

TopSharing – a JobSharing for leadership positions



What aspects influence whether TopSharing is successful?

Overview of the Master Thesis results

Study program

MSc Digital Business Administration

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Table of Contents

1. Summary	2
2. Introduction	3
3. The meaning of Job and TopSharing	4
4. Literature Research	4
4.1. Job and TopSharing in Switzerland	5
4.2. Motivation, Advantages & Requirements.....	6
4.3. Literature Findings	8
5. Methodology	10
6. Research Findings	11
7. Conclusion incl. recommendations	18
8. Future of TopSharing	22
9. Contribution	23
Appendix 1 – Interview Guide	24
Appendix 2 – Visualization of archetypes	28
Appendix 3 – Visualization of JobAd	31

1. Summary

This paper is the Overview of the author's Master Thesis research results. It contains the research findings, conclusions, and some visuals from the slide deck.

TopSharing is a JobSharing in highly qualified and supervisory positions. In order to answer the Research Question – **"What aspects influence whether TopSharing is successful?"**, the author consulted the literature and conducted expert interviews with TopSharing practitioners.

Based on the research, the conclusions are the following:

- six archetype groups of topsharers with similar ages, life situations, experiences, etc., are identified and created,
- considering the structure of interviewees, three of the six archetypes are deeply analyzed (mid-young mothers, senior employees, and young generations),
- factors and aspects that affect TopSharing are collected and summarized, as well as linked to the Archetypes,
- mutual observations and aspects emphasized by all interviewees, which show their significance for TopSharing tandem success, were prepared. These key aspects are flexibility, complementarity/not balanced sharing, openness/reflection, sharing responsibility, values/trust, and digital tools.
- Contributing factors that could better influence TopSharing are digital solutions, such as ExpertSearch, Chatbot, TopSharing Community, and the Discourse platform, but also "soft solutions" - changing a company culture towards TopSharing, better promotion within the company, introducing agile methodology, more strategic approach, training, and protecting a tacit knowledge.
- The author also tackled the intergenerational TopSharing and the creation and retention of leaders.

This research could support the selection of suitable candidates through application and recruiting. Namely, the key aspects could better shape a JobAd and facilitate understanding of future and potential TopSharing job applicants, HR, and hiring managers. Therefore, a concrete JobAd example is also presented in this Overview. Furthermore, a brief impression of how the future of TopSharing could look is given, as well as the knowledge contribution to the latest working models, New Work, and Leadership topics.

2. Introduction

Starting with the three questions as the essential story ingredients to capture critical perspectives, share all-important context, and make it relevant for the audience. Those are: **Why, What, and How.**

Why? This paper aims to further research and promote a TopSharing topic and bring insights regarding TopSharing current and future solutions. Over time, the number of people wondering how much time they are willing to dedicate to business and how much to the other spheres of life is increasing. In the 21st century, the need and wish of many worldwide are to overcome the challenge of balancing and dividing time between work and private interests in a targeted manner. Competition in all markets constantly grows, with new requests for productivity, effectiveness, and efficiency.

Besides, the need for lifelong learning is evident and necessary, and it steals more and more from someone's free time. In this environment, the so-called VUCA world, inner peace, and balance could contribute significantly to going with the flow and succeeding in all spheres. One of the most used phrases is that everybody, from a cleaning lady to a CEO, has the same amount of time daily, but it does not make it less accurate. A recent trend is that people are increasingly interested in organizing it in a more balanced way. That leads to one more buzzword, "a work-life balance," which must be often mentioned within this topic because, according to the literature, it is one of the main reasons people choose Job and TopSharing. A sustainable, balanced share of our available time could support both perspectives of our life – the quality of life and work and productivity - which will synergistically increase economic achievements.

What? - The importance of TopSharing

Pandemic-related digitalization has a lot of positive effects on the professional parquet, despite the difficult circumstances we all experienced. Of course, it brought on the surface challenges linked with changing the world of work, but also more home office possibilities and a mind-shift regarding the new working arrangements. One is TopSharing, which is JobSharing for highly qualified and supervisory positions.

No doubt, there is a great deal of interest in this north star model for various reasons. It is not just because of a work-life balance for employees, but it could solve many challenges that companies and employees face. Also, the motivation can be working part-time, starting an entrepreneurial activity or start-up, taking care of elderly family members, etc.

How? With the support of literature research, the Thesis replies to the Research Question – “**What aspects influence whether TopSharing is successful?**”, and describes TopSharing potential and opportunities, together with aspects that could impact TopSharing’s success within one team or company.

3. The meaning of Job and TopSharing

The infographic is titled "The meaning of Job and TopSharing" and features a background image of a staircase. It contains two main text boxes:

- JobSharing**
The notion of JobSharing, as originally defined by (Olmsted, 1977), is a voluntary working arrangement, in which two people hold responsibility for what was formerly one full-time position.
- TopSharing**
 - J.K.Kuark developed the work organizational model TopSharing as a JobSharing in highly qualified & supervisory positions.
 - Following IKrone's (Krone-Germann, 2020) definition, the term TopSharing refers to JobSharing in positions with a high-level of responsibility, including the management of co-workers.

4. Literature Research

The reality of today's work world is an increasing expectation for 24/7 availability and responsiveness.

4.1. Job and TopSharing in Switzerland

Statistical data regarding **Job and TopSharing in Switzerland** by the Swiss FSO (Figure 1) show that employees in leadership positions make around 40% in favor of men and 30% in favor of women.

