

# The evolution of a team



## Interview with Trudi O'Connell and Nici Lyver job share consultants in Financial Services.

### WHAT IS THE ROLE AND HOW DO YOU SPLIT IT?

**Trudi** We have been **job sharing** as consultants for the past **2.5 years**. We both work three day weeks with a cross-over day in the middle. This means on Nici's last day she sends me a detailed handover note and on the last of my three days it's our crossover day and we catch up first thing in the morning.

**Nici** We take each role differently - where possible we split the role responsibilities according to our particular strengths - this way we still have our own deliverables and it makes it easier for our stakeholders as they know who is responsible for what, and it means less handover. But this is not always possible depending on the role/activities and invariably there is some handover required.

*We've had three different roles during this time and have managed each slightly differently, sometimes sharing responsibilities, and sometimes splitting them so we have our own accountabilities and deliverables, matching those to suit our backgrounds and strengths.*



### WHAT IS IMPORTANT TO LOOK FOR IN A JOB SHARE PARTNER?

**Trudi** *We worked together for 4-5 years before we entered the job share arrangement together, so we knew each other very well. We knew each others working styles were compatible, we had similar work ethics and values and our differences in strengths and weaknesses complemented each other. We had some shared experience, but we come from quite different backgrounds.*

**Nici** Similar work ethics, you need to be able to **completely trust your partner and know that they're giving it their best all the time and will never let 'the team' down.**

*You don't need to have the same skills; in fact having complementary skills is part of what a job share can uniquely bring to a role.*

Discuss and decide upfront how you are going to make the job share work, this will ensure you make things seamless and easy for your stakeholders.

I don't think it's necessary to have the same long term career goals, you can still work together successfully and appreciate that you are working toward a different long term career path



## WHAT ARE YOUR TIPS FOR PEOPLE LOOKING TO JOB SHARE?

### Trudi

- 1 The most important thing in a job share team is to have similar values.
- 2 It's not just about finding someone with matching skills, you need to be able to get along because you'll need to be able to deal with office politics and there will be times where you have to have difficult conversations.
- 3 **Remember it's not just a business relationship; it's more than just working with a colleague, you're sharing your career and your profession.**

### Nici

- 1 **You need to take the onus of making a job share work, which means doing whatever it takes to make it work for your manager and stakeholders** - there should be no or very little extra activities/engagement that they need to because it's a job share over and above what they would need to do if there was just one individual in the role.
- 2 Even though you are doing the same role, ensure you have an agreement that allows you to still have individual performance evaluations.
- 3 Be ready for some push back from your stakeholders and be clear about how you will demonstrate the benefits of job share for them.

## HOW DO YOU MAKE THE JOB SHARE ARRANGEMENT WORK?

**Trudi** Management support is obviously an important part - we have had three different line managers and three different project teams in the time that we have been job sharing, and all have been very supportive once we proved that rather than being a burden there were benefits to getting two sets of skills and perspectives.

**Nici** **We set out clear expectations from the start about what was important to us and how we liked to work.**

Any 'handover' includes details about the mechanics of the role (e.g. the activities and status etc.) but it also includes some detail around personalities, interactions (if they are relevant) i.e. the non-verbal kind of info that you need to understand and know to be effective

We make a point to make the time to do a handover - sometimes it feels like one more thing to get done, so we keep it relevant and succinct so the person coming in can hit the ground running and not be playing catch up.

We are also aware that some stakeholders take advantage of the situation, and we've experienced where they have tried to play one partner off against the other; again that's why handover is so important.

### Some of the ways that we ensure that the job share arrangement is a success are:

- ✓ Role clarity (being clear on deliverables, stakeholders and success criteria)
- ✓ Team work / trust (always supporting each other and backing each other up)
- ✓ Agreement on how tasks will be shared / split (working to individual strengths)
- ✓ Having a cross-over day (which means that we are 1.2 FTE but we find that this is pretty important in making the job share work)
- ✓ Access to each other's calendars / emails
- ✓ Open and honest communication (discussing successes and challenges)
- ✓ Detailed handovers (so that we pass on as much as possible between us and try and ensure that our colleagues and stakeholders do not have to pass on the same information twice)



## THE BEST BITS ABOUT JOB SHARING?

*The number of opportunities available to you when you don't just have to look for part-time work.*

### TRUDI AND NICI'S JOB SHARE ARRANGEMENT



*Two part-time consultants (60% each) share the responsibilities of one full time job by:*

- Where possible they split the role responsibilities according to their strengths
- They have a crossover day with a catch up first thing
- Detailed handover notes

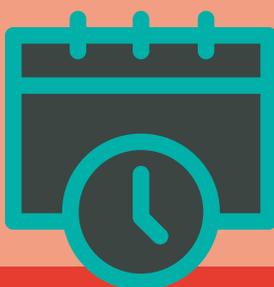
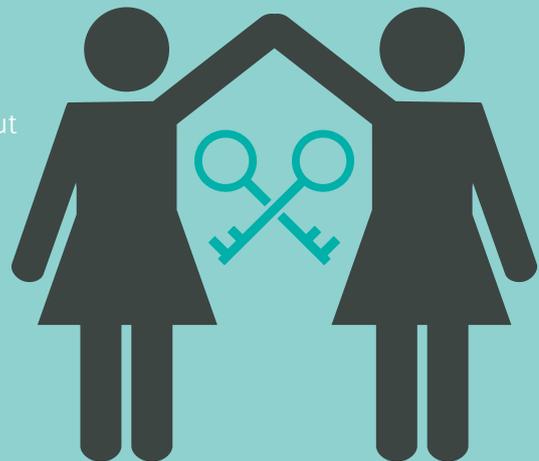


#### **The Key to making it work?**

They set out clear expectations from the start about what was important and how they liked to work.

They have their **own accountabilities and deliverables.**

They are able to completely trust each other, and know the other is not going to let the team down, giving peace of mind on their days off.



#### **Their working week**

<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>
Nici	Nici	Trudi	Trudi	Both