



GARETH'S JOURNEY

FROM HEAD CHEF TO OUR
REGIONAL MANAGER IN 7 YEARS



Gareth's Journey

Office Manager at Jubilee

After 10 years working in kitchens I'd made the decision it was time for change. Going from the familiar routine and comfortable life I was used to was daunting, but I knew I needed a new challenge. After being offered the job of recruitment consultant at Jubilee, I remember being worried about how I would adjust to a different environment. I clearly remember phoning the office manager the day before I started as I had two questions causing me great concern.

"What do I wear" and "what do you do about food?".

On reflection it makes me smile, but my primary fear was genuinely about ensuring I was dressed appropriately (after all I had spent 10 years in chef whites) and knowing when I could eat! On induction day, my fears were soon forgotten.

Most consultants in my team were chefs, so spoke my language. Likewise, they'd overcome the same transition which gave me confidence that the step into office life was possible. I soon improved my wardrobe and realised I had the freedom to eat at my own discretion providing the work was done. It was a great balance between being in a team yet being my own boss. The induction process was a mixture between shadowing and coaching but ultimately taking the bull by the horns and making things happen.

I have learned this fundamentally is recruitment. I started in April 2015 and can remember how it felt to drive home in daylight and to start to socialise with my family on a weekend. I was able to commit to a season ticket at Villa Park for the first time. This is not to say we don't put the hours in. Mondays are usually twelve hour days, as are Fridays, and we are always on hand on evenings and weekends for a phone call.

When business dictates, we go into what we call "event mode" and it's all hands on deck all hours of the day as a team until the job is done. It's a great balance, we put the hours in when necessary and enjoy the downtime when it's possible. I remember the day that recruitment clicked for me.

It was the culmination of all that I'd been taught at Jubilee coming together. I registered a great candidate in a location we had very little knowledge of. I wanted to do my best for him. I searched for all the properties in his area and prepared a list. The first place I called asked if he



could start the following day. This is great I thought. They loved him. After a brief stint working for me that candidate got himself a role as the Head chef of a big property we had never supplied. He called me and got Jubilee on to the Preferred suppliers list.

It clicked.

Understand people and their capabilities and have the desire to go out and find it, providing a great service. After 18 months of replicating this I was promoted to Senior consultant. I had grown the portfolio of clients and expanded it.

I could not facilitate the need now for our service, so it was time to add someone to the team. We introduced another consultant, and it was now my job to share with them that I had learnt. I was no longer the new guy. Six further months of growth and we brought on another consultant, replicating the formula. I was now making more money that I had as a chef and I was developing transferable skills.

I was meeting with General Managers and clients for head office meetings, I was learning about legal contracts, compliancy, Social media, Marketing, a real mix of knowledge.



After two years at Jubilee there was some work being done on brand awareness and I was given a fantastic opportunity to go to India and partake in an event called the Rickshaw Run. A crazy event involving 60 teams worldwide racing a rickshaw from Rajasthan in the north of India to the finish line in Southern Kerala.

You are completely unsupported, there is no route or number to call if you encounter a problem. The aim is not the get to the finish line first, but just to make it! We did this in support of our charity Teenage cancer trust, and took the Jubilee tuk-tuk on the wildest adventure ever. Probably the best “perk” of a job you could ask for.

In India, I spent time working at the Jubilee offices near to Delhi and immersed myself in modern India. Three years earlier I had been fighting to get a new dishwasher in my kitchen which now seemed like a distant memory.

After three years at being a at Jubilee the opportunity came for a new office manager. As with the rickshaw run I did not ask about the opportunity, it was presented to me by Nick the Director.

He felt I was the natural replacement, and I took the opportunity thankfully. There were others in the company who had been at Jubilee for longer than me and perhaps had more varied experience. so I had to work on my personal development to ensure I could succeed. This personal development is at the centre of the Jubilee ethos and it is what inspires me. Unlike the kitchens of my 20's there is no ceiling at Jubilee, you can go as far as you want.

This works well for me as I get frustrated by a lack of progress in life generally. The business model is designed in a way that by growing yourself is going to bring success for the company, so leadership and new opportunities are greatly encouraged.

Even now after almost six years I am encouraged by the creativity and freedoms that can be found within what I had pictured as "office life". Almost six years ago today I was daunted by the prospect of a rigid working environment in which uniform and break times were set. I need not have been.

My role now at jubilee is about bringing on the next leaders to continue the best consultancy possible. We do not focus on the KPI's and rigidity of hitting targets, we are more concerned with shaping the right mentality in people, so they fit in with the way Jubilee does things. For some new starters this is easy, for others it takes a great amount of personal understanding and growth. Myself and the management at Jubilee will give you every tool you need to succeed, but ultimately this desire to succeed must come from yourself.

We have a mantra at jubilee:

GROWTH IS ONLY ACHIEVED THROUGH PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT... NEGLECTING ONESELF LEADS TO DECLINE

Gareth Lawrence
Regional Manager, Birmingham