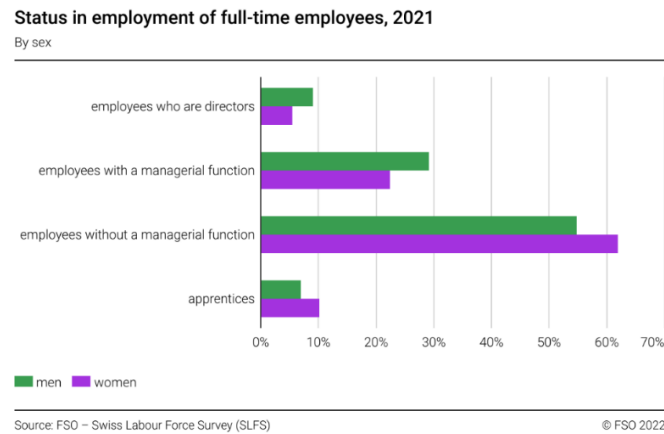


Figure 1 – Status in employment of full-time employees, BFS, 2021

Together with some employees without managerial function, they form a decent market percentage of possible future topsharers. It is a question of time when the demand and supply will meet and create more topsharers. The discrepancy between men and women favors discrimination within the leadership position in companies, what is also recognized by the Swiss Government.

Namely, the Government took steps in this direction with the Gender Equality Strategy 2030 (April 28, 2021), which aims to promote gender equality in a targeted manner and to promote equality in working life and better reconcile work and family life (FSO 2021). Thus, this problem is recognized in politics, and the expectations are that the Strategy will be implemented and better conditions for mitigating the gap created.

Comparing this to the relatively small percentage (Figure 2) who did JobSharing in 2021, only 9.6% of them, it is a matter of time before the demand and supply will meet and create more topsharers.

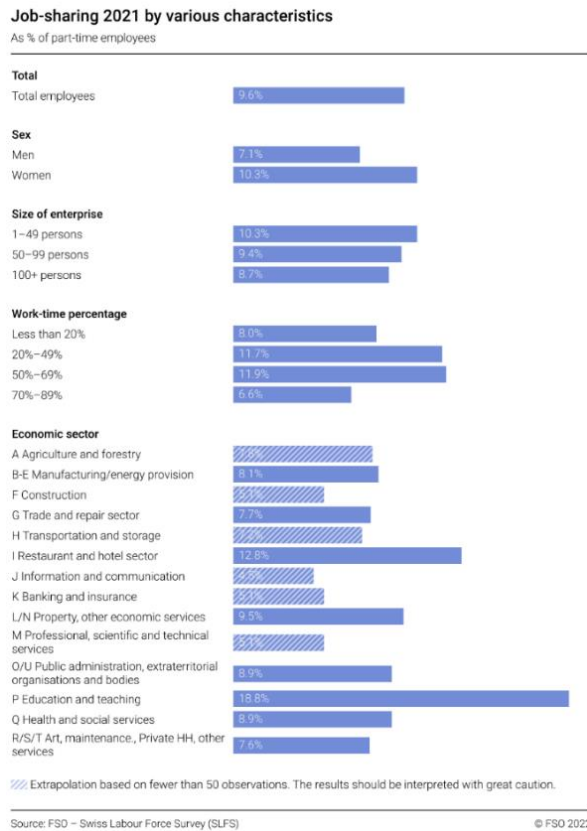


Figure 2 – Job-sharing, BFS, 2021

4.2. Motivation, Advantages & Requirements

The reality of today's work world is an increasing expectation for 24/7 availability and responsiveness. The motivation for TopSharing from the employees' side can generally be described as a wish to realize their dreams, together with achieving or keeping a leadership position. Young employees and mothers are among leading candidates for TopSharing.

This model has a good deal of interest for various reasons from the company side, as well. The literature research shows that many Swiss companies, e.g., banks, state companies, international companies, and the Government, exercise this working model and have some experience in TopSharing. For example, two people who bring different skills, perspectives, and backpacks could be a solution for positions with a high degree of responsibility. That would be one of the paths to fulfill the role in a more than optimum way. Employers are motivated to have a sustainable knowledge-sharing environment, retain talents and skills,

and better manage absences. Also, from the political point of view, a synergetic effect often leads to more significant innovation, and there will be more female leaders.

The advantages of TopSharing are shown in the fact that this is a decisive leadership and personal development tool where leaders take an essential role as change agents. It effectively counters the impending shortage of managers, and, related to that, we come to the requirements. Due to rigid organizational structures, companies must maintain good leaders and competent employees (Kuark, 2003).

In a nutshell:

Motivation for employees:

- to keep or gain a leadership position and their private plans onboarded
- to dedicate some time to different projects, start-ups, or hobbies.

Motivation for employers:

- knowledge sharing and sustainability of know-how,
- improved flexibility,
- better management of absence,
- synergetic effect that it often led to greater innovation,
- retention of talents and skills,
- more female leaders.

Advantages:

- change agents,
- a robust leadership development tool,
- sustainability of know-how,
- extensive personal development and strengthened social skills,
- increased team diversity and productivity,
- effectively counter the impending shortage of managers.

Requirements:

- Companies need many qualities to continue attracting, developing and retaining employees in future and in the long term.

Besides all positive sides, working in tandem brings some open questions from the employer, employee, and HR. For example, recruitment and monitoring can be more complex for the employer on top of additional costs for another workstation, computer, or training needs. Fellow staff may also need clarification on reporting to two bosses (Bradley, 2015). Nevertheless, by positively embracing JobSharing, roles could be flexibly designed to focus on business impact (Saunders & Bassett, 2017) and help address the range of complex roles that are now required (Watton, 2019).

