

January 2009

Tapescript – Margaret

I start work at nine o'clock and finish at five. I have an hour's break for lunch. I do about 35 hours a week. I try my best to stick to my hours of nine to five. It's not always easy because sometimes deadlines, deadlines are looming and you've got to get something out or somebody's waiting for a report but usually I try to do nine till five and try desperately to make sure that I have a proper lunch break. It's very easy to carry on working through lunch if you've got a box of sandwiches in front of you. You just think, 'Oh, just five more minutes and I'll go for a walk' but sometimes you forget to go for a walk and the afternoon really drags on because you've not had a proper break.

I play sport a couple of times a week during lunchtime. I play badminton twice a week. So, with a few colleagues, we go off to the local sports centre, have a good game, really relax, let out any excess negative energy – if we have any – and it actually makes the afternoon fly by because you get back, you feel refreshed, your mind's a bit clearer. You just, sort of, feel a bit better when you get back to the desk. I mean, I work in an office so sitting in front of the desk from nine till five is not always easy. I mean, it's easy to forget to take breaks. I mean, we're always encouraged to get up and have a walk every hour or so just, you know, to get away from your desk, to rest your eyes, perhaps stretch your arms and legs but it's, when you're, you've got your head down in something that you're trying to work on, you sometimes forget to take a break. We have (an) ergonomic assessment. Some people suffer from a repetitive strain injury from using the mouse so, again, the guy who comes in to do an ergonomics assessment can look at this to see if our posture's right and that we're sitting correctly and he also reminds us to take plenty of breaks. Yeah, you can get special wrist rests, a foot stool, you can do regular exercises, sort of, stretching your wrists so that you don't get repetitive strain injuries there.

I think the other things in your working environment, I mean, for me, what's important is to have a good atmosphere in the work place. You know, a good relationship with your colleagues, a line manager that you can speak to and not feel intimidated. It's important that you feel valued and that your role is clearly defined. If you're a team leader then



that's clear and you're not being managed from somebody below you, or... You need to know not only what your role is about but also where you can go in the future. A company has a certain obligation to look out for its employees to make sure that they can develop career-wise as well as personally. They need to know where they can go in the future to feel motivated.

I wouldn't want to work in a very monotonous job. I'm quite lucky in that mine's quite varied. Sometimes there are things that take a long time and that can be a bit tiring but for most part it's pretty interesting and stimulating and I like to feel a sense of achievement, sort of, feel as if I've, all the stuff I've been working on has some positive outcome. It's nice to see the final product, when you know that all that hard work has paid off and that somebody who's bought your product likes it.

I guess the other thing that I like about working nine till five ... because I used to teach so I did different hours, you know, sometimes evenings, sometimes Saturday mornings. Now it's Monday to Friday nine to five, I can, at five o'clock, switch off my computer, walk home and that's it. I don't bring anything home. When I was a teacher I used to have to take preparation home with me and work on it the night before class which I hated. It felt like being back at school and having to do homework.

My current commute to work is a five-minute walk. I'm pretty luck actually. The longest commute I've ever done is about a 20-minute bus ride. I have a few colleagues who drive an hour, an hour and half to get to work which just eats up the day.

Dress code. Our dress code is 'smart/casual'. It's a bit vague I suppose but we're not actually working directly with the public. We're not actually receiving people from the public, any customers necessarily so we can pretty much wear what we want as long as it's, sort of, within reason. I tend to wear a smart top, jeans and, kind of, smartish shoes. I'm glad I don't have to wear a suit. I think it's important if you've got customers to show a certain professionalism but in an office where we're not actually speaking directly or receiving customers it's not really necessary.