



A PRACTICAL GUIDE

# JOB AND TOP SHARING

TWO PROFESSIONALS FOR THE PRICE OF ONE



FOR JOBSHARING  
SHARE AND WIN



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## CONTENT AND PRINTING BY

### Authors:

Irenka Krone-Germann, Anne de Chambrier,  
Mirko Humbert and Rong Zhou,  
PTO Association

### Graphic Design:

Razvan Oprea  
Irina Spirea

### Photography :

Keren Bisaz (Introduction and p. 3)  
[www.miragesphoto.com](http://www.miragesphoto.com)  
Brillantine Pictures  
(p. 12 and 24)  
[www.brillantine.ch](http://www.brillantine.ch)

### Proofreading:

Robin Pasche

October 2020

The *Go-for-jobsharing* initiative is supported by the Federal Office for Gender Equality.



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft  
Confédération suisse  
Confederazione Svizzera  
Confederaziun svizra

Federal Department of Home Affairs FDHA  
**Federal Office for Gender Equality FOGE**  
Funded under the Equal Opportunities Act

# 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. One third of the active population works part-time.

Yet, despite helping ease the work-family balance, part-time positions rarely make it possible to attain positions of responsibility, easily change jobs or, for the employer, ensure full-time coverage at the workplace. The effects can even be negative, restricting highly skilled people to positions without any potential for advancement, risking a diminishment of their valuable skillsets. For many qualified women who are under-utilized in their work, as well as for the increasing number of men who want to work a reduced schedule, job sharing is an innovative solution that offers significant advantages for both the employer and the employee.

In this age of digital communication coupled with the abundance of information processes via in-house corporate social networks, job sharing is developing more rapidly as a viable option, which means it can be practiced on a broader scale. With this distinctive environment, job sharing and top sharing work models are now seen as increasingly desirable by both men and women of all generations. Leading-edge companies implement these models to ensure their know-how remains current and relevant, as well as to retain valued employees and remain attractive as an employer on the labour market.

This guide discusses the advantages, risks, contractual issues and practical details for applying jointly for a job and highlights the importance of a win-win. The objective of the PTO Association – “Part-Time Optimisation” – is to inform employees and employers about the numerous aspects of job sharing with pertinent tools such as coaching and targeted workshops held directly on company premises. In doing so, we aspire to promote partnerships that will help generate greater equality, diversity, and flexibility on the labour market by optimizing the economic potential of part-time workers in an increasingly digitalized environment.

We hope you enjoy reading it!

*The experts and active Members of the PTO Committee  
(Part-Time Optimisation Association)*



**Top FLTR:** Brigitte Egli, Charly Pache, Danuscia Tschudi, Lynn Mackenzie, Isabelle Flouck, Benjamin Egger, Robin Pasche, Nina Prochazka, Maël Dif-Pradalier, Angelica Lepori, Wilma Nesossi, Razvan Oprea

**Down FLTR:** Rachel Riat Müller, Adrian Marti, Corinne Emonet, Irenka Krone-Germann, Anne de Chambrier, Marco Sommer, Mathy Sommer, Myriam Marano, Mahlet Hailegiorgis.



## Part-Time Work and the Labour Market

**60% of women in Switzerland work part-time, compared with only 18% of men (employed population, FSO, 2020). 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.**