This model could be a proper solution to various challenges, from the family caregivers' work-life balance to the companies' wishes to keep track of new working styles and requests for more flexibility from the employees' side. The company should not start from scratch with TopSharing. They can use existing knowledge and experience from similar companies or teams more experienced in this model. Anyhow, the management must be behind that decision. It must also fit the company culture, or a concrete plan should be developed to integrate it well. Finally, finding an approach that would suit all stakeholders is crucial.

4.3. Literature Findings

In the literature conclusion, the author summarized the pros and cons of TopSharing, illustrated in Figure 3 below, are results from an analysis of the literature sources. Together with the interviewees' inputs, that was a solid basis for reaching the research question's answer and contribute to the overview of aspects that could affect TopSharing's success within the tandem.

All aforementioned contributes to the point that this topic will become increasingly popular and deserves attention and directions for implementation.

Pro for employees:	Pro for employers:	Cons for employees:	Cons for employers:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to more stimulating jobs while working part-time • Diversity and innovation through a large range of activities • Work-life balance • Development of new skills and greater expertise • Sharing responsibility and joint decision-making process • Better integration into the company for those who temporarily left the labour market • Larger network thanks to the duo • Better health care and prevention of a burnout <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4-eyes principle • Different perspective is possible, experience, views, temperaments, skills • Aspiring managers can have an experienced partner • Share success and failures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater productivity and continuous presence at the workplace • Talent retention through introduction of flexible work models • More effective decision-making process between two partners • Skills and networks doubled • Onboarding period is shortened • Contributing to the family friendly and gender equality image <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased loyalty, motivation, and integrity • Know-how transfer in case of intergenerational JobSharing • Favourable leading-edge company image • Better sick leave and vacation cover, reduced risk of burnout <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Back up ensured • Higher possibility of better communication among the topsharers and the team (to get along with one or another) • Detailed reporting and admin <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advantage in the negotiations (more energy and mental power if both topsharers are present) • Practicing feedback culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More complex organization, and planning • Duplication of effort for administrative work in sharing duo (handovers, reporting, etc.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compromise and understanding of other way of work, leadership style, personality, habits, etc. • Better coordination needed than usual • Lacking time for many tasks and decision making • Lack of clarity around role accountability and responsibility • Losing the track of the work • A risk that two 50% job share posts on paper can expand into higher percentage positions with extra workloads but no additional pay • Reduced hours come a reduced income, and a lower pension 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination (between topsharers, with the team and superiors). Confusion, e.g. who is supposed to do what. • More administrative work for sharing duo (takeovers, reporting, etc.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possibly additional costs if there is only one person planned in the budget • Changing of company culture could be challenging • Change of SOPs and company's regulations/legislation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could splitting the power lead to reducing authority • Fellow staff may also find it confusing having to report to two bosses

Figure 3 – Pro & Cons of TopSharing (own illustration)

5. Methodology

This Chapter describes the methodological procedure in detail. Furthermore, the methods used in empirical research are described and justified. Namely, qualitative research is used to better understand and gather in-depth insights into a new problem and generate new research ideas.



Figure 4 – Research design (own illustration)

The research design is presented in the visualization above. The literature research helped identify the Research Question. As well, its systematic review and analysis became the foundation for further qualitative research through interviews, which led to the findings and conclusion.

Regarding data collection, literature findings are complemented by the results of ten expert interviews conducted through a semi-structured interview process. The Interview Guide (below) was prepared, and the industries covered are Swiss state companies, universities, the banking sector, and organizations/startups. All the interviewees have been employees with management responsibility and in touch with TopSharing. One person has both managing tandems and personal TopSharing experience. One person manages and leads many topsharers. In all other cases, they currently work in this flexible working model.

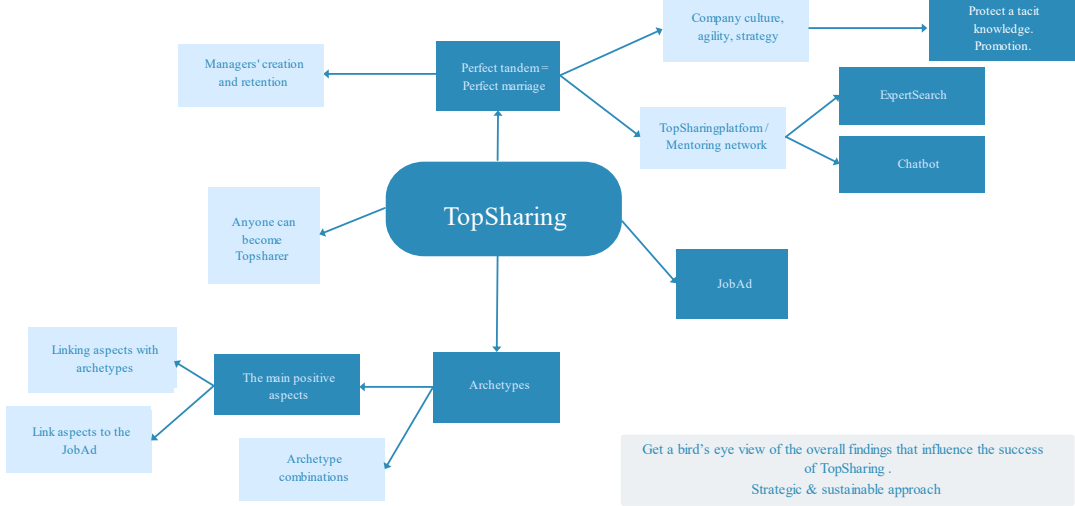
The author was delighted to gain insights from the practical point of view of the interviewees. In addition, the author was quite impressed with their motivation and the challenges they faced during this process.

