



A PRACTICAL GUIDE

JOB SHARING

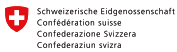
TWO PROFESSIONALS
FOR THE PRICE OF ONE



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INTRODUCTION

Dear Readers,

The number of part-time workers has grown steadily in Switzerland over a number of years, especially among women. With one-third of its working population holding part-time positions, Switzerland is virtually the European record-holder where part-time work is concerned, just after the Netherlands.

Yet despite the fact that part-time positions help provide work-life balance, these jobs have a number of disadvantages. For example, part-time positions are not typically advertised, but rather granted at the specific request of the employees. Part-time work is rarely offered for positions with a high-level of responsibility, makes it difficult for a part-time employee to change jobs even within the company and hinders the employer's ability to ensure coverage at the workplace every day of the week. Furthermore, part-time arrangements can have even more detrimental consequences, such as limiting highly-qualified people to positions with little prestige and no potential for advancement, and as a result, they incur the risk of losing their skills. Given the high percentage of women in part-time jobs, these consequences could lead to new forms of discrimination between men and women in the work place.

For the many qualified women who are under-utilized in their work as well as for the increasing number of men who wish to work a reduced schedule, job sharing is an innovative solution that offers significant advantages for both the employer and the employee. It is a third option that provides full-time positions through part-time work.

This guide discusses the advantages, risks, contractual issues and practical details for applying jointly for a job and highlights the importance of win-win. It also emphasizes the fact that job sharing requires certain personal qualities in order to be implemented successfully.

The information provided is based partly on our experience with job sharing as programme managers at the Economic Cooperation and Development Division of the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs SECO over the past seven years. It is supplemented by the experience from similar initiatives in Germany, the U.K. and the U.S. led by committed professionals.

The objective of the PTO Association - "Part-time Optimisation" - is to inform employees and employers about the numerous aspects of job sharing through our website as well as through publications, such as this practical guide. By promoting this type of partnership, we hope to achieve greater equality and flexibility in the Swiss labour market by optimising the economic potential of part-time workers.

We hope you enjoy reading it!

Irenka Krone-Germann & Anne Aymone de Chambrier
Co-directors PTO Association

I. Krone-Germann A. de Chambrier



A. de Chambrier

I. Krone-Germann



PART-TIME WORK AND THE LABOUR MARKET

Fifty-nine percent of women in Switzerland work part-time, compared with only fourteen percent of men (employed population, FSO, 2014). This discrepancy between the two is among the highest in the world. This particular aspect of the labour market is even more surprising given the dwindling disparity between men and women in terms of qualifications.

1

The decision to work part-time is generally a personal decision made by the employee and not one that is imposed by the employer (for economic reasons, for example). Statistically, most women state that they work fewer hours to be able to look after their children or a close family member (e.g., an elderly parent). This choice is therefore linked to a social model in which women, more than men, attend to the upbringing of children and care of other family members.

It is also important to remember that Switzerland has a highly effective education system as a result of its vocational training programs and the high quality of its universities. Therefore, Switzerland is an extremely well-developed centre of human capital.

DISCREPANCY BETWEEN WOMEN'S QUALIFICATIONS AND THEIR ACCESS TO POSITIONS OF RESPONSIBILITY

In comparison with the '80s, the education level of women has increased considerably. Today, more women than men have obtained the school-leaving certificate (known as *maturité fédérale*). In certain fields which were previously studied almost exclusively by men, women are even in the majority today (e.g. medicine, law, education). However, this fact is not currently reflected in the professional world.

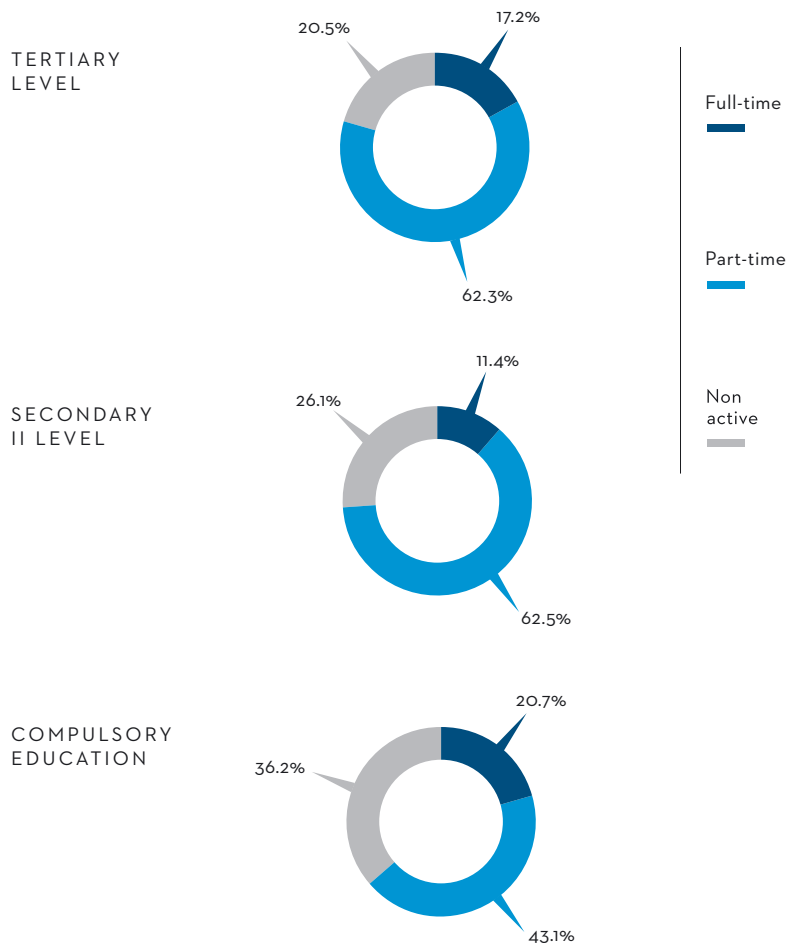
Switzerland still ranks among the European countries with the lowest number of women holding key economic positions. Only 6% of women are members of company executive boards (see Schilling Report 2013).