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**

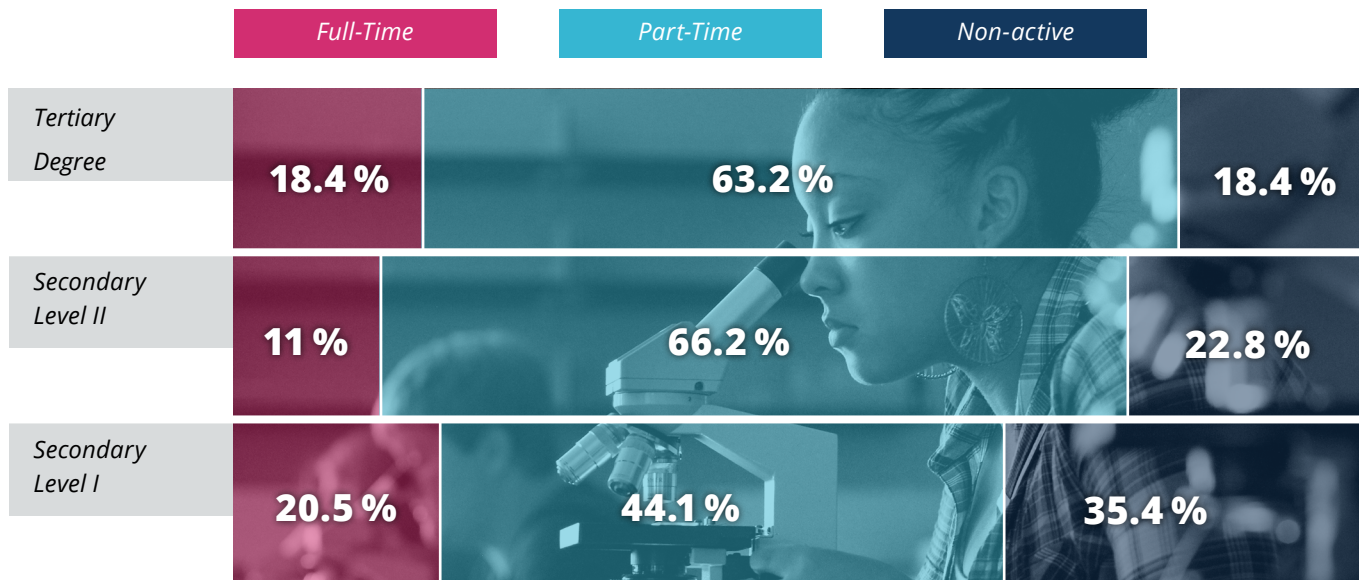
In comparison with the '80s, the education level of women has increased considerably. Today, more women than men have obtained the school-leaving certificate (known as *maturité fédérale*). In certain fields which were previously studied almost exclusively by men, women are even in the majority today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

Switzerland still ranks among the European countries with a lower number of women holding key economic positions. Only 10% of women are members of company executive boards, and 23% are on supervisory boards. The public sector is still leading the way. The proportion of women employed as top executives in this sector reached the 20% mark. Nevertheless, the Swiss economy must remain persistent on this evolutionary course; otherwise it risks lagging behind other Western European countries, some of which boast a considerably higher proportion of women (shillingreport 2020).

**An observation: The more highly qualified working mothers are, the more likely they are to work part-time**, with some variances based on specific factors found in each individual situation. 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 jobs<sup>1</sup>.

Almost 50,000 university-educated women<sup>2</sup> 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.

In Europe, after the Netherlands, Switzerland is the country in which part-time work is most prevalent among mothers. However, fathers in the European Union do not widely engage in part-time employment. Still, both in Switzerland and the Netherlands, this segment exceeds 10% (FSO, 2020).



## Part-Time Work and Qualification Level

The above chart illustrates 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, 2020).

1. Cf. 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.**

### **JOB SHARING AS AN ALTERNATIVE**

Intergenerational job sharing (partners with at least a ten-year difference in age, see p. 8) 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 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. In times of an economic crisis, job sharing in the form of a work share can also in some cases help to avoid layoffs.**

# Definition of Job Sharing and Statistics

## 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.

“Job splitting” refers to one job divided into independent roles where the workers are complementary.

There are two categories of job sharing:

- **«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.

In 2016, 3.7% of employees and 9.8% of part-time employees held job sharing positions. Job sharing is especially prevalent in the following categories: women, parents with children under the age of 15, persons employed part-time with an employment level of 20% to 69%, persons working in education and teaching sectors, as well as those working as administrative staff or in intellectual, artistic and scientific professions (FSO, 2016) .