Data analysis is based on content structuring. Also, the interviews were transcribed and coded. Its analysis supported the development of the Findings and presented conclusions and recommendations.

6. Research Findings

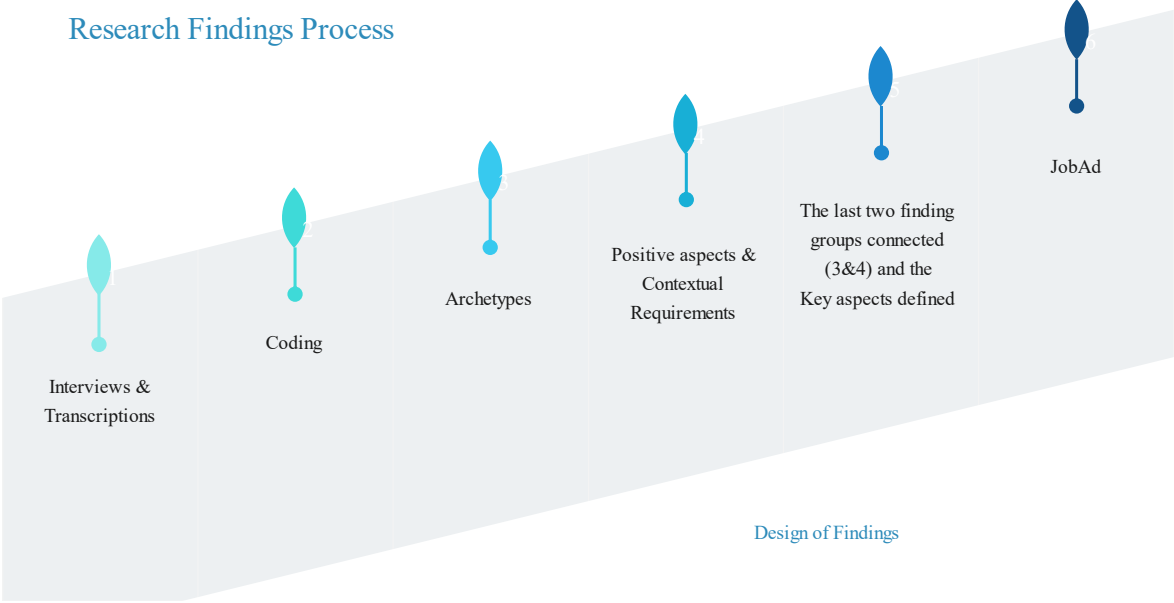
The overall findings are presented using a mind map model below.

A mind map of the overall findings



To move forward the research of aspects that influencing TopSharing in a positive way, the author collected and elaborated findings within the following process:

Research Findings Process



The interviews were conducted with experts in TopSharing topic. Most interviewees are impressed with the model and immensely thankful for the TopSharing opportunity to help them achieve their goals and contribute to the company, to mutual consent. However, only one interviewee would prefer to perform this position alone. They think it is unsuitable for their position and may need to be better accepted among colleagues, even though they have a fantastic experience with this model as a leader of topsharers. In that sense, it is essential to raise awareness about TopSharing itself, its role, and its benefits, by changing the culture in the company or department and sharing information among all stakeholders. Some interviewees had TopSharing experience earlier; for some, it was their first time working in this flexible arrangement, and TopSharing was the opportunity for them to become leaders. However, everybody agreed that TopSharing is a process that can be learned or at least improved. Moreover, the common impression is that the preparation phase is crucial and that future co-sharers do not need to know each other.

The design thinking method shapes the central part of the paper, whereby conducted expert interviews and literature research helped creations of different archetypes corresponding to possible topsharers. The archetypes and the condition for their creation are presented in Table 1: TopSharer’s Archetypes (mid-young mothers, fathers, young employees, senior employees, young generations, and managers close to retirement). The archetypes can help us to be better informed about potential “customers” for whom TopSharing could be helpful.

		Archetypes					
		Mid-young mothers (<45yo)	Fathers - Family oriented man	Young employees (<40yo)	Senior employees (>40yo)	Young Generations (e.g., Z, Alpha)	Existing managers close to retirement
Interviewees	Person 1				x		
	Person 2				x		
	Person 3	x					
	Person 4				x		
	Person 5	x					
	Person 6				x		
	Person 7				x		
	Person 8					x	
	Person 9				x		
	Person 10					x	

Table 1: TopSharer’s Archetypes (own illustration)

Considering the structure of interviewed persons, three of six archetypes are present in this paper and deeply analyzed. They are mid-young mothers, senior employees, and young generations. The archetypes are visually presented, and the aspects derived from the research findings (positive aspects and contextual requirements) are linked to them.

The archetypes are linked to the aspects derived from the researching findings and presented as positive aspects and contextual requirements. Further, archetypes are visually presented in Appendix 2 – Visualization of archetypes, but a sneak-peak of that could be seen in the Figure 6 below.



Figure 6: Visualization of archetypes (own illustration)

Starting with the defined Archetype 1 - mid-young mothers, which corresponds to two interviewed ladies, the brief description is that they live in Switzerland with their husband and kid(s). They are mainly family-oriented, but career and leadership positions are also their focus. The main goal is to manage the family and keep track of the career and a leadership position without “harming” anyone, with less stress. They prefer Digital tools: OneNote, MsTeams, MS Office, email, phone, and Chat. The positive aspects of this archetype are sharing responsibility, becoming more tech-savvy, upskilling, and having a work-life balance. As the contextual requirements, they mentioned that more flexibility and openness for criticism is needed, that it is not always a proportional share, and emphasized a self-reflection, complementarity, etc.

