

Job share model: 'Classic' Twin

Case Study



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Anna Wade is a Policy Manager in the Better Regulation Division of the Customer Service cluster. She has job shared with Julie Wright for over 6 months in a 'twin' model, which means that they are jointly responsible for all duties. Although sometimes they may divide up projects, both need to be across the work. Anna would like to see job share become normal in every workplace.

Why do they job share?

Julie had been working part-time in their role, initially four days and then three, to balance child care with her career. Her directors at the time had been picking up parts of the role on her days not in the office but they realised it would be better to employ another person to work three days a week.

At the time, Anna was looking for a part-time role of three or four days a week so

that she could dedicate the other days to get her own business off the ground. Job share seemed like an ideal way to provide her security through a transitional period and a much healthier balance.

"Just knowing that you've got that security; and it was important for me that the work was still a role that I really, really liked - that it was still challenging", Anna said.

Job sharers managing job sharers

Anna and Julie are supervised by directors who also job share, and therefore understand the issues to work through. Anna says they have learnt a lot from their job-sharing directors and that it has given them a benchmark for handover and support for the kinds of teething problems that can occur at the commencement of any job-share arrangement, while people learn how to make it work.

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Anna Wade and Julie Wright

Job share model: *Twin*

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri
Julie	Julie	Anna	Anna and Julie	Anna

What does it take to job share?

Anna says that filling a vacant job share role is about not only finding a person with a particular skill set but, “you’re also looking for fit”. She believes that it requires a lot of trust in the other person – that it takes faith in the other person because when you’re not there, “someone else is being you; you’re both taking responsibility for anything that might go wrong even if the other person has done it,” she said.

“Works for me, works for NSW”

Anna says that the introduction of flexible working has been good for individuals but also for business productivity:

“It’s one thing to be able to have part-time arrangements but it’s also another thing to have a good healthy separation between work and home. When you go home you’re not still thinking about anything that continues on the days that you’re not working. You can truly give 100 percent to your job and then 100 percent to whatever it is that you need the flexibility for,” she said.

Job share gives other team members an opportunity to take on higher duties without being thrown in the deep end, when either of the job share partners is on leave, Anna said.

Working in a job-share arrangement has been a very collaborative process for Anna and Julie, helping them develop a shared strategy around their regulation work.

“Two people sharing a role bring different strengths to the role. People have different personalities and different approaches. I like hearing a different perspective and being able to bounce ideas off another person. It’s a really good discussion and we’ll agree on a way forward. As part of my handover I might anticipate what Treasury may say in the future and maybe we want to do X or Y, or this is what I think this other agency might be wanting, and perhaps we should respond in this way.”

Handover and communication

Anna and Julie use OneNote and Trello to document meeting notes, what they are each working on, what their team members are working on, and any other issues to be aware of, like what needs addressing now and what might be coming up.

Communication is one of the most important disciplines of a job share pair, says Anna, as she believes it reflects how the job share arrangement is going for people. It has been important to ensure that stakeholders know how the arrangement works and make sure there’s

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no confusion, but mainly that their team is happy. Anna and Julie work hard to minimise any impact on their team, and to help the team feel like there's one person they can ask questions of at any time - they don't need to wait until the other person is back in the office and shouldn't feel like they have to say the same thing twice.

Anna and Julie regularly check in separately with their team to make sure the job share arrangement is working for everyone. They use Team Gauge, an online tool for gathering feedback. Anna describes Team Gauge as, "a litmus test of how everyone's feeling outside of the employee survey process" to make sure their team is feeling supported and that there is adequate communication. They also hold regular one on one catch ups with members of their team, separately.

Championing the change

Anna says that cluster leaders have been very proactive in supporting flexible working and advocating for change, to support new initiatives.

"We have a really supportive executive director whose view is, 'if the system can't be changed then we need a new system'. Things have moved on now," she said.

She recommends that agencies proactively seek out I.T. and H.R. systems that can support employees to work flexibly, instead of current systems that treat each role as if there is only one individual filling the role. For example, Anna says that she has seen instances where one member of a job-share pair has access to their team's career planning and development system and the other member of the job share pair has access to the leave requests and administrative tasks, when actually they should both have access to both systems.



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