it now was going to be well timed? And so, I did.

I embraced my time out. For 5 years I kept myself busy. I was around to take the children to and from school or nursery. I attended every school assembly. I cheered at every sports day and school sports match. I volunteered in the school with reading and school trips. I was actively involved in the PTA, fundraising for the school and putting on an array of events. Alongside this I even took on a house refurbishment project which we bought and sold on for a profit; but once was enough!

Also, during this time, I became a volunteer First Aider for my children's sports clubs. Surprisingly, I rather enjoyed this and became interested in sports injuries and how I could help my children recover from their active

## Sue Livingstone-Learmonth

MA, DipCG, MISRM, MFHT, MUM



lives. Could I do further training, other than just first aid? I parked the idea until, quite by coincidence I met a Sports and Remedial Massage Tutor from a reputable course in London (LSSM) whilst on a refresher certificate in Sports First Aid. She told me it was the best course around, and as it was taught over a year, roughly one weekend a month I reckoned that I could easily manage this. I only needed to be around for the boys during the week, as my husband could look after the children whilst I went to college on the occasional weekend.

Doing the BTEC Clinical, Sport & Remedial Massage Therapy was the best thing that I have ever done. I truly believe that I should have done something like this many years ago. I'm a much more practical person, and I enjoy working with people. Having always enjoyed human anatomy and physiology, this just seemed to be the perfect fit.

Unlike many of the people on my course, I didn't really expect to convert the course into a job as a Sport and Remedial Massage Therapist upon qualifying. I honestly believed that as much as I'd have a sparkly new skill, I would only use it for family and friends. And to be fair, to start with that is mainly what I used it for. I had space at home where I set up my massage couch to treat clients. But many of the people who allowed me to practice on

them whilst I was training asked if they could become paying clients when I qualified. They knew and understood my circumstances – I could only see them when the children were at school. How could I turn them down? And so there it started. I had my first clients.

And so, it grew. Friends and new clients spread the word, and so my very small business grew. I've been very lucky: I've never had to advertise, as the majority of my business has come from my own contacts, and word of mouth. But that isn't the best thing - I now have a flexible occupation that I am in control of. I can pick and choose my hours. I can pick my children up from school. I can go to support all the activities from sport through to school productions. I can be at home if they are sick. This is my perfect job.

# Swapping a payslip for P&L Accounts...

**Michaela Gartside**



**Employed role, job description, monthly payslip guaranteed, generous employment benefits and shared accountability for delivering the business results – why would anyone consider self-employment and running their own business?**

After 25+ years developing my HR career and working at a strategic level in a global IT company – why would I give all of that up to run my own business?

For me, it was all about new challenges and finding a way to ensure that I achieved the work life balanced I desired. So I swapped being a HR Director for being the Director of my own Company and acquired many other roles too... not only do I work "in" the business using my HR skills for the benefit of my clients but I now have also developed many new skills as I am also the company's Financial Director, Sales and Marketing Director, Facilities and IT Manager – the list is endless.

Being my own boss has created many opportunities for learning and this is what stimulates me day in day out – now I not only keep myself up to date with HR best practices to ensure we provide the best possible advice to our customers, but I am constantly learning about the many aspects involved in running a business. Part of this journey also requires you to be honest about where your strengths lie and by being honest with yourself ensures that you can surround yourself with the services of

other experts e.g. Accountant, outsourced IT support, etc. You rapidly learn that engaging the services of experts can be a relatively small cost versus the hours you may spend (which aren't billable to anyone) trying to fix it yourself!

Have I achieved the work life balance I desired – yes, I believe I have made improvements - that doesn't mean I work any less hours or work any less hard (hopefully that might come later) but I am in control of how and when I work and I am able to determine how I prioritise my time – feeling in control rather than at the beck and call of others.

But fundamentally the most important motivator for me has been that of accountability and empowerment - the success or otherwise of my business is entirely based on the decisions that I make. I have responsibility for steering my way to success! If I make a mistake, I learn from it and hopefully don't repeat it!

As I look back on over 5 years in business, the challenges and successes have been many; building an established client base from zero, hiring my first employee, developing a strong network of local business contacts and continuing to grow the business. Of course, there have been the moments when you ask yourself "why am I doing this?", but when you review your "why" and balance it against setbacks, it still balances out in favour of running my business.

Would I go back to an "employed" role – it's highly unlikely as I enjoy being my own boss too much!