An observation: The more highly qualified working mothers are, the more likely they are to work part-time. This trend can be explained both by the fact that salary levels are higher for those with more education and training, and by women's reluctance to delegate the care of their children entirely to someone else. It is important to note that the risk of losing one's skills in a part-time position is more significant for highly qualified individuals. This is all the more true as working part-time restricts access to continuing education programmes. Consequently, the costs of this decision can be substantial for individuals and for society – women's qualifications and skills are undervalued, leading to increased gender inequality with regard to access to positions of responsibility and to part-time jobs¹.

Almost 50,000 university-educated women² in Switzerland are no longer active professionally, and most of these women are mothers. This enormous source of talent is needed more than ever to fill the gap of highly-qualified professionals in the Swiss labour market.

PART-TIME WORK AND QUALIFICATION LEVEL

The following charts illustrate the percentage of women, with at least one child under the age of 15, who work full-time, part-time or who are non active, by level of education (FSO, 2014).



1. See also Krone-Germann I., *Part-time Employment in Switzerland, Relevance, Impact and Challenges*, Peter Lang, 2011

2. Der Arbeitsmarkt, Zeitschrift für Arbeit und Beschäftigung, *Teuer ausgebildet und nicht gebraucht*, Naomi Jones, 1/2 2015



A MODEL FOR ALL AGES

When compared internationally, the Swiss economy is doing well and employment levels remain high. However, there is a shortage of highly qualified employees in certain sectors. This is because individuals in the vast “baby boomer” generation, who are well-trained and close to retirement, are gradually leaving the labour market, creating a void in a variety of economic sectors. At the same time, cantonal statistics in certain regions of Switzerland show that unemployment among young people is rising.

3

Intergenerational job sharing (partners with at least a ten-year difference in age, see p. 11) is a potentially innovative solution for utilizing the skills of more experienced co-workers and for training and integrating younger ones.

For many parents, job sharing allows them to hold a stimulating job on a part-time basis rather than working full-time and entirely outsourcing the care of their children.

JOB SHARING AS AN ALTERNATIVE

Job sharing offers an alternative approach that can be practical at the various phases of an individual's working life. It is suitable for:

- › Young professionals who are eager to integrate into the company by means of an intergenerational exchange.
- › Dynamic women and men who want to hold a stimulating job while also maintaining other activities.
- › Older individuals who wish to remain active professionally while working fewer hours, and who are willing to pass on their know-how.

Lastly, job sharing is beneficial to society as it allows job opportunities to be shared more equitably and generates a return on education investment.



DEFINITION OF JOB SHARING

The term “job sharing” means two or more employees sharing a full-time position with inter-dependent tasks and joint responsibility.

The term “top sharing” refers to job sharing in positions with a high level of responsibility, including the management of co-workers.

In practice, job sharing can be categorised into **several different forms:**

Job splitting, where one job is divided into independent roles and the workers are complementary.

Job pairing, where the job cannot be easily divided. In this case, the workers are interchangeable, and the employer can ask either employee to handle a task. Job pairing comprises two further categories:

- › “Pure” job sharing: This method uses a single employment contract between an employer and two workers. The job sharing partners are completely interchangeable in handling all projects and tasks, for example, using a single e-mail account for both partners.
- › “Hybrid” job sharing: This method uses two separate employment contracts between the employer and the workers. In practical terms, hybrid job sharing involves the division of projects between the partners on an informal basis, and the other tasks remain interchangeable. In both cases, the responsibility is shared between the partners.

The legal consequences may differ depending on the model chosen, most notably with regard to the replacement of an employee on a long-term leave. This practical guide will primarily address the hybrid job sharing category, as this is likely the most frequently practised form.



LEGAL ISSUES

Under Swiss law, there are currently no particular legal provisions and no jurisprudence applicable to job sharing³. In practice, HR managers generally apply the labour law provisions.

5

In the absence of any contract specifically designed for job sharing, the most suitable form is an open-ended or fixed-term individual employment contract (IEC, art. 319ss CO) for each of the partners.

When the contract is signed, the employer may add specific **clauses**, and the parties should pay particular attention to the following points:

- › The job sharing partners **are not bound by any legal obligation**, but they are **jointly responsible** for carrying out the work and share the task of managing personnel (for positions with responsibility).
- › The partners will be **held jointly liable** in the event of damages caused to the employer (CO art. 321e) if incurred together. However, if one of the partners incurs damages while working alone without the agreement of the other partner, the latter cannot be held liable. Similarly, the allocation of insurance premiums should be determined on a case by case basis, and defined in advance.
- › Ideally, the workers should organise themselves to ensure that the position is **covered at all times as needed**, either by one employee or the other. A **consensus** should be found between the three parties.
- › Should one of the partners **be absent for a long period, or leave**, a formal provision for replacing the absent partner should be included in the contract at the time it is signed (see page 19).