With respect to companies, the 2014 FHNW survey sent to around 400 companies reveals 27% already offer job sharing positions, a quarter of these are managerial positions (see the FHNW survey)<sup>3</sup>.

3. Source : Enquête FHNW, Mandat PTO, Olten, février 2014 : [www.go-for-job-sharing.ch/fr/publications/enquete-jobsharing](http://www.go-for-job-sharing.ch/fr/publications/enquete-jobsharing).

# Legal Issues

**Under Swiss law, there are currently no particular legal provisions and no jurisprudence applicable to job sharing<sup>4</sup>. In practice, HR managers generally apply the labour law provisions.**

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**<sup>5</sup>, 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).
- 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.

4. Hirschi, V., SECO, *Rapport juridique Jobsharing*, Berne, décembre 2013.

5. Éventuellement sous la forme d'avenant au contrat.





**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 1970s. Today, nearly 20% of U.S. companies allow job sharing, according to a study by the American Society for Human Resource Management. A guide<sup>6</sup> 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.



## 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 and even a specialised placement agency which offers "flexible" job opportunities<sup>7</sup>.



## 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 sharing<sup>8</sup>.



## 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 subject<sup>9</sup>.

6. Cremona L. & Miller E., *Job Sharing Resource Guide*, [www.missionjobshare.com](http://www.missionjobshare.com), 2009.

7. Daniels L., [www.thejobshareproject.com](http://www.thejobshareproject.com) – Site agence : [www.capabilityjane.com](http://www.capabilityjane.com).

8. Tepe J. & Kaiser A., *Plateforme job sharing*; [www.tandemploy.com](http://www.tandemploy.com).

9. Hirschi V., SECO, *Rapport juridique Jobsharing*, Berne, décembre 2013.



## 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)<sup>10</sup>. 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.

10. 37% of companies are already affected by the shortage of skills and expertise, according to a Manpower survey from October 2013.

# 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 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	Co-w. 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		

# Advantages

## FOR EMPLOYEES

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- 1 Access to more stimulating jobs:** job sharing allows part-time workers to hold interesting jobs typically only accessible to employees working full-time<sup>11</sup>.
- 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

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- 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 week<sup>12</sup>.
- 2 Talent retention:** through the introduction of flexible work models, companies can attract and retain committed, loyal employees.
- 3 Effective decision-making:** discussion between the two partners leads to better-formed decisions.
- 4 More experience and skills:** thanks to combined skills, the employer benefits from the experience of two professionals.
- 5 Continuous presence:** in most cases, job sharing means the job is covered full-time, in contrast to a traditional part-time position.
- 6 Innovation:** the commitment of the partners and in-depth sharing foster innovation.
- 7 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.
- 8 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.
- 9 Maintains know-how:** intergenerational job sharing allows skills to be transferred from more experienced partners to their younger co-workers.
- 10 Favourable company image:** by providing a flexible work model, the company conveys an attractive, avant-garde image in the labour market.

11. 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.

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

# Challenges and Constraints

## FOR EMPLOYEES

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- 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

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- 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 costs<sup>13</sup>.
- 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.

13. FHNW survey, Mandate PTO, Part-time Employment and Jobsharing in Switzerland, 2014, [www.go-for-jobsharing.ch/fr/publications/enquête-jobsharing](http://www.go-for-jobsharing.ch/fr/publications/enquête-jobsharing)



## 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.

In Switzerland, online platforms exist that put potential partners in contact with one another. For example, on the [wejobshare.ch](https://www.wejobshare.ch) platform, a partner can be found in Switzerland or abroad by providing some basic professional data.

The [teilzeitkarriere.ch/jobsharing](https://www.teilzeitkarriere.ch/jobsharing) website provides up-to-date job-share offers in the German-speaking labour market in Switzerland.

The [tandemploy.com](https://www.tandemploy.com) platform is also very active on the German market.

