

Meet From Another, the company rethinking how we work flexibly

As part of our quick founder questions series – or QFQs – we spoke to Jess Lancashire, CEO and founder of From Another, about recovering from illness, the importance of trust in the workplace, and their mission to reimagine flexible work for 1 million families by 2030.

Temps de lecture : minute

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I left my role as a Director at General Electric in 2019 to undertake one of the most important careers – full-time parenting. When the time had come for me to go back into the career field, as a mum and military wife, I looked for a role where I could do the work I loved while meeting the needs of my family. Not being able to find one inspired me to build a business of my own. First came Venbridge, the public sector innovation agency. After developing innovative solutions to support leaders and innovators in oncology, Venbridge has bootstrapped and incubated the development of From Another in 2022.

Tell me about the business - what it is, what it aims to achieve, who you work with, how you reach customers and so on?

From Another delivers practical solutions to help employees, team leaders and organisations manage flexible work. Our team of experts, including business experts, an anthropologist and a counsellor, work with all people in an organisation – individuals, line managers, HR and leaders - to create productive and empathetic working environments. This supports

recruitment, retention, engagement as well as diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging.

It does this through a research-led eco-system of courses, listening programmes and support that align with people's and organisations' objectives. The way it works is:

- Individuals take courses to navigate and excel at work-life as their family grows, as well as participate in research to talk about their personal experiences.
- Employers can support their employees and managers with courses and processes to maximise productivity and wellbeing. They can learn from anonymised insights and conduct From Another research to hone in on their specific circumstances and needs.

We recently conducted a *Frictionless Flexibility #1: Balancing the Needs of Employees and Managers* report that revealed that of the 70% of working parents who had access to flexible work arrangements, only 57% agreed that these arrangements were adequate for their needs. Additionally, 81% of managers agreed that managing flexible work requires a different skill set to managing non-flexible work arrangements. However, 44% did not feel they had the right training, tools and support for their needs.

The research also found that flexibility friction can be reduced by investing in relationships and training, being clear about objectives and agreeing on boundaries of flexibility in advance.

Our aim is to help organisations and its employees achieve this balance. We work with organisations and individuals across retail, public sector and education. People can book courses directly or via their employer.

How has the business evolved since its launch?

We launched From Another in 2022 with our return to work report and toolkit. We tested this with individuals and employers - learning about the challenges individuals encounter at home and at work and the competing priorities faced by leaders from an HR and growth perspective. This allowed us to hone in on where we could add the most value to organisations, many of whom are already doing great work in this space. We wanted to be an easy plug-in that delivers high value in organisations for whom this is already a priority.

Tell us about the working culture at From Another

I set out to build the place I couldn't find - somewhere that would accommodate the ebb and flow of my family's needs and my personal ambition. I think we've managed to create that place. We are bold, we dream big, we are kind and we do brilliant work. I have people in the team who have been with me from the very beginning and it's been such a gift to be able to blend what they need and what the business needs in different ways at different times.

While many organisations claim to be flexible and remote, From Another truly embodies this culture. Employees have the autonomy to work remotely and are trusted to manage their own work routines. We prioritise a supportive and inclusive environment where questions are encouraged, growth is fostered, and each unique contribution is valued. The fantastic people create an inspiring atmosphere, where even on team calls, there is a balance between checking in with colleagues and diving into exciting work. The quality and variety of work are exceptional, and the values align with the vision of doing good. Life happens, and we understand that,

supporting each other when the unexpected occurs.

How are you funded?

Venbridge generated a staggering £600K revenue in the first 24 months and has been the primary source of funding for From Another. We are now generating revenue through course sales and research programme membership. We are also raising our first round of investment.

What has been your biggest challenge so far and how have you overcome this?

Just as the business was about to secure some key revenue and partners in the autumn of 2022, I contracted viral meningitis. My recovery took months. The team pulled together and progressed what they could, however, I had to make a fundamental decision about whether to continue at all. I decided that I had to continue. The work we do at From Another is needed more than ever, and if I'm only able to do one thing - then it's going to be this. My illness prompted us to streamline and simplify our offer, which has really paid dividends and accelerated our development by about 24 months.

How does From Another answer an unmet need?

Flexibility at work isn't about time and place. It's about trust. However, the issue is created in disparity - employees seek more flexible work while employers are struggling to manage flexible workforces. Our research shows that the UK lacks tools that can meet the needs of all parties, who pull in different directions, creating friction and dissatisfaction.

Furthermore, empathy plays a pivotal role in workplace productivity, driving notable outcomes. Engaged companies, witnessing a remarkable 23% higher profitability, stand in stark contrast to those with low engagement that experience a significant 18% to 43% higher turnover, highlighted by Gallup research.

Despite this, a mere 39% of organisations provide flexible working hours, a top empathetic benefit favoured by 96% of employees, according to a 2023 BusinessSolver survey.

In the realm of hybrid work, a Microsoft study reveals that 53% of individuals are now prioritising health and wellbeing over professional commitments. Gartner insights emphasise the crucial connection between flexibility and empathy, where 61% of HR leaders identify employees' desire for these qualities as the prime barrier to engagement.

This sentiment resonates with Gartner's January 2023 findings, revealing that only 26% of HR leaders observed full compliance with Return to Office mandates, underscoring the ongoing importance of understanding and accommodating employees' holistic needs.

From Another is a space for bold conversations designed to listen, research and implement a workplace culture that sees family and parenthood as an asset, not an obstacle.

What's in store for the future?

From Another's mission is to reimagine flexible work for 1 million families by 2030. We have the 'Reset', our flagship programme for individuals, and in 2024 we will expand our cohorts to cover GenZ, Working Parents and Over50s. We are continuing with our 'Navigator' programme for managers and planning to launch our accreditation process for individuals. Finally, we are developing a SaaS product that enables the

rapid and dynamic management of teams based on individual work preferences and skill sets.

So, we're incredibly busy. Of course, research will always remain at the heart of what we do, so we will keep listening to hundreds of managers and parents and expanding our amazing research programme partners.

What one piece of advice would you give other founders or future founders?

Do it now. Whatever you're unsure about - just do it.

And finally, a more personal question! What's your daily routine and the rules you're living by at the moment?

My recovery from meningitis has forced me to push my own wellbeing right up the agenda. So I'm very intentional in the way I work, how I rest and spend time with the people I love. I work during school hours, I make time for a proper lunch break and, at the moment, I don't work at all on a Thursday. This huge reduction in my hours forced me to draw on the team, find the very best people and ask for help when I needed it - all of which are good things to do. It's been good for me and for the business.

Jess Lancashire is the CEO and Founder of *From Another*.