³. Hirschi, V., SECO, *Rapport juridique Jobsharing*, Bern, December 2013.

- › The employer is likely to ask the partners to plan their **vacations** at different periods.

The annual performance evaluation is conducted in the presence of both partners and is based on joint objectives. Accordingly, the partners have to accept the loss of confidentiality with regard to their performance, as the joint evaluation is a basic principle of job sharing. However, part of the assessment may be conducted separately (e.g. addressing personal and soft skills, continuing education needs). In this way, the job share partners get a joint assessment with identical evaluations in terms of the professional objectives, but may also get personalised recommendations.

Salaries will depend on variables such as age, qualifications, experience and the number of years with the company and may differ depending on the profile of each of the partners in the duo.

The workplace should have one workstation per partner to facilitate collaboration and information-sharing. As for correspondence by e-mail, they can either have a joint e-mail address or two accounts, the latter being preferable in the case of hybrid job sharing.

Telework: Teleworking has been implemented by a growing number of private and public companies, and provides greater flexibility and saves infrastructure and transportation costs. These flexible working conditions further support employees in reconciling their professional and personal lives. This type of arrangement can be easily integrated with job sharing.

**ASPECTS TO
BE DETERMINED
IN ADVANCE**

- › Joint responsibility and assessment of results.
- › Organisation of work and vacation policies.
- › Replacing a partner on leave.
- › Job sharing category (split, hybrid or pure); the choice and methods might evolve over time.
- › Communications between the partners and the employer.
- › Decision-making process in the case of disagreement.

The work of the two partners should not be assessed separately as this is not consistent with the concept of job sharing and could compromise the team spirit between the two partners.

SITUATION IN OTHER COUNTRIES



United States: The job sharing model emerged in the United States in the 1980s. Today, nearly 20% of U.S. companies allow job sharing, according to a study by the American Society for Human Resource Management. A guide⁴ published in the United States has a list of articles on the subject.



France: The first job share positions were introduced in 1994, and were imported first and foremost by the company Hewlett-Packard (HP), but the concept is still relatively unknown in French companies. The emphasis was then put on a collective reduction of working hours (35-hour week) rather than flexible work arrangements. There are no special provisions for job sharing in French legislation.



Italy: The Italian labour laws are more advanced when it comes to job sharing. Legislative Decree no. 276 from 2003, Art. 41-45 addressing the issue of job sharing has been in effect for a number of years. However, this work model is rarely put in practice in favour of other forms of part-time work or flexible working hours⁵.



United Kingdom: British legislation gives very few directives concerning labour. In a nutshell, “everything goes as long as both parties agree”. There are numerous cases of job sharing, however, and even a specialised placement agency which offers “flexible” job opportunities⁶.



Germany: There are legal provisions on job sharing in paragraph 13 of the TzBfG Part-time Labour Law which sets out the general principle of job sharing. This paragraph also points out that the partners are obliged to replace one another but says nothing about how this form of work is to be organised. Initiatives are under way to promote job sharing⁷.



Netherlands, Sweden and Denmark: Along with Switzerland, these countries have the highest rate of part-time workers. Logically, they must also practise job sharing. However, little information is available on the subject⁸.

4. Cremona L. & Miller E., *Jobsharing Resource Guide*, www.missionjobshare.com, 2009.

5. *Decreto legislativo 10 settembre 2003, n° 276, Capo II Lavoro ripartito.*

6. Daniels L., www.thejobshareproject.com – agency site: www.capabilityjane.com

7. Tepe J. & Kaiser A., *Job sharing platform: www.tandemploy.com*

8. Hirschi V., SECO, *Rapport juridique Jobsharing*, Bern, December 2013.

ADVANTAGES

FOR EMPLOYEES

- 1** Access to more stimulating jobs: job sharing allows part-time workers to hold interesting jobs typically only accessible to employees working full-time⁹.
- 2** Diversity and innovation: sharing tasks broadens the range of activities and leads to new ideas.
- 3** Work-Life balance: working part-time allows employees to reconcile their professional lives with family obligations, continuing education or other activities.
- 4** Strengthens professional skills: the diverse skills and experience of the partners provide greater expertise on demanding projects.
- 5** Effective decision-making: having a professional partner can provide a different perspective to support good decision-making and reduces the feeling of isolation often expressed by managers.
- 6** Ensures coverage: in the case of an unforeseen absence or illness, job sharing facilitates the temporary replacement of one employee (by the partner).
- 7** Extended network: job sharing is useful for establishing new professional contacts.
- 8** Better integration into the company: through information sharing, the partners are better-informed of company activities and as a result feel more integrated than traditional part-time workers.
- 9** Professional re-integration: having a job share partner can build the confidence of employees returning to the labour market after a significant absence.
- 10** Providing a boost to employees starting their careers: with a job share, young professionals are more easily integrated into the workforce.