# Starting Work at 21+?

**Tom Turnball**

Digital Marketing Assistant



**Deloitte, Bryan Cave Leighton Paisner, Apple and the Civil Service were just a few of the places my friends got accepted to during my lengthy search for a job.**

It took me a year and a half after graduating from university to get the right job. I felt there was a lot of societal pressure on myself to start a job that would allow me to use my education and university degree. I was very fortunate in that my parents understood how difficult it is to get a job as they saw my brother, who has a law degree from University College London, be turned down by over 20 law firms before getting accepted.

At the start, I used the excuse of going to America for my university education as to why I didn't have a job within a couple of months of graduating.

However, six months and around 40 - 50 applications later, this excuse wore off.

The toughest part of the search for me was the lack of rejections. By this, I mean a large percentage of my applications ended up being ignored rather than receiving rejections. This was difficult as I had little frame of reference as to where I was going wrong. I had good GCSE and A level results and a university degree in media, yet my applications didn't even deem a response from many companies.

A low point was spending three hours completing a third Graduate scheme application in one day and getting a rejection email ten minutes later.

However, I managed to keep positive and keep going and have been incredibly fortunate to get a job with the Licensed Trade Charity. It is such a wonderful place to work and the people have been incredibly welcoming. I don't think I could have landed a better first job.

I am saving up to move out of my parent's house and have finished off paying for my car.

Finding a first job after 21 wasn't easy but the rewards of being determined and patient have really paid off. In terms of searching for a job, it is important to focus on yourself and not worry too much about the success of your friends and family as this, at times, can be disheartening.

Getting the right job is important and rushing into things should be avoided. I was offered another job before starting at the Licensed Trade Charity, but turned it down because I didn't think it was right for me.

You are in work for a long time, so taking a year to make sure you start off on the right path isn't a bad thing.

# Remote Working

## Remote working is brilliant, for me it offers work flexibility and a work-life balance I never thought possible.

I am fortunate, I work for a very large multi-national organisation, based in the USA with subsidiaries all around the globe. This gives me the opportunity to work remotely with parts of the organisation in many different time zones. Not all roles are appropriate for remote working, but if you can, welcome it, even for part of your working week. I'm a Project Manager, my manager is based in the US, with only one other person in my immediate team based in the UK. Other members of my team and my virtual project teams are spread throughout the world – Australia, Asia, across Europe and the Middle East, LatAm and North America. The majority of my time is spent on Skype or Teams conference calls. As I live close to the office (about 20 minutes), I can easily get there if I need to.

After a couple of years mostly working from a hot desk and home, I would like to sum up my thoughts and recommendations for anyone contemplating remote working.

## Not all roles are suitable for remote working. Not all people enjoy remote working

There are advantages for employers – saving office space, and to the environment – reducing that carbon footprint. These need to be weighed up against the type of work you can do from home and whether you are a good communicator that won't suffer from 'isolation' and whether you can really be productive whilst remote.

## Recommendation - Be clear on your working hours

There is temptation to start early in the morning talking with Asia and then finish late talking with the US West coast. Soon you realise there is no time for you, your family, anything else. I have found as long as you state what your working hours are, when you are available for early/late calls, the easier it is for people to work with you and vice versa. Personally, I start work earlier on Mondays and Wednesdays, and finish later Tuesdays and Thursdays. A degree of flexibility is required though, for those high priority calls! And don't forget to book in commute time if you are going to the office.

## Tanya Roberts



## Recommendation - Invest in decent peripherals

I have two screens connected to my laptop – this makes for a much easier way of working, listening to skype calls and sharing my screen. I have a decent chair and about a year ago, after realising too much time was spent at my desk and not enough steps were going on the fitbit, I decided that a stand up desk would be ideal. So now I have an adjustable stand/sit desk. I also have a wireless headset – the best invention ever! I can walk all around my house, even put out washing in the garden whilst on my calls.

## Collaboration and Growth Mindset

It can be easy to get 'lost' in the remote world, amongst conference calls and workload. It is important to schedule recurring catch-ups with colleagues – our so-called virtual coffee chats. We also have quarterly face to face 'community meetings' in the office. Use the time not spent commuting, to switch on your always-learning mode – it's great to join some networking meetings and women's career groups. I'm also a member of the Project Management Institute – offering monthly workshops across the southeast. I help out

with promoting STEM to our school and college learners, and am a member of two PTAs. We learn more than we realise from these external sources.

