

I had always been aware that many women that consider having a baby also must consider giving up on their career although I didn't understand why. I had witnessed colleagues leaving and not returning to work, I have comforted family members in utter heartbreak feeling as though years of hard work had be wasted and seen close friends resort to casual jobs outside of their experience just to bring in a monthly wage to survive. To my horror, when the time came to return to work after having my Son as a Single Mum, the fears I had were quickly brought to life and the battle had begun.



My parents had always encouraged me to do well in education, so I finished my academic journey after graduating with a degree before finding my calling which was clearly Sales. I had been working in Sales for a company for 5 years, in a male dominated industry of locksmiths and returned to work part time after having my beautiful little boy. I considered myself a very knowledgeable, skilled and valued member of the team although due to restructuring in the company, the career path I wanted to take vanished overnight. 'It won't work with you being part time' was the exact sentence that made me decide that it was time for a new venture. I searched for a position for 9 months, having had several job offers, none of the companies seemed right for me.

When I walked into Diamond Distribution and met Keely the Managing Director, something just clicked. It was one of those strange unexplainable gut feelings, I knew that this is where I needed to be before the interview even finished. Firstly, I noticed that diving into a new industry was exciting rather than intimidating and the world of logistics was intriguing. Secondly, I was able to be open and honest with Keely about my goals in wanting to excel in my career and embrace motherhood equally. I accepted Keely's offer to work part time for 3 days a week and it was one of the best decisions I have ever made.

I have had consistent support from everyone at Diamond Distribution in learning about the operations of logistics and have been warmly welcomed into the team. I have established strong rapports with our customers by knowing what is important to them and making sure we provide the service they need. Keely has expressed her support for me as a woman wanting a career in a male dominated industry, but most importantly she has supported me as a mother. Being a single parent, trying to pursue a career and embrace the joys of motherhood is not easy as many employers simply do not understand, or they fear the stereotypical risks us mothers seem to come with. Keely has supported me in wanting flexible working hours and has allowed me to take time off, so I can commit to my duties as a parent involving my Sons education and medical care. I feel I am appreciated for the input I give, the contributions I make to the company's success and Keely has made it clear that she expects me to progress. Do not underestimate how important it is to work for someone that supports and understands you.

Companies can and should give us confidence to be ourselves, make us proud of our achievements and encourage us to embrace every aspect of our lives that comes with being a single parent. Sadly, the lack of support can do the exact opposite and employers often lose skilled and experienced employees. Empowering women not only creates successful careers, it impacts our lives outside of work and contributes to our identity. I am an amazing Mother and I am an amazing Area Sales Manager, so we can do it all if we work hard and have the support we need. I wake up every single day hoping to make my little boy proud, us single mothers have a bigger drive than most and

companies could benefit from that. My dedication and commitment to provide my child with a role model to aspire to is certainly something I felt has massively driven me forward since having my Son. We need to spread awareness of the gender inequality in the logistics sector and encourage women into the industry as well as showing our support for single parents, I know I feel very passionately about both causes and hope to work with several organisations going forward to contribute to making this happen.

One year later, we've achieved 338% growth in Sales Revenue and 212% in Trading Accounts, also doubling our postcode coverage area for the Palletways Network. We achieved Platinum Status within Palletways for our service levels and were finalists in the Croydon Awards for Women in Business and Best SME in 2017. This year will be Diamond Distributions most profitable year yet and we have exciting plans for the near future. I am proud to be a part of it and will work incredibly hard to make sure we achieve our goals.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank everyone at Diamond Distribution for supporting me along this journey so far and valuing me as a member of the team. I'd like to say thank you to everyone at Palletways, you are another source of encouragement and a Network I am honoured to be a part of. Last but not least, Keely you helped me and my Son find our happy and changed our lives. I'll forever be thankful to you for this and I look forward to working alongside you in the years to come.

I take every obstacle, every challenge and every set back as experience and use it to drive me forward. There are hard days, long nights and I intend to embrace every moment of the beautiful chaos, the exhaustion and the wonderful joys of doing it all. I love my life and I love my job. You see in raising children and holding down a career you lose your mind a little bit along the way, but you end up finding your soul. You can do it if you work hard, stay hopeful and make the right decisions for your little family.

So, I guess it can be done part time right!