FOR EMPLOYERS

- 1** Greater productivity and fewer absences: two employees can generate greater cumulative productivity, as opposed to one employee who may experience a decrease in productivity after a certain number of working hours per week¹⁰.
- 2** Effective decision-making: discussion between the two partners leads to better-formed decisions.
- 3** More experience and skills: thanks to combined skills, the employer benefits from the experience of two professionals.
- 4** Continuous presence: in most cases, job sharing means the job is covered full-time, in contrast to a traditional part-time position.
- 5** Innovation: the commitment of the partners and in-depth sharing foster innovation.
- 6** Ensures coverage: in the case of an extended absence by one partner, job sharing ensures the continuity of the work and saves temporary replacement costs.
- 7** Motivated, loyal employees: offering stimulating work reduces employee turnover and provides motivation and a sense of loyalty to the company. It can also reduce the risk of burnout.
- 8** Maintains know-how: intergenerational job sharing allows skills to be transferred from more experienced partners to their younger co-workers.
- 9** Favourable company image: by providing a flexible work model, the company conveys an attractive, avant-garde image in the labour market.
- 10** Networking: the company benefits from the network of two professionals.

9. See also, Demand for job sharing in Switzerland, in Kelso M., Cahn N., Miller B., *Gender Equality in Employment, Policies and Practices in Switzerland and the US*, The George Washington University, 2012, p. 33.

10. Productivity falls after the completion of 70% of weekly working hours (see European Inquiry of Kelly Services, UK, 2005).

CHALLENGES AND CONSTRAINTS

FOR EMPLOYEES

- 1** A proportionately greater workload: the way the responsibilities are divided can increase the number of projects handled compared with traditional part-time work at a similar rate of activity.
- 2** Calls for greater flexibility and organisation: extra flexibility is required whenever important decisions must be taken outside working hours. Similar to regular part-time positions, job sharing requires sound organisational skills.
- 3** The pressure is on for results: like any alternative model, job sharing must prove its worth, and the expectations are high. The partners may feel they are under a certain amount of pressure to prove not only their skills but the ability to make the job sharing model work.
- 4** Internal coordination and compatibility: at first, a balance must be found between the partners, which takes time. This process calls for the qualities that go hand-in-hand with efficient job sharing: flexibility, generosity, confidence, transparency, ability to critically evaluate one's own actions (see p. 15). Communication is key.
- 5** Decision-making process: a procedure should be in place to address any potential disagreement on an important issue, in particular in management positions.

FOR EMPLOYERS

- 1** More complexity in the recruitment and monitoring process: the job sharing team works as a single unit, but is still made up of two individuals.
- 2** Higher costs: two computers and/or workstations and possible differences in training needs generate additional costs¹¹.
- 3** Single point of contact: in cases where a single point of contact is required, it can be difficult to select one partner over the other.
- 4** Cost of information sharing: it is recommended that the job sharing partners spend half a day working together, especially for the broader team meetings (requiring the presence of all co-workers).
- 5** Risk of conflict between partners: although low, there is a slight risk of conflict, as there is in any partnership. However, the recruitment procedure and probation period should minimise such a risk.

11. Source: PTO FHNW survey, Olten, February 2014: www.go-for-jobsharing.ch/fr/publications/enquete-jobsharing

ORGANISATION

The diverse nature of job sharing is not only due to the differences between the individual partners (gender, age and personality) but also in the many ways the working hours can be divided. To maintain an adequate income, various rates of activity can be foreseen. Job sharing is not limited to a 50%-50% share.

Variante A: simple weekly split, 50%-50%.

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Co-worker A	Co-worker A	Co-worker A	Co-worker B	Co-worker B
Co-worker B	Co-worker B	Co-worker B	Co-worker A	Co-worker A

Variante B: 60%-40% division of weekly working hours, including one morning together. Neither co-worker is present at the workplace on one afternoon but both can be contacted in case of an urgent need.

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Co-worker A	Co-w. A	Co-w. B	Co-worker A	Co-worker B
Co-worker A	Co-worker A		Co-worker B	Co-worker A

Variante C: Each partner works 60% of normal weekly working hours, and the division of responsibilities is organised by day of work. The co-workers share the supervisory role (middle management) 50% of the time and the remaining time (10%) is allocated to project-related tasks (lower management).

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Manager A	Manager A	Co-w. B	Manager A	Manager B
Manager A	Manager A	Manager B	Manager B	Manager B

Variante D: work is split quarterly 70%-70% (top sharing). In this model, two senior managers in a job sharing arrangement work at 70% of normal working hours, alternating their function every three months (top sharing). Co-manager A works 70% as the senior manager for a period of three months, while co-manager B works 30% in the senior role and in a subordinate role the remaining 40% of the time. This schedule corresponds to a full-time employee in the lead management role. Three months later, this scenario is inverted. This model is advantageous for the employer, because the subordinate role is integrated into the partnership.

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Manager A			Manager B			Manager A			Manager B		
Manager B and subordinate role			Manager A and subordinate role			Manager B and subordinate role			Manager A and subordinate role		

INTERGENERATIONAL JOB SHARING

One of today's challenges is to capitalize on and transfer the know-how of the generation that is gradually leaving the labour market and to integrate younger professionals.