## Enjoy the Flexibility

I find myself managing my own working hours, able to take time away to go to a pilates class and attend school events. I also find it useful going into the office sometimes and then leaving around 3pm to take the later calls from home. We usually have a sit down family dinner together and I am really grateful for that.

## Make It Work For You

Remote working is the future and a great work/life balance.

# How joining the 'Gig Economy' enabled me to 'Side Hustle'



Jarmila Yu

**I had the privilege of working in senior marketing positions for some of the world's largest brands for most of the first 20 years of my working life.**

However, 3 years ago, I decided I no longer wanted to be restricted by traditional employment and took the leap into becoming a Consulting Chief Marketing Officer and set up my own business.

I saw a gap in the market for providing board level marketing strategy on a consulting basis and inadvertently found myself in the Gig Economy.

What I love about working in an on-demand way for multiple clients is the variety, flexibility and freedom it offers me whilst delivering added value to them; there's never a dull day for me, and they benefit from my broader range of experience! The downside is all the additional burdens of running your own business, especially having to deal with VAT returns, legal contracts, and prospecting for new business to have a steady flow of client work and so on....

What I did not foresee at the time, was that this newfound flexibility liberated enough time and energy to allow me to indulge Side Hustles I'd always been interested in. When working 9 to 5 (which in reality of course is more like at least 7:30am to 7:30pm by the time commuting and taking "one last conference call" in the office is factored in), I didn't have a spare moment or the

energy to divert towards interests outside of work and family. Now I can plan my working time with much more freedom, albeit fitting in with what works best for my clients.

I can also choose which sort of projects I want to engage with and bringing a senior level outsider's fresh perspective means I am free from all the tiresome insider office politics, so I'm spared the energy zapping that can bring. However, what this has liberated is the time and focus to engage in another type of politics, one I've always been interested in: "Local Politics." I campaigned and was elected as a parish councillor for my home village of Lightwater two years ago and have since been active on many committees, worked on several initiatives and represented the council at regular "you're your councillor surgeries" where I've been doing my best to help the local community.

I have now been selected as a candidate to stand for Borough elections next May, and if I am fortunate enough to get elected, that will be an exciting progression up the political ladder.

On occasion, I've managed to connect work and politics and that's been wonderful being able to leverage two of my work personas and each is stronger for it.

On top of my Consulting CMO and Councillor work, I've also somehow managed to find time to get involved with various other (pro bono AKA

unpaid, but rewarding) Side Hustles: Membership Secretary & Social Media Advisor of the Lightwater Business Association; Member of the Advisory Board at the Royal Holloway University of London; School of Management Registered Mentor with the Direct Marketing Association; Member of the Corporate Engagement Fundraising Board at Battersea Dogs & Cats Home And of course, being an enthusiastic member of the LVS Ascot WoW group!

Further to the above, I am also an active member of The Institute of Directors, The Federation of Small Business and The Surrey Chambers of Commerce. Each of these extra-curricular Side Hustles and groups allows me to grow, build new networks and flex my marketing and business skills. I'm now regularly invited to speak at events to share my expertise and experiences and (subject to having enough time) I'm more than happy to oblige if that helps encourage business owners to embrace marketing.

Professionally, I have a Diploma in Marketing and have achieved Chartered Marketer status - for which I have to maintain my Continual Professional Development (CPD) Award annually. I am a Fellow of both The Chartered Institute of Marketing and The Institute of Direct & Digital Marketing and have served as a judge for the Marketing and Entrepreneurship Awards. This year it was thrilling to find myself and my business

nominated and be a finalist in awards ourselves (Entrepreneur of The Year & Best New Business).

It's a juggling act for sure to stay at the top of your game, but then as we all know learning never stops. And, going self-employed by building and growing a business means every day is a school day!

This was not intended to be a long list of "stuff I do", but the point is, virtually none of this would have been possible (nor would I have found the drive to get involved in so much) had I remained in a traditional employed status role.

To be honest, I will probably start to carefully assess some of my Side Hustles in order to preserve my sanity and family life (although I'd never leave the LVS WoW group!), but I am grateful for the opportunity that working in the Gig Economy gave me to be able to get involved in so many extra-curricular activities.

Working in the Gig Economy, whether that's traditional freelancing, being self-employed, indulging in side hustles or working in the gig marketplace itself, will not suit everybody; although some such as Intuit report that just over 40% of the US workforce will be working that way by 2020. For those for whom the opportunity presents itself, I personally highly recommend giving it a go and embracing the chance to get involved with a Side Hustle or two along the way.

