

The what, who, why and how of job sharing

Everything you need to know to make job sharing work



What does job sharing look like?

There's no one-size-fits-all when it comes to job shares. In fact, the advantage of a job share is that it can be designed to suit both partners by dividing the role according to:

Skills

Job partners work to their individual strengths and skills and have distinct and separate tasks within the partnership. The advantage of combining skills in a job share is that they are often more than those of a single person – two heads really are better than one.

Time

Job partners share responsibilities and tasks but create their own working patterns within the fixed hours required. The working patterns are usually determined by the demands of the role, and a handover is crucial for seamless working. Splitting weeks is commonplace, often with an overlapping day for handover, but some people choose to alternate weeks and some choose to work simultaneously.

Responsibilities

Job partners divide the role according to responsibility for different elements of the job, and can be therefore be done simultaneously. This model can be both flexible in allocating work and also helpful in problem solving.

Who can job share?

- ♥ Anyone! Job shares can work at all levels and roles. It can work well in high pressured jobs, where the load can be shared.
- ♥ Job sharing is ideal for people who want to progress in their careers as it enables people to stay on the ladder whilst managing different dimensions of their lives.
- ♥ Partners in job shares can be very different. In fact, having a diverse range of complementary skills and experience can be a good thing.
- ♥ Job sharing requires the same collaboration and communication as working in a team, so if you're able to do that, you can job share!

The benefits of job shares: why job shares are increasingly popular

- ❖ Job shares help to close the gender pay gap by keeping women in senior roles enable more women to progress in careers whilst and is effective in helping women progress their careers.
- ❖ Employers reap the benefits of a more diverse workforce by tapping into a wider talent pool.
- ❖ No two people are alike, and so with each bringing unique skills and experience, partners benefit from the opportunity to develop as they learn from one other.
- ❖ Continuity is improved as partners can provide cover for leave and periods of peak workloads.
- ❖ Older partners can pass on valuable experience and wisdom to younger partners, providing business continuity.
- ❖ Pairing bright minds will result in more creativity, critical thinking and enhanced problem-solving.
- ❖ Without a midweek dip, job shares are able to maintain energy and focus so productivity is increased.
- ❖ Employers can retain top talent through the prospect of a better work-life balance.
- ❖ Higher levels of wellbeing for job share partners arise from an improved work life balance.
- ❖ Knowledge, skills and network are preserved even if one person leaves, and for the new partner joining, onboarding will be seamless and accelerated.

Misconceptions around job shares

- ❖ **Job shares cost a lot**
Actually job shares can save the business money through a boost in productivity, and because job shares improve staff retention, organisations save on recruitment costs too.
- ❖ **Job shares require more management time**
Working with a trusted peer that you can bounce ideas off and work through issues

with means job shares are better at problem solving, and therefore better at self-management.

♥ Job shares are just for mums

As well as enabling parents and carers to manage looking after their loved ones, job shares open up opportunities for anyone wanting to embark on self-development through learning, or investing in passions outside work, or for mature workers wanting to wind down but still stay engaged with meaningful work.

How to make job sharing work

- ♥ Focus on the positives, for the business. Carefully select partners based on ability to organise, make decisions, communicate, collaborate, negotiate and problem solve.
- ♥ Ensure management is on board. Support and encouragement from line managers goes a long way in ensuring the success of a partnership. Keep management in the loop about the coordination of work so they can build trust and confidence in the partnership.
- ♥ Clearly define responsibilities for both partners, considering any caring responsibilities and skill levels or areas of expertise so that the division of work is appropriate and both partners can work to their strengths.
- ♥ Make a Job Share Agreement, which sets out what each partner can expect with regards to working structure and handover, holiday arrangements and emergency leave, as well as conflict resolution, reviewing and assessing the partnership, and exiting protocols.
- ♥ Make sure everyone internally and externally is aware of the arrangement and the best way to communicate to ensure a seamless experience.
- ♥ Maximise the use of tools to keep communicating and get frequent feedback so that problems can be quickly solved. Never presume – leave nothing unspoken to avoid misunderstandings.
- ♥ Review regularly and be prepared to experiment at the beginning whilst both partners settle into the way of working that suits them and the organisation.

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