Positive aspects:	Contextual requirements:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •An option for keeping a track in a career and a leadership position •Sharing responsibility facilitating a decision making •Less stress, work-life balance •Save time through better information flow •Become more tech-savvy •Better team dynamics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •More flexibility needed •Openness for criticisms •Common values and trust required •Not strictly balanced share •Complementarity •Self reflection and communication needed •Understand the spirit and way of work of the other topsharer

Figure 7: Findings of the Archetype 1 (own illustration)

Archetype 2 covers senior employees, over 40yo, with grown-up kid(s) or without them, corresponding to six interviewed persons. They value their professional advancement and career a lot, but they also want more free time. The main goals of this Archetype are to keep track of their career and hold a leadership position with attaining a work-life balance. Another reason they would consider TopSharing positions is that they want to try new perspectives. Digital tools they prefer are OneNote, MS Office, email, phone, and face-to-face meetings. The positive aspects of this Archetype are having a sparing partner, improving communication skills, and gaining more experience with a mix of digital and classic ways of organization. Contextual requirements are flexibility again, openness, common values required, reflection, etc.

Positive aspects:	Contextual requirements:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TopSharing is an option for holding a leadership position or to try new perspectives • Having a sparing partner, sharing responsibility • Improving communication skills • Mainly follow digital trends, but also appreciate a classic way of work • Good tasks share according to skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To understand the model and be flexible • Openness for criticisms • Sometimes it makes a decision making process more complex • Common values required, and different experiences • Not balanced share • Understand different personality and working habits of a co-sharer • Project management skills and good organization needed

Figure 8: Findings of the Archetype 2 (own illustration)

Young generations (e.g., Z or Alpha) represent Archetype 3. They would like to become managers asap and simultaneously complete their education, lead a start-up, or want some free time. Those are also their primary goals. It corresponds to two interviewed persons. They often work with Archetype 2 and, in these cases, adapt to their communication and working style. With that in mind, they use the same digital tools as the previous Archetype 2. The positive aspects of this archetype are tacit knowledge transfer, sharing responsibility, better coordination, and the contextual requirements - common values required, complementarity, openness, and similar.

Positive aspects:	Contextual requirements:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The opportunity to gain management experience as a young employee, and a leadership position • Learning more • Tacit knowledge transfer • Sharing responsibility • Less stress, more free time • Better team coordination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good communication and organization needed • Common values required • Complementarity • Understand the spirit and way of work of the other topsharer • Leverage lack of experience

Figure 9: Findings of the Archetype 3 (own illustration)

The conclusion is that the key aspects (including contextual requirements) that influence whether TopSharing is successful, and which arose from everything mentioned above, are:

- flexibility,
- complementarity/not balanced share,
- openness/reflection,
- sharing responsibility,
- values/trust,
- digital tools.

That led us to the JobAd, which will be further explained in more detail.



All interviewees emphasized these aspects' significance in the tandem's success.

Comparing these findings with the literature, we could see the links. Namely, looking at the Pros & Cons of TopSharing overview, we can see that these aspects in different forms run through the columns. The research findings show a collection of them summarized in six defined aspects, confirmed through the interviews, and linked to the JobAd.

Here is a brief explanation of the aspects. All the aspects are connected and create a flow of concrete skills and characteristics that a successful topsharer should possess or develop. If there is a will and a common aim in tandem, together with self-improvement, this model can succeed in most cases.

1. **Flexibility** - If it were necessary to choose one aspect that could affect the success of a TopSharing tandem, it would be flexibility or agility.
2. **Values/Trust** - The next would be the values, which ought to be the same or at least similar, and trust is vital.
3. **Openness/Reflection** - A vanity should be overcome, and co-sharers should be willing to listen to their partner, reflect on it, and discuss it further. Self-reflection is a particular skill and a resource for potential solutions in different areas. Moreover, openness for criticism and openness in general, as well as transparency, should be exercised by both topsharers.
4. **Complementary/Not balanced share** - It cannot be expected that the share of responsibilities will always be balanced. Nevertheless, even then, it is significant to be fair to ensure positive feelings and energy between topsharers in the long run. The skills should be complementary, but the goals and values should be the same. Moreover, one interviewee mentioned the importance of project management skills. Besides, coaching in some organizational methodology would be good before taking the TopSharing position.
5. **Sharing responsibility** is one of the main benefits of TopSharing. Today's organizations are driven to squeeze the maximum out of their resources, and the expectation for 24/7 availability is increasing. Therefore, TopSharing, with its sharing responsibility aspect, is an excellent solution for this challenge.
6. What also contributes a lot are **digital tools**. Especially after the pandemic, it has become a rule, and anybody who cannot or does not want to adapt is lost. Besides, digital tools bring many benefits to tandem's work organization and facilitate their personal project management and communication.
7. This collection of aspects leads us to their importance to **JobAd**. The publishing vacancy instrument could be improved by adding these aspects or/and TopSharing declarations and statements to the content.

Getting back to the interviews, all aspects can be described in the following quotes of the interviewees:

Flexibility – “It is very important to be aware that you have to be very flexible in your mind, very flexible with your time.”

Complementarity/(not)balanced share – “We do have complementary skills. That was why I chose her as well”, “Also you are giving sometimes more. It's not always in a balanced share. So, you have peers where you must be generous too.”