Demographically, the generation known as the “baby-boomers”, currently in their sixties, are generally in good health, and in many cases wish to continue working in their profession. They have expertise that is relatively difficult to find in certain sectors of the economy (the healthcare sector, watchmaking, IT and teaching)¹². They are capable of transferring valuable know-how to the younger generation. Maintaining the older generation in a part-time activity is one feature of intergenerational job sharing.

After many years in the working world, some individuals close to retirement lose interest in their work, have health problems or feel that they are no longer recognised or effective. In these cases, job sharing can also be a means of remotivating these employees.

Intergenerational job sharing refers to job sharing between two people with an age difference of at least ten years.

The objective is a two-way sharing of knowledge:

1. Older individuals who hold a position of responsibility and who wish to reduce their rate of activity can share a position with a less experienced co-worker. They are able to pass on their know-how and the corporate culture while keeping a stimulating job.
2. Reciprocally, the technological know-how and recent training of the younger co-worker represent added value for the older partner. By sharing this different knowledge, the partners are able to perform better.

In Switzerland, we have seen an increasing number of this type of partnership, especially in teaching (from primary school to university level). The age gap in a job share also offers greater flexibility, as the constraints differ according to generation.

¹². Thirty-seven percent of companies are already affected by the shortage of skills and expertise, according to a Manpower survey from October 2013.



THE IDEAL PARTNER AND THE JOB APPLICATION

Having a suitable partner is a basic prerequisite for job sharing. This requires common values, as the pair will only be able to function properly if there is mutual trust and respect.

Often, professional partnerships are formed within a company between employees who may or may not know one another, but who work in the same professional environment. Other teams are created between one person who works with the company and an external person who has complementary professional expertise. It is also possible that two external individuals apply jointly for a job sharing position.

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FINDING A JOB SHARE PARTNER

For an employee, the ideal solution is to contact an identified group or “pool” of part-time workers in a company who are interested in job sharing. This is a means both of identifying someone with a complementary profile and of ensuring that the employee is currently available for the desired job.

If this type of “pool” does not exist, the employee can identify potential partners by drawing up a preliminary list of part-time employees and gradually adding to it through an internal network. This process will make it easier to identify a potential partner.

In Switzerland, online platforms exist that put potential partners in contact with one another. One example is Teilzeitkarriere.ch, a site that provides up-to-date job share offers in the German-speaking labour market in Switzerland: www.teilzeitkarriere.ch/jobsharing

Another example is Pacte, an association which organizes meetings with the goal of putting potential job sharing partners in contact with one another and offers personalised coaching sessions. www.pacte.ch/jobsharing

Social networks such as www.linkedin.com or www.xing.com also have job share groups which enable users to actively seek potential partners and share professional experiences.

MAKING THE RIGHT CHOICE

As with any commitment, there are no guarantees with regard to choosing a partner; only working together on a routine basis over a period of time will determine the partnership's effectiveness. However, meetings between the potential partners before applying for a job share can provide an initial indication of the professional compatibility in the long term. For example, if, during your initial discussions, there is a disagreement on working hours, your motives, or the level of personal commitment, the risk of such differences occurring after starting the job share is even greater. Job sharing is first and foremost a model based on tolerance, sharing and flexibility.

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DRAWING UP AN APPLICATION

The job application and interview must be particularly well-prepared. On the one hand, this process allows the partners to get acquainted with one another, and on the other hand, gives the employer confidence in the pair's ability to self-manage the work in tandem.

ONE SINGLE JOB APPLICATION

An employer seeking to fill one position should receive only one application. The application should consist of at least two CVs and related documents, one or two cover letters and a proposed work arrangement.

As for the cover letter, it can be written and signed by both partners. Alternatively, the two partners can each write their own letter stating their individual capabilities related to the job requirements while devoting a few paragraphs to their reasons for seeking a job share with the person they have identified.

Providing suggestions for working hours will show the employer that the partners have already considered the best way of dividing the workload, including working together for a half-day.

Flexibility remains one of the keys to job sharing. This flexibility requires the partners to remain open to the employer's suggestions in the case of disagreement and, if work times need to be reviewed, finding a solution that suits all three.



**INTERVIEW
JOINTLY THEN
INDIVIDUALLY**

Typically, the employer will decide how the interview will be conducted. It is recommended that the first meeting be held with both partners, after which, if interested, the employer is likely to talk with each candidate separately. The process can also happen in the opposite manner.

Prior to the interview¹³, the partners should discuss and prepare their perspectives on various issues in order to avoid providing contradictory information. These issues might include questions such as: What if one of the partners is ill? What if one of them leaves? What if the two partners do not have exactly the same knowledge or skills? What if they do not get along in the long term? How will the partners share the task of monitoring co-workers? This preparation will be of use to the partners by helping them get to know one another better. It is important to remember that job sharing involves continuous learning and that the skills of one will be assimilated by the other over time (learning by doing). As with any new job, the job sharing team and the employer should expect that it will take some time to adapt to this new working model. Finally, the partners should be aware of the possibility that the employer wishes to hire only one person.

Drawing up a single application while remaining true to yourselves, and emphasising how complementary you are as a team and your twofold expertise will be more convincing than trying to present yourselves as one perfect unit.

¹³. See also, “The 10 steps to job sharing” on p. 21 and the website www.go-for-jobsharing.ch under “applying for a job”.

