

✔ Title

Key person of electrification!! How Ms. Hirooka, a mother raising children who works short hours, works

✔ Subtitle

Women's success at JATCO is born out of a comprehensive system and support.

✔ Thumbnail



✔ Lead

Robot technology necessary to achieve high efficiency production. There is a woman who is a leading expert at JATCO in this area. This is Mr. Hirooka from the Unit Technology Department.

How do you manage to balance work and family while struggling to raise children and with the limited time of working short hours? She confessed us the secret!

Hirooka's profile



Joined JATCO after graduating from high school (major in agricultural course).

Dreaming of building a house, she decided to join JATCO, a famous local company.

When she joined the company, she was assigned to the assembly line department, and then transferred to her current unit engineering department on the recommendation of her superiors. After giving birth, she took childcare leave for about a year and returned to work.

In high school, she was a member of the brass band and still enjoys playing a trumpet.

**Until I got involved in robot technology. The journey from joining the company to the present.
From assembly line department to unit engineering department**

What kind of work did you do when you first joined the company?

When I first joined the company, I was assigned to the assembly line department. It was my first time working in the workforce, and I was doing my best to handle tasks that I was not used to. Also, because I was running around the large factory, my boss often cared because I was physically tired.

How did you get transferred to the Unit Engineering Department?

My boss at the time, Mr. Takahashi, recommended me to transfer to the Unit Technology Department in order to expand the opportunities for women to play an active role. At the

same time, it seems that they wanted to create human resources who could act as a bridge between the unit engineering department and the manufacturing department. Actually, I was a little nervous because I was in a department where I didn't know what the job entailed, but since I was offered the job, I wanted to take on the challenge.



Ms. Hirooka looking back on those days.

How did you learn about robot technology after transferring to the Unit Technology Department?

First, I participated in two educational training sessions to learn the basics of robot operation. I took classroom lessons to learn the basics of the program and training using actual machines, but to be honest, I didn't feel like I was going to be able to do anything from now on. However, during the practical training, I was very moved when I saw the robot perform a simple picking task using the program I had created. I still remember the memory of that time vividly.



Checking the picking operation

Research, listen, and try! Achievements achieved through hardship.

Did you have any difficulties working in the unit technical department after the training?

At first, there were so many things I didn't understand, so I just kept researching, listening, and trying. The only way to do this was to accumulate knowledge, so I had a lot of trouble at first.

Since robot technology is a new field, there were many problems that could not be solved within the company. However, I had no choice but to do something about it on my own, so I proactively consulted with the instructors I met during my education training and solved each problem one by one.

Through this experience, I was able to realize my personal growth, and it became even more rewarding!

Was there ever a situation where your skills were appreciated?

In February 2023, we participated in the robot division* of the company-wide skills

competition* held internally. I took on the competition with great enthusiasm, saying, "I absolutely don't want to lose," as it was a chance to test my skills, and I remember feeling relieved when I won with a perfect score of 100 and no mistakes.

*Company-wide skills competition: A competition where technicians compete in their daily training.

*Robot Technology Division: Operate a robot and compete for accuracy and time to use the irritation rod to move workpieces without touching them in narrow passages and to teach positional deviations for block palletization on the spot.



Ms. Hirooka performed well in the company-wide skills competition.

After childcare leave, started working shorter hours. Women's success through comprehensive support

Ms. Hirooka's boss, Mr. Takahashi, is indispensable for working in a new field while raising a child. From now on, I would like to ask Mr. Takahashi about the way he works at JATCO.

Let's take a look at Ms. Hirooka's work style, which is fulfilling both work and private life.



Photo right: Mr. Takahashi

Awareness that changes with the times. About JATCO's system

Please tell me about JATCO's system for balancing childcare and work.

Ms. Takahashi: Over the past 30 years, the number of female employees has increased, and workplace awareness of work styles has gradually changed. In response to these changes, companies have begun to put in place systems, and I believe that the environment has now become easier for everyone to work in.

Ms. Hirooka: There were many people around me who were working reduced hours. What I found very difficult was that when my child first started nursery school, I often had to take sudden leave due to illness or other reasons, and I ended up losing my paid vacation. However, I was able to get through this by taking advantage of life support leave*, so I think it's a really helpful system.

*Life support leave: In addition to paid leave, this is a system that allows you to take 12 days off for childcare, nursing care, injury or illness, etc.

Please tell me about returning from childcare leave.

Ms. Hirooka: Before returning to work, I had the opportunity to meet with my boss. Although I listened to my wishes about the department I would like to return to, my superior also wanted me to return to my current department, so I decided to return to the unit engineering department. In fact, I was happy to be relied on and felt that it would be a waste to waste the skills I had worked so hard to develop in a new field.

Also, during the interview stage, we talked about shortened working hours. There are no people in the unit engineering department who work short hours, so I thought that by setting an example, I could expand the opportunities for female employees to play an active role. So I decided to take on the challenge, even though it was a tough road.

Heading small: Please let me know if you have any ideas for working shorter hours.

Ms. Hirooka: I frequently share schedule management with my team members. If I feel like I won't be able to meet a work deadline, I try to ask for help as soon as possible.

Mr. Takahashi: Since we know each person's schedule and the progress of work within the team, we have a team structure in place so that even if a sudden vacancy occurs, someone can follow up and respond.



Private life is the most important!

Heading small: Are you conscious about balancing childcare and work?

Mr. Takahashi: I just want them to value their daily lives the most. I believe that having a proper balance in your life will improve the quality of your work.

Ms. Hirooka: At the end of 2023, when a female employee of a well-known large company came to tour our factory, she was surprised at how JATCO was using its reduced working hours. I am very grateful to the company because it seems that it is difficult to use it at other companies. When it's time to finish work, the team members will say to you with a smile, "It's almost time to finish, let's start cleaning up!"

Therefore, I am able to enjoy my private life to the fullest. In the morning, I send my child to school holding hands, and after dinner, I have time to hang out with my family by watching TV. And after my child goes to bed, it's a nice way to take a break and practice playing the trumpet, which I started practicing when I entered the workforce. I bought that trumpet with my first bonus, and I still use it.



JATCO communication born from ZASSO

Ms. Hirooka: I feel that it is because of the support that I am able to devote time to childcare and hobbies. We use ZASSO (chat and consultation) communication every day within the company, so I think it's important to have an environment where it's easy to discuss things.

Mr. Takahashi: JATCO has a culture of casual chatting and consultation called ZASSO. We are conscious of creating an environment where people can casually chat and discuss ideas while having snacks. It has gradually become a workplace where I can do ZASSO as a matter of course.

The future envisioned by Ms. Hirooka

I feel that robot technology is an essential technology to increase work efficiency as we move toward electrification.

Although there are still issues to be addressed, such as the issue of implementation standards, I believe there are many things that can be developed, such as technical measures that cross departments and the possibility of mobile robots that can handle a variety of tasks. The robot processes I have worked on so far are being used on the production line, but I want to do my best to provide even more technology that will make everyone happy.

With this blessed environment, I believe that JATCO will allow me to realize the future I envision while still taking care of my family and hobbies.