Social networks such as [linkedin.com](https://www.linkedin.com) or [xing.com](https://www.xing.com) have job share groups which enable users to actively seek potential partners and share professional experiences.

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### 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.



## 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.





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### **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 interview<sup>14</sup>, 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.**

14. See also, "The 10 steps to job sharing" on p. 18 and the website [www.go-for-jobsharing.ch](http://www.go-for-jobsharing.ch) under "How to apply?".

# Ensuring a Successful Job and Top 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 and top 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.

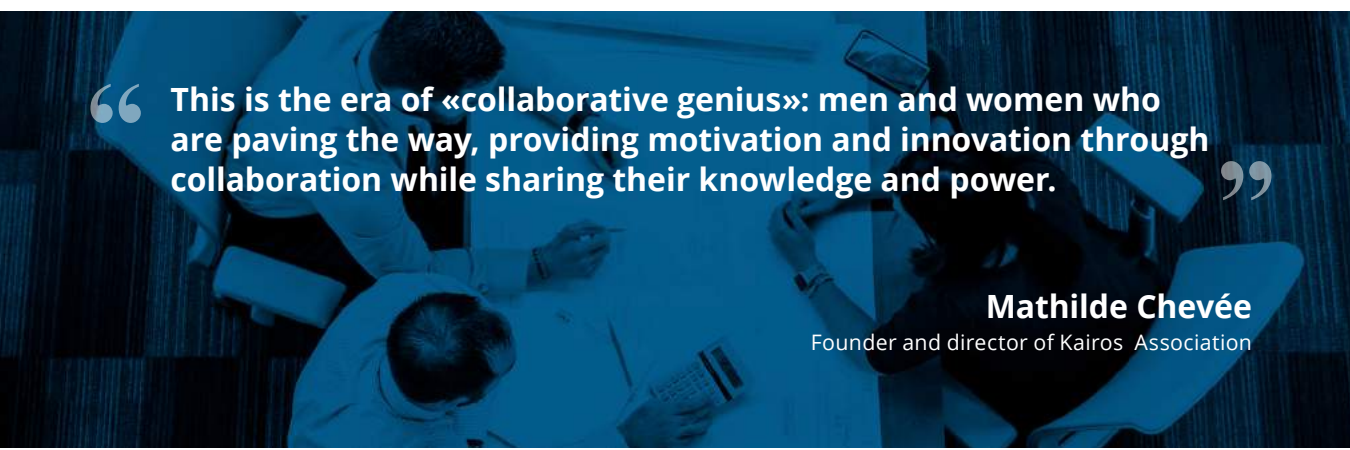
## PREREQUISITES

Experience has shown that individuals in job and top 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.

## 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 and top 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

# Job Sharing, Digitalisation, Slash Careers and Entrepreneurship

**Digitalisation facilitates job and top sharing as its collaborative work because shared documents platforms not only increase efficiency, speed and transmission of information between duos but also centralise relevant documents for department / project teams. The digital asynchronous harmonisation thus offers impactful tools for managing tasks and projects for job sharers<sup>15</sup>.**

## DIGITALISATION AND THE RISE OF FREELANCING

As digitalisation is becoming more and more “the norm”, the number of freelancers<sup>16</sup> and slashers<sup>17</sup> is increasing rapidly each year. According to a Deloitte study<sup>18</sup>, this trend is also apparent in Switzerland, with a quarter of the population currently working independently and one-third of those remaining reportedly considering freelance work. Generations Y and Z are even more inclined to choose freelance careers. Millennials, who form a portion of these two generations, are now thoroughly integrated into the labour market and constitute more than half the international workforce. These millennials, largely digital natives, are particularly skilled with digital technologies.