**Jarmila Yu is Founder, Managing Director and Consulting CMO at YUnique Marketing & Councillor for Lightwater East, Windlesham Parish Council**

# Redundancy and Second Career

**At the age of 48, after a 25-year career with an airline, the majority of my working adult life, here I was being made redundant. Scary, scary, SCARY!! I was good at my job, well respected, knew my position inside out, a good performer and popular (reasonably- depends how well you knew me) with colleagues and co-workers. I had 'survived' 3 rounds of redundancy over the years. This time was as a result of a huge re-organization as the airline business became more cut-throat and competitive. It's very easy to feel that it's UNLUCKY to be made redundant, but in my case, it turned out to be the kick I needed to review my life and step out of my comfort zone and bubble of complacency.**

"So Carol, what skills do you have?"

Skills? I don't have any 'skills'. I left school after A levels, worked in Retail for a year then moved into the airline business – ground staff. I have no formal qualifications, not been to university and was now having to dip my toe back into the job market. Dipping a toe, felt like suddenly being up to my neck in deep water. I had no CV, no LinkedIn profile and hadn't been to any sort of external interview in 20 plus years. Where do I start?

Fortunately, my Company gave me access to a recruitment/careers company as part of my package so that's where I started. Everything I had ever done was analysed, pulled apart; strengths and weakness listed. To my amazement, I had 'transferable skills' and an abundance of life experience

I was good with people. One of my strengths was my ability to talk. Yes! Talk! To anyone and everyone on any level. Through my interactions with airline passengers, from VIPs, CEOs to the Grannies embarking on her first flight, I could talk to them about anything and everything. It may be called a soft skill but in this age of technology where all communication is electronic, this was seen as a major strength. As a working mother, I managed the household budget, I managed the family diary, I was well organized, used to working under pressure, capable of working on my own as well as being part of a team. So that's how it started, turning redundancy from a negative experience to a positive one. Yes it took a lot of soul searching; blood, sweat and tears; multiple applications to companies – several of whom never had the courtesy to reply; Group interviews where I was clearly the oldest there, competing with 20 year old graduates. Psychometric testing; presentations; one to one interrogations!!

## Carol Milligan



Six months after being made redundant, and pursuing a position posted on LinkedIn, I started a new career in Airline IT. Official title "DCS Customer Support Specialist for Airline IT". This couldn't be further from what I was doing in my old life. For someone who can't operate the remote control on the TV or use the Xbox, here I am analyzing airline systems computer traffic. I still talk, but now to customers on the phone, troubleshooting their system issues.

That was almost 6 years ago. At the start of my 2nd career I was on a very steep learning curve and it took me 2 years to feel both confident and competent in my new position. I started at the bottom but have taken advantage of numerous opportunities to improve performance. So in my case, yes, you can teach an old dog new tricks!

Don't see redundancy as stumbling block or as the end of the world as you know it; view it as a stepping-stone into a new chapter of your life. It is what you make of it. Promote yourself, make use of all the resources

available and don't be afraid to step out of your comfort zone. Have the confidence to take a risk. Don't get me wrong, it will be hard work and it will take effort to ensure that you are the best applicant. In the words of Gerry Rafferty "if you get it wrong, you'll get it right next time". It's your life, make the most of it. You can be anything you want to be if you put your mind to it.

# Decision to retire: how I felt about it and how I feel now

**On my 60th birthday – I received letters – asking when I wanted to take my pension. My immediate reaction was, absolutely not yet. However, a seed was sown and my daughter was on her third gap year, doing what she wanted, so why not me? Family asked why not. Retired friends said they never regretted the decision. Why was I even hesitating about taking the opportunity? I have a very strong work ethic and the idea of having time for me was alien.**

I needed to get some financial advice and to investigate the reality of the situation, could I really afford it – how much would I need to live on? Provision made earlier in my working life, in my pre-teaching career in IT industry, meant I had a good final salary pension. Fifteen years ago, when I returned from the USA with primary age children, I trained as a teacher, the teachers' pension was attractive then and would help now.

What would I miss? What would I do? I was involved in the community, including as a school governor, had just taken my Portuguese GCSE but my Portuguese teacher was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer (luckily survived). My mother died suddenly, younger

than any of us expected; so how long do I have? My father is in his late eighties – if I wanted to spend time with him, it had to be soon. For years I had wanted to research and write the social history of my village; a mini-exhibition that I put together, as a result of a chance conversation, tested the water. This could be the big project that I felt I needed to give some structure to my potential new way of life.