Open for criticism/reflective – “You have peers where you have to be very open for criticism when you have a different opinion.”, “It is important to be willing to reflect yourself, having good capacity on those reflection, communication, a good contact to your own feelings, knowing why you react in some way, knowing very well your own personality, and having also experiences in different situations. Because working in tandem has much more challenges in this kind of interpersonal contact.”

Sharing responsibility – “That is very helpful to have someone, equal, to share the responsibility and with whom you really can discuss and reflect situations. I think really, as a leader, you are often very lonely.”

Values/trust – “We have similar values, very different experiences. And I think this combination is quite good one.”

Digital tools – “We use eMails, Onenote, Chat, Voicemails. They are the most important thing ever! One Note is our bible.”

JobAd – “I would write that it needs to be flexible.”, “TopSharing is still too little known and new. Talk about it and make it better known. Advertise the positions in the same way.”, “We are looking for a leader from 60% to 100% and it could be a TopSharing opportunity.”

7. Conclusion incl. recommendations

Get a bird's eye view of the positive aspects that influence success in TopSharing. First, it is vital to create conditions for a more sustainable work-life balance and knowledge retention. Besides, as one of the interviewees with over 15 years of Topsharing experience said, “TopSharing is not for everybody, but anyone can become a topsharer.” As a result of the research and interviews conducted, the author would add:

-
- if they work with a common aim in mind, trust and support each other by sharing responsibility,
 - keep a picture of the successful functioning of the tandem,
 - sharing the same values but having complementary skillset,
 - are flexible and do not measure if it is fair sharing in every moment,
 - are constantly reflective and open to criticism,
 - use more digital tools,
 - pitch the TopSharing aspects in a JobAd.

Perfect tandem is like a perfect marriage (which probably does not exist), but with a detailed plan and positively embracing TopSharing, it can become almost perfect. If both topsharers want success in their tandem, they should try to gain the best from pooled resources and skills. Future topsharers should also know that good preparation is a step forward in this model. However, if they want the success of their tandem, they should focus on developing skills that support the aspects presented in this paper.

Archetypes combinations and motivation - Archetype 1 is the most thankful for the opportunity to work in TopSharing model. Mid and young mothers recognize the importance of this working arrangement for their future careers and balancing the requirements of the family and a household. The most challenging for “convincing” to work in TopSharing is Archetype 2 because their motivation is the lowest. First, they mainly have grown-up children or no kids. For many, that is their last position, or they have enough time, capacity, experience, and knowledge to obtain it alone. Second, sometimes, they find a position where they do not need to engage at their total capacity. Finally, in Archetype 3, young leaders appreciate this opportunity as a chance to step into the leadership world at a young age.

A combination of Archetypes 2 and 3 is among the most useful for companies. The main goal of this tandem combination is to exchange the senior manager experience on the one hand and the digital and new working trends knowledge from juniors on the other. The literature also agrees that tacit and leaders learning from one another is essential (Watton, 2019). A combination of Archetypes 1 and 1 is the most useful for themselves, and a combination of 2 and 2 can be considered equally important to both tandem and a company.

Those combinations could be a reasonable basis for further research about correlations and possible good combinations of archetypes and developing others mentioned in the Table of Archetypes.

Further, future topsharers and their superiors should carefully interpret the aspects. They should perceive the whole picture and a tandem combination. Sometimes positive aspects in one tandem can have a negative impact. For example, if somebody is more IT skilled and another is not, or if somebody is full of harmony, it could be a challenge for another co-sharer. It becomes an advantage if they see it as complementarity. If it creates work obstacles, it is a possible clash point. If both topsharers want the success of their tandem, they should try to gain the best from pooled resources and a skills package. The focus should be on the positive aspects influencing TopSharing, not on competition between themselves.

Additionally, a recommendation for companies is to use existing research to gain more insights into new working methods, build up the agile mindset, and transform the company culture toward TopSharing. People usually need to learn how this model functions, so establishing a mentoring network is practical, as one of the interviewees mentioned and emphasized its usefulness. With this network, it is possible to approach colleagues from the TopSharing list who are ready to support others. Going a step further, the author would propose that the mentoring model become an ExpertSearch tool. This tool would consist of necessary info about topsharers, enable quickly reaching out to any mentor from the list, and send them a direct message. Also, in an advanced stage, it would be great to have a Chatbot, which will be linked to their chat system, and everybody from the mentors' group can see the group chat messages of potential topsharers and reply to them (such as a customer support model to be applied on TopSharing). Also, creating the TopSharing Community and the Discourse platform is a great way to exchange knowledge and interact with the TopSharing Community.

Protect tacit knowledge and promotion - This is also linked to knowledge management, promotion, and a knowledge retention strategy, to protect tacit knowledge and convert it from accessible data to reusable information. On the other hand, promotion should go toward a top-down approach, preparing TopSharing packages and organizing training sessions and various events, publishing on the Community page, or sending newsletters to their members.

Creation and retention of leaders - TopSharing could be an excellent solution to solve one of the significant challenges in the future – losing qualified management-skilled employees. If companies lose mothers, older, or people who have been in the company for a long time and want some changes, young people do not have experience and will stay alone. The conclusion is that more jobs should be open for this flexible working arrangement, a clear strategy should be prepared, and job advertisements should be published. The JobAd recommendations presented in this paper can contribute to that.

The last piece in this TopSharing puzzle is a **JobAd** and the author's willingness to facilitate a process of its understanding for all stakeholders - future and potential TopSharing job applicants, HR, and hiring managers.