## SLASH CAREERS AND JOB SHARING

Although freelancing provides greater freedom, that freedom is generally offset by a lack of financial and job security. Freelancers could combat this instability by embracing a dual-career strategy, known as a slash career: working as an employee to enjoy the financial and social security that option provides, while pursuing independent activities on a per-project basis. In scenarios such as these, job sharing work could be a way of exploring more interesting part-time positions with the security of being a salaried employee. In a freelance career, job sharing in the execution of projects could be a way to overcome another disadvantage of freelancing: loneliness.

Coworking spaces – where independent workers gather to share ideas, equipment and knowledge – are already home to an informal form of job sharing. Switzerland has more than 150 coworking spaces and that number is steadily on the rise, creating spaces naturally conducive to the growth of freelancing, slash careers and job sharing.

## ENTREPRENEURSHIP: THE ADDED VALUE OF THE CO-FOUNDER

In the world of start-ups, many examples can be found of companies founded by duos or trios. One study<sup>19</sup> has shown that companies created by more than one person raise 30% more money and gain customers three times faster than those having just one founder. The reasons behind this model’s popularity are the same as the advantages mentioned in this guide for job sharing in a salaried-position framework: diversity and innovation, increased productivity, efficient and effective decision-making, network expansion.

**For freelancers, the job sharing opportunity integrated in co-founding a company can optimise entrepreneurship, making it possible to share the risk burden and attract and complete larger-scale projects.**

15. Egger, Benjamin, *L'évolution de la communication dans le job sharing grâce à la digitalisation*, Travail de master UNIFR, 2020.

16. The term “freelancer” refers to a person who is either exercising a profession independently or accepting part-time assignments in conjunction with a part-time job.

17. Slashing, see *Panorama, Formation, Orientation et Marché du travail*, No 3 2020.

18. *The Workplace of the Future, How Digital Technology and the Sharing Economy are changing the Swiss Workforce*, Deloitte, 2016.

19. *Startup Genome Report*, Max Marmer, CSO Startup Genome, Bjoern Lasse Herrmann, CEO Startup Genome, Ertan Dogrultan, CTO Startup Genome, Ron Berman, PhD at UC Berkeley, March 2012.



## Perception within the Organisation

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### 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.

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### 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.**

## Testimonial

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### 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 17 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 jobs are! 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

# The 10 Steps to Job and Top 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 [go-for-jobsharing.ch](http://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 like [wejobshare.ch](http://wejobshare.ch) (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. 9).
- 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).

# 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 Emeritus 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:

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## **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.

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## **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.

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## **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.

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## **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 [topsharing.ch](http://topsharing.ch) and [go-for-jobsharing.ch](http://go-for-jobsharing.ch)

# Sharing for better Leadership

**Top sharing and co-leadership are definitely on the rise. In recent years, two management heads have been augmenting and has been successful in Switzerland and elsewhere. Top sharing is gaining popularity in not only managing SMEs, but also in state offices, where top hierarchy is more and more commonly shared. They are also frequently present in family businesses, where intergenerational top sharing is also taking off.**

Power sharing is derived from sharing of skills and exchange of know-how. It is rare to find a single person at company head with the complimentary skills and experience offered from a pair. Decision-making is often more impactful when made by two co-managers as decisions area more sound and inclusive when not made alone. This is a valuable criterion in our professional world where complexity is increasing rapidly.

In the case of top sharing, managers work toll is less than 100%, but in co-leadership, managers work in co-responsibility often remain at least 100% active. Even if the organisational and management methods are similar: the shared vision and speed of information within the duos ensures efficiency of the model.

These shared leadership styles often integrate a more horizontal corporate culture where responsibility is also shared with lower management levels and thus the hierarchical structures of yesterday are progressively giving way to agile forms of work in which instruments such as lean management and scrum are observed.

At the core of such high-level sharing is the ever increasingly important role of knowledge management, which must be well assimilated within the company and between the duos.