ENSURING A SUCCESSFUL JOB SHARE

The success of a job share depends on the commitment of the partners and their ability to work as a team. It is important to remember that **job sharing is not for everyone**. Individuals with a rather pronounced ego, those who have difficulty in sharing information and authority, or others who feel that they are indispensable will not be able to share their job harmoniously.

PREREQUISITES

Experience has shown that individuals in job sharing partnerships must have common values and the following personal characteristics: **flexibility, open-mindedness, generosity, critical thinking**, the ability to **regularly assess oneself critically** and the ability to manage conflicts **constructively**.

Collaboration between the partners goes further than typical teamwork, as results are evaluated jointly and there is a greater level of involvement between the two individuals. When preparing a joint application, the interaction between the partners during the initial meetings is an important indication. If one of the partners is very dominant from the start, this kind of imbalance could be detrimental to the subsequent division of the workload.

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COMPLEMENTARY OR SIMILAR?

Should partners be complementary to one another? Or, on the contrary, should they be fairly similar to work in a job sharing arrangement? There is no template for job sharing. Both types of teams can work well together. A complementary team has an advantage when making a joint application, as the employer will see the immediate benefits (e.g. diverse language skills, prior experience and other skills). However, over the following months, this type of team will require that both partners grow in their roles. For example, the more extroverted of the two should not always take on the oral communications activities, but rather should allow the other partner to develop their public speaking and presentation skills. The partner who is more skilled at writing should encourage the other to take on these types of tasks so that, gradually, the workload can be shared equally.



"This is the era of 'collaborative genius': men and women who are paving the way, providing motivation and innovation through collaboration while sharing their knowledge and power."

Mathilde Chevé
Founder and director of Kairos Association, quoted in *Le Temps*, Stéphane Herzog

TESTIMONIALS

JOB SHARING PROFESSORS AT UNIVERSITY

“

“We have shared a position at the Faculty of Arts and Humanities of the University of Fribourg for the past twelve years, first as associate professors (2003-2008), and currently as full professors. We were motivated partly by the desire to achieve a balance between our private and professional lives (one of us has four children) and partly to have time for research and writing. Among the foremost advantages of job sharing, the most important for us are the exchange of ideas and intellectual stimulation of working as a team, publishing jointly, and quality of life in general. It is a fact that we work more than our paid 50%, but even for our colleagues who are working full time, it is difficult not to work more. That’s just how the job is! As for our students, they seem to appreciate both the differences and complementary aspects of our two personalities.”

Professor Claude Hauser and Professor Alain Clavien
Chair of Contemporary History at the University of Fribourg

JOB SHARING IN CREATION AND TEXTILE DESIGN

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“We build our collections through dialogue. This principle reflects our company philosophy and serves as the foundation for any discussion about building sales strategies and negotiations. With two of us, there is no room for subjective or arbitrary decisions. Job sharing also means working efficiently in a short amount of time. It also allows one partner to stand in for the other in the case of an unexpected absence. There is less pressure, which gives you greater freedom for reconciling your private and professional lives. For a company, innovating is more than “simply” creating new products: it’s also about thinking in terms of economic and political policies and culture. In Switzerland, labour policy stipulates that personalised solutions must be offered to working mothers. Since our company employs mainly women, we have to be creative on that front. Job sharing is one solution that has been introduced.”

Sabine Portenier and Evelyne Roth
Co-directors and designers
PortenierRoth Sàrl, High Fashion Studio



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PERCEPTION WITHIN THE ORGANISATION

RELATIONS WITH OTHER CO-WORKERS

For job sharing to be perceived in a positive light throughout the company, the job share partners must ensure that they make themselves available to both their co-workers and direct reports as well as to their managers. If one partner receives a specific request that is typically in the area of responsibility of the other partner, he or she must avoid making statements which would imply that it is up to the other one to reply. The more contact the tandem has with the other team members, the better it will interact with and be accepted by the group.

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MINIMISING COSTS

Information should be shared rapidly and efficiently between the partners (e.g., via e-mail, SMS, telephone or other electronic communications tools) without creating any additional workload or costs for the HR department or colleagues. Infrastructure costs should be kept low.

A SUCCESSFUL MODEL FOR EVERYONE

To avoid a negative perception on the part of managers and co-workers, the partners must not forget that the fundamental concept of a job share duo is “win-win”.

Remember that any job share partnership that fails will affect any large-scale rollout of this model. It is an unfortunate fact that in many cases, people observe and judge even before new ideas have been tested.

WHEN A PARTNERSHIP ENDS

As with any job, there is a risk that one of the partners will resign or that the employment contract is terminated by the employer.

When one of the partners leaves, there are **four potential** options for moving forward:

1. The remaining co-worker takes over the position, either at 100% or 80%, either temporarily or permanently.
2. A new partnership is created either temporarily or permanently (new job share).
3. The job (in its entirety) is advertised as vacant; the remaining co-worker continues in a part-time position.
4. The job (in its entirety) is advertised as vacant; the remaining co-worker must find another position.

A partnership may end for a number of reasons, which may or may not have anything to do with the job, such as a move by one of the partners, illness, career change, personal promotion, dissatisfaction with the work or the company, disagreement between partners, etc.

Consequently, it is advisable for the partners to discuss these issues before applying so as to reach agreement about the risks and the commitment that the partners expect of one another. The employment contract can also include provisions for how the departure of one partner will be handled (see legal issues, p. 5).