The final recommendation is that a TopSharing JobAd uses the key aspects that a tandem should be ready to follow or develop as a pitch for the TopSharing model within the vacancies. Therefore, one section of a JobAd should be titled "TopSharing requirements" or "Soft skills requirements for a TopSharing tandem" so that the general audience can more easily understand. However, this section should not be burdened with too many details, and it is pretty significant to strike a balance between oversimplified and over-detailed content. It could also be presented as Nota Bene or affirmation/declaration about the openness for TopSharing.

Finally, the webpage on the company's site should be created and added to the JobAd. On that page, all those aspects could be explained, as well as the whole philosophy of TopSharing from a company's perspective.

The proposal of how it could look is given in Figure 11 below and Appendix 3. Nota bene: this amount of space for the TopSharing requirements is only taken for the visibility reasons of the Visualization.

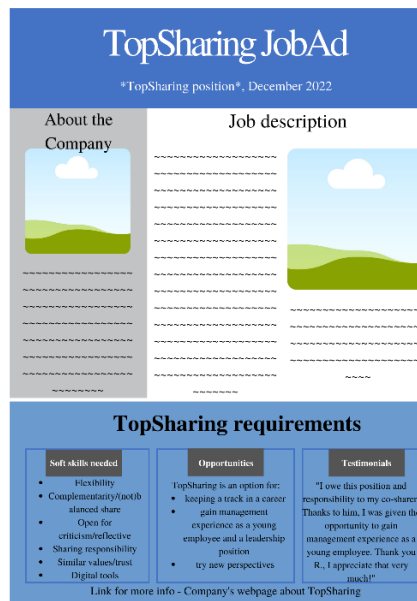


Figure 11: JobAd for TopSharing positions (own illustration)

8. Future of TopSharing

A form of TopSharing existed already in the ancient times (Sally, 2002), but will it be so important in the future, as well?

Besides, with a few not so nice examples from Swiss society, we could see the growing importance of a work-life balance. Considering the recent suicides of top executives in Switzerland, such as the chief executive of Julius Baer, the Swiss private bank, Visana Insurance president, former chief executive of Zurich Insurance, or CEO of Swisscom, without going into details and reasons for their decision, can be assumed that stress and unbalanced life contributed to that. Have we learned something from that, as a society and an individual (remains to be seen)?

After detailed analysis, the conclusion is that a TopSharing is the newest marketplace (r)evolution, as mentioned in the article of Uherezky (2019). The author added “r” in brackets because it seems to be more evolution than revolution but could have a sudden breakthrough as a consequence of the pandemic. Considering TopSharing, as a north star of flexible working arrangements, we should have Peter Drucker’s words in mind: “the greatest danger in times of turbulence is not turbulence itself, but to act with yesterday’s logic”.

9. Contribution

This Master Thesis overview of the results serves as further research and promotion of the TopSharing topic. Further, this Master Thesis overview of the results aims to contribute knowledge to the latest working models, New Work, and Leadership topics, especially current and future solutions for TopSharing at the intersection organization of work.

Companies, institutes, associations, state administration, universities, and schools could use these results to innovate working arrangements, consider the best tandems' fits, and use all benefits of complementary and synergetic potentials of TopSharing.

Finally, this paper intends to provide a basis for additional research in this direction. The research results could be shared with all parties involved, such as experts who contributed to the expert interviews, respective institutes, associations, and organizations. Moreover, the Swiss model could be considered for implementation in other countries.

Appendix 1 – Interview Guide

Bern University of Applied Sciences (BFH)

Digital Business Administration

Interview Guide

TopSharing – JobSharing for leadership positions



What aspects influence whether TopSharing is successful?

Author

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October 2022

Date:		
Name, position, company of the interviewee:		
Interview topsharers		
Question categories	Key Qs	Additional explanation of Questions
Brief general questions (important for identification of a fictional personas) 6 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please introduce yourself briefly? • Did you cover the same position as a single leader? • How long have you been working in Topsharing and in which workload? • What do you think how the workload percentage influence the success of TopSharing? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Background in, position, department, age, married or not, with kids or not, reasons for TopSharing and goals (behavior, attitudes, needs, challenges). • Did you cover your current position in the company before TopSharing or it came with it? • If a tandem work 80% each is better than 60%? • Why have you chosen this leadership model? Yours or your superior initiative?
The TopSharing planning phase 6 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How would you go about finding a suitable topsharer? • How have topsharers organized between themselves? • Which issues did you clarify before the start and how? • How were you able to persuade your superiors to do TopSharing? • Which tasks you divide to perform together and which individually? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the pains and gains, criteria in finding your topsharer partner? What was important to you about your partner? • What are the signs that bring you the idea that it would be a good match? Did you know each other before? • Do you have one or more days together in the office? • How is joint attendance / handover regulated?
The first implementation phase - 3 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you make your decisions and do the conflict resolution? • How do you deal with strategic and urgent decisions, and what about daily tasks? 	
TopSharing in daily work and the next phase 10 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you describe your most important daily tasks in terms of TopSharing? • What bad results, risks or obstacles have already occurred? • Has anything changed after the initiations phase? • What are the pains and gains in achieving aims and objectives? • To what extent the TopSharing contributed to the change management of the company and you as a change agent? • How that affected the culture in the team and the organization? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could you walk me through your regular working day? • What do you enjoy most about your work in terms of TopSharing? • Bad results in a sense of pains and gains arising from that situation. • Where do you see the advantages and challenges (or which did you face)? • Does the organization differ from the beginning and what changed? • Which factors supported you on your path?
Pains and gains, skills 13 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are important prerequisites for a functioning of TopSharing? • Could you share any testimonials or feedback from your manager and peers? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Best practices, stumbling blocks, lessons learned, recommendations • What are a complementary skills (plus values and beliefs, management style) and what are the same?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the most important skills? • What is a noticeable impact on your satisfaction and motivation? • To what extent the TopSharing contributed to your professional success? • Which personal experiences of success have you experienced thanks to TopSharing? • What could the company do for the strengthening this leadership model? • How did you achieve a good communication, trust, etc.? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In which areas are you more successful and efficient than before? • What opportunities do you see for the model in the future?
Tools, digitalization 7 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What communication and working methods do you use? • What importance do you give to digital channels? • How have you improved your communication in the tandem, with the team and towards superiors, and externally (meetings, negotiations, etc.)? • In which aspect the admin part is time consuming (pains) and how could be improved? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital tools, such as. Trello, Jira, Miro, etc. could be helpful in collaboration in tandem? If you haven't used it yet, could you imagine that agile and digital solutions could facilitate your work and make your life easier? • How do you track the activities?
JobAd 5 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What should be the crucial part of the JobAd for TopSharing position? • Would a personality tests helped in finding the best match? • What are the reasons for the low percentage of topsharers and how can this proportion be increased? 	
Notes:		