## Testimonial

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### TOP SHARING AT TRIVADIS



*“Since September 2018, we have shared the leadership of Trivadis as Co-CEOs. This top sharing enables us to draw on our double knowledge, double experience and a single advantage: double capacity. This not only enables us to better scrutinise decisions, but also to advance several goals in parallel. With our different backgrounds and competences, we complement each other very well. Last but not least, top sharing makes it easier to switch off. We want to show our employees that it is possible to create freedom in everyday working life with suitable models. Not just for the CEOs, but for everyone.”*

**Ana Campos** and **Gerald Klump**  
co-CEO at Trivadis



# Cross-cultural Job and Top Sharing

Globalisation has redefined the cultural context of today's business world. Local and international companies and institutions now function in a more diverse, multicultural environment, which opens up a treasure chest of opportunities, but can also lead to misunderstanding and conflict. Overcoming cultural barriers can be a complex undertaking, as cultural understanding is not learned merely through academic or professional channels, but also through life experience.

Cross-cultural job sharing entails creating pairs of employees from different cultures for the same job. By sharing complementary experiences, skills and knowledge, employees can make the most of each person's unique cultural background.

Cross-cultural job sharing is also an effective strategy for retaining talent, because it incites employees to stay in challenging positions in an interactive learning mode, eliminating potential culture-based conflicts and misunderstandings, while maximizing the productivity of the multicultural environment. This form of job sharing can apply to both the company or institution's in-house administrative positions and its outsourced operational positions. Some examples might be human resources responsibilities for multinational companies, communication roles within state entities, marketing positions at major brands or expatriates cooperating with a local partner.

**In the foreseeable future, cross-cultural job and top sharing could become a new trend in job sharing. This would help maximize productivity in multicultural environments and make the most of the broadly differing perspectives born of diverse cultural backgrounds**

## Testimonial

### JOINT MANAGEMENT AT CEDAC - A MODEL FOR SUCCESS



*"At the beginning of 2019, we jointly took over the management of cedac Assessment & Beratung AG. We see great opportunities in the dual management model for our relatively small consulting company: double energy, double expertise and experience, two perspectives. But we don't just add up our resources and skills, we combine our strengths and entrepreneurial ideas and create something new together. Our customers benefit in several ways: in a two-some, we have more know-how, are more innovative and can better align our services to changing customer needs. We expand our experience with new leadership models and can offer credible advice in this area. The joint management opens more opportunities for us to exemplify entrepreneurial thinking and acting as well as an agile mindset and to successfully implement it in our network of self-reliant employees, freelancers and cooperation partners".*

**Sladjana Baumann and Rahel Knecht**  
Co-Directors cedac AG

# Testimonial

For further testimonials and films, visit [go-for-jobsharing.ch/en/testimonials.html](https://go-for-jobsharing.ch/en/testimonials.html)

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## INTERGENERATIONAL TOP SHARING AT THE SWISS DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS (FDFA)

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### LEADING A TEAM WITH 21 EMPLOYEES IN TOP SHARING

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*“As it is well known, the perfect match does not exist. But what you can do is divide tasks and responsibilities. If you then mix age and gender in job sharing, not only does the organization benefit from more innovative and sustainable solutions, but the people concerned often experience the mix as an enrichment. “Tony brings in fresh ideas that help us move forward” dixit Lisa Lang, responsible for personnel recruitment and deployment SHA. “Lisa strengthens I would say back me with her experience” dixit Tony Zuber, responsible for further training SHA. In a nutshell: Mix gender and age increase your chances to get more added value for your organisation and yourself”.*

**Lisa Lang** and **Tony Zuber**, Co-Heads Resources Field, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs FDFA, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC, Humanitarian Aid and SHA



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## GENERAL SECRETARIES IN TOP SHARING AT THE DIRECTORATE OF PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND CONSTRUCTION OF THE STATE OF FRIBOURG