However, numerous testimonials would indicate that job sharing partners have above-average company loyalty. Individuals who choose a job sharing arrangement are typically people with intrinsically strong social values, are highly motivated and in some cases, feel grateful towards their employer. Obtaining a job share position is not easy, and the partners will not want to lose such a hard-earned position.



“Job sharing makes good economic sense when the demographics of the working population are considered. It is also a response to the growing number of highly qualified people who, for whatever reason, are looking for part-time employment. We must make use of this potential!”

Professor Norbert Thom
University of Berne, IOP, Institute of Organisation
and Human Resource Management

SUPPORT FROM THE TOP

Company executives and Human Resource (HR) managers play a vital role in the implementation of job sharing.

With their knowledge and experience, HR managers can guide company executives towards adopting new work models while optimising the potential of part-time workers. To support employees embarking on a job share, HR managers must have an understanding of existing work models and how to implement them. They should support realistic initiatives from committed, innovative co-workers.

A company that opts in favour of job sharing can adopt the **following measures**:

WRITING THE JOB OFFER

Internal and external job offers should explicitly mention the possibility of applying for a job share (using wording such as “full-time role or job share arrangement”) to encourage candidates to consider the option. If the immediate supervisor for the open position refuses to consider a job sharing arrangement because he or she is sceptical, applications from potential job share partners should be analysed by the HR experts. Many requests for job sharing are still viewed unfavourably by managers who have very little, if any, knowledge of the concept.

INTERNAL LIST OF POTENTIAL PARTNERS

With the agreement of those concerned, the HR department can draw up a list of part-time workers (potential partners) with basic information about each employee (educational background, professional experience, current rate of activity). This internal document will serve as a “database” and can be distributed to the part-time employees to provide additional relevant information. Full-time employees who are interested in working fewer hours can also be included.

JOB SHARE CHARTER FOR MANAGEMENT POSITIONS

The most avant-garde public and private companies in Switzerland already have a charter setting out the prerequisites and advantages of a job share arrangement in management positions. Having such a guideline facilitates access to information about job sharing and encourages employees to apply.

COACHING JOB SHARE TEAMS

Getting in contact with job share experts is a way of actively supporting joint applications. Once a job share team has been recruited, a coach can accompany the new partners as they get started, especially in top share arrangements (job shares in high-level positions of responsibility). See “Coaching” on the websites www.topsharing.ch and www.go-for-jobsharing.ch

THE 10 STEPS TO JOB SHARING

Are you interested in job sharing? To help you prepare, here are the ten key steps:

- 1** Clarify your objectives and motives: define your professional and private objectives (family, continuing education). List your reasons for seeking a job share position; collect the information about the job share model by consulting web sites such as www.go-for-jobsharing.ch and read the testimonials.
- 2** Examine the possible paths and options: analyse your current job to see whether it could be shared or whether you need to look for a new position. Check whether your company's HR policies, mission or vision contains references to alternative work models. Search for companies that refer to these models on their website and in their mission statement.
- 3** Plan your job share: depending on the circumstances, you will need some time to find your work partner. Set a schedule for yourself, including deadlines and intermediate goals and build in alternatives.
- 4** Find a compatible partner: if you wish to share your current position, think about possible partners within the company. If you cannot identify an appropriate candidate, consult existing information in the company or on networking sites (see p. 12).
- 5** Set up the partnership: discuss the terms of your job share. In your discussions, take into account your different strengths and weaknesses, as well as the points you have in common. Negotiate and agree upon the specific details of how you will share the position: working days and hours and rate of activity. If there is already a job description, discuss how the workload will be divided.
- 6** Outline your arguments in favour of job sharing: include arguments from both the employee's and company's perspective. Plan your sales pitch. In addition, prepare a list of possible objections from hiring and/or recruiting managers and prepare responses to address their reluctance.
- 7** Prepare a joint application and job sharing proposal: draw up a presentation on the details for your job share (see p. 10).
- 8** Prepare for your job interview: arrange a joint appointment with the HR manager. Give each participant in the interview a copy of the documents you have drawn up. Prepare for the interview with your job share partner. Have an alternative strategy or new options available. You and your partner should have considered the possibility that your proposal may be refused. Be prepared with another suggestion.
- 9** Job interview: during the interview, be professional and keep your objective firmly in mind. It is an unusual subject and every minute counts. Negotiate and if necessary arrange a second interview.
- 10** Negotiating the contract: in most cases, separate contracts are prepared for each co-worker. Avoid uncommon provisions or conditions concerning termination of the contract if one person quits the partnership (see p. 19).

TESTIMONIALS

CO-PRESIDENTS AT THE POLITICAL LEVEL

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“We were elected co-presidents of Switzerland’s Green Party in 2012, and we greatly enjoy sharing this responsibility. Not only does job sharing help us reconcile a life in politics with our family lives, but it also contributes to the Green Party because the party benefits from our combined professional experience. The fact that one of us is German-speaking and the other French-speaking also gives us a significant advantage in working with our colleagues in the cantons and with the media, as well as in our interactions with our contacts throughout the country. Moreover, sharing this position provides an excellent opportunity to share a wealth of experiences which provide the basis for our decision-making and increases our commitment. We are convinced that collective intelligence allows us to create well-founded and innovative solutions.”