The list of interviewees

Name	Company	Confirmed	Date
Person 1, F	Organization/startup	Yes	03.11.
Person 2, M	Higher education sector	Yes	11.11.
Person 3, F	Swiss Bank	Yes	14.11.
Person 4, M	Swiss state company	Yes	16.11.
Person 5, F	Higher education sector	Yes	18.11.
Person 6, F	Higher education sector	Yes	18.11.
Person 7, M Person 8, M	Swiss state company	Yes	24.11.
Person 9, F Person 10, F	Swiss state company	Yes	09.12.

Appendix 2 – Visualization of archetypes

Archetype 1

Archetype 1 is looking for better work-life balance that match her busy life.



Brief description

Archetype 1 - mid-young mothers, who lives in Switzerland, with her husband and kid(s). They are mainly family oriented, but also career and a leadership position are in their focus. (Persons 3 & 5)

Archetype Main Job (Main goals)

- The main goals of Archetype 1 to be achieved are to manage the family and household activities, keeping the track of her career and a leadership position easily without harming anyone, with less stress.

Personality

- Outgoing
- Caring
- Dynamic
- Family oriented
- Relatively ambitious

Interests

- Family
- Leadership

Apps used by Archetype 1

- OneNote
- MS Office 365
- MsTeams
- email, phone
- Chat/communication channels/voice messages

Positive aspects

- An option for keeping a track in a career and a leadership position
- Sharing responsibility facilitating a decision making
- Less stress, work-life balance
- Save time through better information flow
- Become more tech-savvy
- Better team dynamics

Contextual requirements

- More flexibility needed
- Openness for criticisms
- Common values and trust required
- Not strictly balanced share
- Complementarity
- Self reflection and communication needed
- Understand the spirit and way of work of the other topsharer

TopSharing - Archetype 1

Archetype 2

Archetype 2 is looking for a career progress at the first place, but also more free time for a work-life balance.



Brief description

Archetype 2 - senior employees, >40yo, who lives in Switzerland, with grown up or without kid(s). They value a lot their professional advancement and career, but they also want more free time. (Persons 1, 2, 4, 6, 7 & 9)

Archetype Main Job (Main goals)

- The main goals of Archetype 2 to be achieved are to keep the track of career and hold a leadership position.
- Besides, they value their free time, or simply want to try new perspectives.

Personality

- Ambitious
- Dynamic
- Family oriented
-

Interests

- Leadership
- Family
-

Apps used by Archetype 2

- OneNote
- Ms Office 365
- email, phone
- Classic way of organization
- Chat/communication channels

Positive aspects

- TopSharing is an option for holding a leadership position or to try new perspectives
- Having a spare partner, sharing responsibility
- Improving communication skills
- Mainly follow digital trends, but also appreciate a classic way of work
- Good tasks share according to skills

Contextual requirements

- To be flexible and understand
- Openness for criticisms
- Sometimes it makes a decision making process is more complexed
- Common values required, and different experiences
- Not balanced share
- Understand different personality and working habits of a co-sharer
- Project manag. skills needed

TopSharing - Archetype 2

Archetype 3

Archetype 3 is looking for a manager positions, together with a further education, and a work-life balance/enjoying life more.



Brief description

Archetype 3 - young Generations (e.g. Z, Alpha) who would like to become managers, and at the same time complete an external further training course, or lead a start-up, or simply want a free time for a better work-life balance. (Persons 8 & 10)

Archetype Main Job (Main goals)

- The main goals of Archetype 3 to be achieved are to gain more management experience, with an opportunity to have less stress and a bit freer time for themselves.

Personality

- Outgoing
- Dynamic
- Ambitious
-

Interests

- Leadership
- Education
- Free time
- Start-up

Apps used by Archetype 3

- OneNote
- MsTeams
- Ms Office 365
- email, phone
- Classic way of organiz.
- Chat/communication channels

Positive aspects

- The opportunity to gain management experience as a young employee, and a leadership position
- Learning more
- Tacit knowledge transfer
- Sharing responsibility
- Less stress, more free time
- Better team coordination

Contextual requirements

- Good communication and organization needed
- Common values required
- Complementarity
- Understand the spirit and way of work of the other topsharer
- Leverage lack of experience

TopSharing - Archetype 3