If I was going to make this happen I had to take some decisions – I put a lump sum into my Teachers Pension and bought myself a bicycle. We booked our holiday for September instead of the usual July, to avoid sitting at home regretting not returning to school. I realised I could not go part time, it was all or nothing.

I kept these thoughts confidential at work, I was not sure that I could actually do it, once you say something you expect people's attitudes to change. I was very aware that my decision would impact others and only a handful of people knew before I actually resigned. I came out thinking, 'I cannot believe I have just done this.' It was a surprise to LVS too.

## Sheila Featherstone-Clark



Then telling people – surprising responses – mainly congratulations. The summer holiday was a helpful transition – I had not retired but was 'just on holiday'; but I could, and did, start interviewing for my village history project. So the saying good bye was hard; however knowing that I had recruited good new people helped me to walk away from 'the family' that I had built over 9 years.

I have enjoyed the summer so much, getting my new project under way, my ideas are forming, the villagers are excited and I will spend the winter in the archives. This is my new work and it is such a treat to be doing something I have wanted to do for so long. I feel a bit guilty though, as I sit in a Portuguese café when I should have been in school.

It is early days but I believe that the difficulty of the decision made me really think through what I would do and sensible decisions early in my career made it financially possible. Taking advice from professionals and those

who had already done it was invaluable, as was the support of my family. I think of it as another career change, I am not ready to sit in front of the TV yet! I value the time I have now to be able to plan and make things happen – the excitement of the first dentist appointment on what would have been a school day! My family has a tradition of 'giving back to the community' and I have the opportunity to do this now. Yes, I am aware how lucky I am to be able to retire early while I still have health and energy to make a difference, and I intend to do so.

***Sheila Featherstone-Clark has been Head of IT and Computing at LVS for 9 years, Assistant Head of Sixth Form for 2 years and as Head of Project Qualifications established the programme for EPQ and HPQ. Prior to this she worked in a number of major IT companies including ICL, HP and Ask Jeeves.***

# Leaving work to become a parent for the first time

**Georgina Lindsay**

Careers Consultant, LVS Ascot



**As I approached my date for leaving work to go on a 12 month maternity break, I joked with my colleagues that I was concerned that I might be bored during my year off and what would I do with myself. I had been in full time work since graduating some 15 years ago and had no idea what a year off work would look like. My colleagues reassured me that I would be up to my eyes in nappies and baby sick and would not have any time to think about work.**

They were pretty accurate with this statement and the year did seem to fly by with the monotony of the early 3 months consisting of feeding a newborn and getting some sleep myself. I enjoyed the latter months when my daughter was more active and engaging and I could do those yummy mummy activities which I had only read about on social media – coffee mornings, baby massage, baby swimming, NCT meet ups and trying to find the best soft play which served very strong coffee!

The phases of the first year seemed to merge into one when one minute I was up every few hours in the night and the next minute, we were moving her into her own room. The next challenge was to look for the right childcare placement for my daughter and being the queen of research that I am, I had booked visits to 101 different nurseries and childminders to see which one was perfect for my daughter (and me!). Well, the perfection never came because

no one was going to look after my daughter as well as I could, but I was lucky enough to find a childminder who felt like a second mummy for my daughter.

As the reality of returning to work approached me, the anticipation kicked in and I questioned whether I should go back to work. What is the other option? To stay at home with my daughter full time? That was a definite no for me as I need intellectual stimulation and she needed more stimulation, which I couldn't give her.

Although the first day of dropping my daughter at the childminder was emotional, I also felt excited about the next chapter in both our lives. Working 3 days a week is a great balance for me because it still gives me lots of time to spend with my daughter but also the ability to progress in my career, which I have worked hard to do.

The work/life balance with having a child has been the most challenging part of being a working mother because unfortunately, there aren't enough hours in the day and the role of mother and career woman does ultimately seep into each other.

Hopefully I will get the balance right as time goes on but in the meantime I am taking each day as it comes and enjoying being Mummy with a career on the side or Career woman with Mummy on the side (depends which day it is ☺).

LVS Ascot  
London Road  
Ascot  
Berkshire  
SL5 8DR

 **01344 882770**  
Email: [registrar@lvs.ascot.sch.uk](mailto:registrar@lvs.ascot.sch.uk)  
[www.lvs.ascot.sch.uk](http://www.lvs.ascot.sch.uk)

