JUDITH’S STORY  Job Sharing

People Service Manager at Bournemouth, St Pauls

Where did it all start?
“Gemma and I returned to work after we both had our first children. We worked full time but both had a need to work reduced hours. After realising we both wanted the same thing, we decided to explore job sharing and approached our Regional People Manager to discuss this further”.

What hours do you work?
“We deliver a 4 week rolling rota as we are both contracted to do 1 in 4 Sundays. Due to the inflexibility of nursery care, we both requested set days so we could book the necessary child places at the nursery. Gemma works Monday, Tuesday and every other Wednesday and I work Thursday, Friday and every other Saturday”.

How do you divide workload?
“We have the same KRAs and are both measured on all areas of responsibility. Whatever lands on that day is normally picked up by the person who is in. We prefer to try and deliver the whole task and see things through to completion to ensure consistency and less handover. Attendance at meetings is governed purely by who is in on that day, although we would also cover for each other where needed. The General Store Manager has the planning meeting with Gemma every Monday. We share our own individual ‘to do lists’ with the GSM to ensure a smooth handover”.

What have been some of the challenges?
“Communication and handover are the main challenges. Gemma must ensure she has passed on any information from the start of the week such as conference calls, service dashboard, planning meetings with the Service Team etc. I rely heavily on this to ensure I’m prepared for the rest of the week.

There were some initial challenges when it came to changing mindset and culture. Although we made it very clear that we were willing to support each other where needed, some managers still found it difficult to accept that we could not change our working days on a regular basis.”

How did you make it work?
“The key to success was having the support of our General Store Manager. Some managers would expect me to cover all of Gemma’s days whilst she was on holiday and vice versa, but there has never been the pressure to do so.

Our manager does expect that our communication is second to none, ensuring that nothing has been missed during handover and that we are well prepared for any cover or additional support that may be needed as and when. Whilst I was off on maternity leave Gemma was able to cover for me and work full time and I have also done the same for her, this may not be possible for all job shares but this works well for us. It definitely has to be a win-win situation or the job share arrangement won’t work”.

“It definitely has to be a win-win situation or the job share arrangement won’t work”
JOANNA’S STORY  Job Sharing

Project Manager, New Space Supply Team at Asda House

What made you consider job sharing?
“I had my first baby in November 2010 and returned to work after having 9 months maternity leave, I then found out baby number two was on its way! After having my second in January 2012, I had a different outlook on life. After losing my dad and brother, then having my two children, I sadly lost my mum and sister too. Time suddenly became much more precious”.

How did you go about requesting the change?
“After my second child, I spoke to my manager about wanting to work less. I was the first person in my team to go through this process so there were some challenges along the way. The procedure initially felt daunting, however once the meetings began I was at ease and had the full process explained to me in detail which really helped”.

Why did you consider job sharing rather than reducing your hours?
“I love my job and have spent a lot of time building up my network and skills. Therefore I wanted an option that would allow me to stay in a role I was passionate about but that would also fit in with my life outside of work and job sharing did just this”.

How do you work together?
“Steph and I share 100% of our work. It’s not a role where we could split work down the middle. We are both measured on the same KRAs which feed into the team’s performance. This is a bit of added pressure but it gives me the drive to ensure I don’t fail my job share partner!”

What have been some of the challenges?
“It took a while to find the right job share partner who we felt would bring value to the role and the job share arrangement. After a while searching, we eventually recruited an external colleague into the role. Having two colleagues in the same role with different views and ways of working was initially challenging. As an existing colleague, I knew the business well and had already built up my own reputation and I had to give Steph the time to do this too. I had to step away from ‘taking over’ and allow Steph to build up her own contacts and learn the ropes. In the end, Steph actually helped me change my approach and gave me a new perspective on things”.

What are the benefits of job sharing?
“It’s given me so much, allowing me to spend as much time with my children before they start school, whilst maintaining a career with Asda. I don’t know of anywhere else where I would have had the freedom I have with my role. We’ve gained a new colleague to the business with new ideas, thoughts and learning’s too. We’re both really engaged whilst at work and have the work life balance to go with it. I don’t feel held back and I’m confident that I can continue to develop and progress at work. I am now a mum2mum mentor and my line manager is supporting other line managers in similar situations. I can’t say enough about how much I praise job share, but if I could sum it up, I would say job sharing gives me the perfect work life balance”.

“By educating those around us we’re making it the ‘norm’ rather than the exception”
DOUG’S STORY
Job Sharing

Night Shift Manager at Hamilton store

How long have you worked part time?
“I have been part time for about 11 years now and I job share with my colleague Dawn.”

Why did you choose to work part time?
I used to work days until my role changed; I then started in a new role working nights. Unfortunately this meant that child care became difficult and very costly as my wife had also taken on a role at the same time that required her to work more hours.”

“Flexible working suits me as it fits in with child care. My wife works during the day, so the 3 nights that I work allows my wife to work 4 days.

How did job sharing come into the equation?
“My GSM at the time offered me the opportunity to try a job share arrangement working with my colleague Dawn. Dawn works 2 shifts a week and I work the 3 shifts. My Team Leader arranged for me to work a fixed 3 week rolling rota. This works around my wife’s job and my child care needs. As I have my rota in advance (usually around 3 to 4 months ahead) if the business needs me to do different shifts then it is easy to arrange. If I need to change my working week it is rarely an issue. This has created a very flexible working relationship between myself and the business.”

How do you make it work?
“Although I share my role with Dawn, we are part of a strong management team and we all flex around each other without causing issues with management cover.

Dawn and I see each other at least once a week so catching up or passing on information is not an issue. Sometimes I don’t see Dawn due to our shift pattern but it’s easy to email or just call for a catch up.”

Why is flexible working important to you?
“Until my youngest reaches an age when he doesn’t need me to run after him (probably 18!) flexible working will always be important to me. I get to spend a lot of time with my two boys that maybe I wouldn’t have had if it hadn’t been for part time hours.

Flexible working came along at just the right time. If anyone reading this and is looking to work flexibly as a way of balancing their life with work, I would certainly recommend this as a way of working.”
DAWN’S STORY
Job Sharing

Night Shift Manager at Hamilton store

Why did you choose to work part time?
“I have worked for Asda for 15 years. When I was a colleague I worked part time to support my young daughter, five Siberian Huskies and was in the middle of renovating a house!

I was keen to develop but could only do this if I could remain part time. I received a call (8 years ago) to say there was a night shift manager vacancy and another manager was also interested who wanted to work 3 nights and would I be interested in doing 2 nights. I agreed and that was the start of my job share with Dougie.”

How do you make it work?
“Dougie needs to do a set rota to fit around his wife’s job and I’m happy to work my shifts around this and the needs of the business, store visits, holidays, sickness etc. I can also work at short notice and do more shifts if needed which really helps.”

Any top tips you can share with us?
“It is easy to communicate with Dougie and the other managers. We use a handover book, emails and phone calls. At the start of my shift, another manager who has been that week will take me through the week so far. Our colleague rota has all the activity on it which keeps me up to date with what has been going on and what is going to happen over the next couple of days.”

How does job sharing help you?
“I have been able to spend more time with my daughter, continued with my hobbies and went to college to learn a new skill. My Team Leader has supported me all the way. Job sharing is great but we couldn’t do it without a great a team around us.”

“Job sharing is great, but we couldn’t do it without a great team around us”