*“We have divided up the services, tasks and files so that we can operate as independently as possible without doing double work. For our job sharing to work it requires a high level of trust between us and flexibility for successful organisation. The Secretary General position role has a lot of unforeseeable events that are taken care of seamlessly between our duo without even known to our management team. We have very diverse profiles, whether in terms of mother tongue, education, professional experience or gender, and we have complimentary skills. This job sharing allows us to exchange views on complex issues and to show solidarity in the case of adversity.”*

**Joana de Weck** and **Martin Leu**, Co-Secretaries General Directorate of Planning, Environment and Construction of the State of Fribourg

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## TOP SHARING, A STIMULATING CHALLENGE

*“Top Sharing – which refers to job sharing in positions of responsibility including management roles – may be an interesting means to free up one’s time for other missions and tasks. Since February 2017, we have been experimenting with this work model within the Department of Internal Medicine at Lausanne’s University Hospital. In our department, we oversee around ten intern doctors and about forty patients. As part-time work was not the norm, this way of scheduling seemed a little disconcerting at first - as it not only involves sharing time, but also patients and leadership as well as changing habits and attitudes to simply “let go”.*

*Once the system was in place, we gradually began to see other benefits particularly for patients. What we initially considered a risk (less commitment and responsibility towards patients and medical team due to a reduced weekly presence) has actually proved to be an opportunity to be more committed and responsive on working days in the clinic and to take advantage of a second opinion for diverse patients’ cases and therefore improve care through more effective identification of problems.*

*What is even more compelling is job sharing done between men and women – something which is certain to help us overcome gender-related obstacles, a notion which we are gradually discovering and understanding through this system. Consensus and concessions enable us to get results!”*

**Pierre Alexandre Bart**

Professor, Department of Internal Medicine, Lausanne University Hospital (CHUV)  
and Director of the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Lausanne

**Marie Méan**

Associate Physician, Department of Internal Medicine  
Lausanne University Hospital (CHUV)



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## TOP SHARING IN LEADERSHIP – WE DO IT!

*“We have more than three years of experience in top sharing. We didn’t make the decision to direct the company together overnight. We talked extensively about the challenges we would face and found that this position couldn’t be filled by just one person on a part-time basis. Top sharing was the perfect solution for us. It let us focus on the strengths and weaknesses of two people. We divided our duties in such a way that we had clear-cut responsibility in different management areas: Jana Jutzi was responsible for operational matters, while Jacqueline Scheuner handled strategic questions. As a result, we could work independently and efficiently. We had weekly telephone conversations to address current issues and heard one another’s views. Once a month, we met to discuss things in person and made important decisions.*

*This type of collaboration has strengthened our skills as well as advanced our career development. At the beginning of 2020, Jacqueline Scheuner took over the management of our group of companies, which means that we unfortunately no longer get to work in job sharing together. However, based on our positive experience with this model, we will continue to promote and establish flexible working models and top sharing within the group”.*

**Jacqueline Scheuner and Jana Jutzi**

Former Co-CEOs, Careerplus Testimonials

For further information,  
please visit our website

**[www.go-for-jobsharing.ch](http://www.go-for-jobsharing.ch)**

To find a job sharing partner, visit:  
**[www.wejobshare.ch](http://www.wejobshare.ch)**

**Other useful websites**

- [www.topsharing.ch](http://www.topsharing.ch) and [www.jkk.ch](http://www.jkk.ch)
- [www.teilzeitkarriere.ch/jobsharing](http://www.teilzeitkarriere.ch/jobsharing)
- [www.supsi.ch/go/jobsharing](http://www.supsi.ch/go/jobsharing)
- [www.teilzeitmann.ch](http://www.teilzeitmann.ch)
- [www.job-sharer.ch](http://www.job-sharer.ch)
- [www.supsi.ch/go/jobsharing](http://www.supsi.ch/go/jobsharing)
- [www.pairforming.com](http://www.pairforming.com)
- [www.jobsfuermama.ch](http://www.jobsfuermama.ch)
- [www.emilyspath.ca](http://www.emilyspath.ca)
- [www.workmuse.com](http://www.workmuse.com)

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