Adèle Thorens Goumaz and Regula Rytz
Co-presidents of the Swiss Green Party



TOP SHARING AT THE INVESTMENT BANK IN BERLIN

“We took charge of the department which manages loans for the investment bank, IBB. Both of us worked three days per week, with one day overlapping with the other. Initially, some of our supervisors and colleagues were a bit skeptical about job sharing, mostly with regard to the communication and decision-making process. Our experience from our individual careers allowed us to analyse various options and to generate innovative ideas. We divided our responsibilities based on our specific preferences and capabilities, which gave both of us significant job satisfaction. In order for our job sharing to succeed, we had to be willing to work as a team. This manner of sharing the workload allowed us to maintain a work-life balance. Due to changes in our personal lives, we ended our partnership after six years of working together and each of us took over responsibility for a different department. However, we are completely convinced by this work model, and if the opportunity were to arise again in the future, we would take it right away.”

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Susanne Broel and Christine Krüger-Freese, former department managers at the Investment Bank Berlin (IBB, Investitionsbank Berlin)

INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS IN A TANDEM

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“Jointly managing a team has its challenges, of course. Because of our common values and similar management principles, our collaboration runs smoothly. It often happens that when one of us takes a decision, the other endorses it without hesitation. This way of proceeding allows us to be very efficient in our work. We enjoy working as a team. We knew each other very well beforehand, which is how we knew that it would be very agreeable both on a human level and a professional level. This is a key aspect to a successful job share. We function in the same manner, and we are comfortable in discussing issues and in finding solutions. This arrangement brings us a lot of satisfaction and leads to more effective decision-making. It is a privilege to work together as a team on a daily basis.”

Esther Kühne and Caroline Wälti
Co-direction, Internal Communication, Swisscom



MANAGING A TEAM OF 16 EMPLOYEES IN A JOB SHARING ROLE

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“For the past three years, we have worked in a job sharing role as co-directors of the section on “Infrastructure Financing”, part of SECO’s Economic Cooperation and Development Division. This shared position provides us with an excellent opportunity to fully utilise the potential of two professionals: generating ideas is more fruitful, having a counterpart at the same level in our daily management role makes us stronger, and we are able to take advantage of our individual knowledge and expertise. The biggest challenge is to ensure seamless coordination. The success factors for job sharing at this level include strong organizational skills and having clearly defined tasks. We have an excellent rapport between us, without even a hint of competition. Our commitment beyond the formal 50%-50% sharing of the management role allows us to lead a team of 16 employees and to provide our own managers with a strong management presence. In addition to the work-life balance offered by this type of arrangement, it also provides us with professional satisfaction and an enriching experience, which in turn generates loyalty and stability for our employer.”

Dagmar Vogel and Guy Bonvin
co-directors of the “Infrastructure Financing” section, State Secretariat for Economic Affairs SECO, Berne



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A BALANCE BETWEEN WORK AND CREATIVITY

“I was looking to work only part-time in order to be able to spend time developing my artistic creativity (painting, graphics, furniture design). I found a job as a maintenance manager at the HEP in the Canton of Vaud, and they were receptive to my request to work part-time. The job was split into two part-time positions, with the job fully-covered over five or six days. A second colleague was hired shortly after I was, and we both handle the same tasks.

Our working hours are calculated on an annual basis, which provides our employer with the ability to schedule our shifts taking into consideration certain times of the year which are more demanding. Vacation time is more easily managed, as one of us is always available. In 2014, I was on disability leave for three months following an accident, and so my colleague took over the job full-time. This type of arrangement is beneficial for the employers, as they do not have to find and train a replacement. The job sharing provided me with a two-fold benefit—a stable job and salary which also allowed me free time to devote to my artistic activities. This arrangement was also very well perceived by the HEP, principally because it provided them with the flexibility to schedule the working hours as needed.”

Nicolas Sorel
Artistic painter and custodian
University of Applied Sciences for Education
(Haute école pédagogique “HEP”)
Canton of Vaud



For further testimonials, visit www.go-for-jobsharing.ch/fr/temoignages

IDEAS PUT INTO PRACTICE

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Job sharing is not only a good idea in theory. In reality, its value can be illustrated by the following example. For the past five years, two women have shared the role of executive assistant to the CFO of AXA Winterthur, Fabrizio Petrillo. The job sharing model allows both these women to maintain a satisfying career and to devote time to their families. At the same time, the CFO can count on having two, motivated assistants. “I must say that, at times, it does not even cross my mind that this job is split between two people, given how well the two function together,” explains Fabrizio Petrillo. Nicole Binder and Prisca Torti-Gsell agree: “This work model is ideal for us. It is true that job sharing requires mutual respect and excellent organization in order to remain fully informed on all fronts, but the advantages far outweigh these requirements.”

AXA Winterthur



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100% career.»

Mike Pfäffli (39), Head of Market Research

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WWW.GO-FOR-JOBSHARING.CH

USEFUL WEBSITES IN SWITZERLAND

- › www.pacte.ch
- › www.teilzeitkarriere.ch/jobsharing
- › www.teilzeitmann.ch
- › www.topsharing.ch and www.jkk.ch
- › www.undonline.ch/fr/lesentreprises/labelfamilleprofession
- › www.job-sharer.ch
- › www.jobsfuermama.ch
- › www.seco.admin.ch (topics › work › work and family)

