

TakeTwo

A job share blueprint for film & TV crew

BECTU Vision + Further&More

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Screen Scotland, Scottish Union Learning, BBC & BECTU

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“It is well-documented that a lack of (and, in some cases, an absence of) flexible working is one of the biggest inhibitors to women progressing in their careers. It is also true that attrition rates in terms of women giving up their careers altogether, tend to coincide with early-years parenthood. I believe that for society, for companies and businesses to thrive, it is imperative that we improve the diversity of our work-forces and offering flexible working is one of the key routes to securing this. It is critical that we retain skills and talent as well as allowing every opportunity for women to move into senior leadership positions.”

Donalda MacKinnon, Director, BBC Scotland

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Job-sharing:
Two people
jointly delivering
a full-time role.

Which roles can be shared?

Most crew positions – technical, logistic or creative – can be shared. Every department can accommodate a job share with the support of the HOD.

Who can job share?

Anyone.

So, why should I job share?

Popular reasons include caring responsibilities, better work/life balance, and reducing working hours towards retirement.

How does it work?

Sharers often divide their time 50:50 over the week. However there are many options including alternating weeks, shooting blocks, or split days.

What are the benefits of job-sharing?

Talent retention

Rapid growth is leading to crew shortages which job-sharing helps resolve. It also helps with the retention of experienced and skilled practitioners.

Creativity

Two heads are better than one in making decisions and developing creative ideas.

Well-being

Job sharers are free from the conflict of trying to make a full-time role fit with other commitments.

Flexibility

Just as no two productions are the same, the flexible nature of job-sharing make it easy for pairs to adapt to the needs of the production to ensure it is a success.

Finding a partner

Partner first, role second

Our best advice is to find a partner before applying for a position.

You will be much more credible and appealing if you already have a partner and can clearly explain how you would make your partnership work.

Your job share partner is likely within a degree or two of separation.

Who makes your perfect job share partner?

The best partnerships bring a breadth of skills and experience greater than any one person can offer.

You might have different background, perhaps have worked on different genres of production you might have different strengths (detail, big picture, communication), or management styles, or experiences (working on foreign shoots, for example).

Map your job share profile — so that you can identify what a complimentary partner might look like.

- List your skills.
- Look at where you answer the role requirements, and where the gaps are (because no-one has everything the role asks for — although job sharers can!).

Those gaps describe your job share partner.

Get the word out there. Be loud.

Ask colleagues and friends to spread the word that you're looking for a job share partner.

Be clear about the crew role you are in/ looking for.

Set out the kind of skills and experience a potential job share pair would have (making clear that these are a ballpark rather than a rigid guide).

Use social networks too.

“Every good conversation starts with good listening.”

Tom Haak

Soon you'll have a shortlist of potential partners.

Start with emails then meet for coffee.

Don't put too much pressure on the conversation.

Talk about your backgrounds, interests, and reasons for considering job-sharing.

You will know when you have met the right person.

Your perfect job share partner will fill some of those gaps you identified (don't exclude anyone who doesn't fill all of them – it's a guide not a rulebook) and you will have great chemistry.

Many great job share pairs aren't mates out of work – a pal isn't necessarily a good option. But you need to like each other. And you'll only know that by spending time together.

You could use these prompts to steer the conversation. Share them before you meet, so you've both thought about your answers beforehand.

- If you have any experience of job-sharing (either personally, or working alongside a pair).
- What you've most enjoyed about your work to date (roles, of course, but also a project, developing a skill, or a relationship).
- Similarly, you could talk about what you've most disliked at work.
- How you deal with conflict.
- Your hopes for a job share partnership.
- What you want for your life in the long term.

“Too many people walk away from the industry because of long hours, particularly when trying to juggle a career with family life. If there is a practical way to ease that burden then, as an employer, I’m happy to consider it, especially if it helps to retain good people.

We have job-sharing on Outlander, and we’ve found they can be an excellent solution. I know it comes down to individuals being on the front foot, and coming up with creative solutions to help find a work-life balance they can thrive with.”

Michael Wilson, Co-Producer of Outlander

Setting up your partnership

Two is the magic number

There are two phases to setting up your partnership:

Before you apply

When applying, your aim is to instil confidence in your partnership and give an insight into how your skills and experience combine.

You will do this by establishing how your job share will operate.

When you have a new role (but before starting)

This is when you work on how to tailor your job share to the role so that you optimise delivery.

Establishing how your job share will operate

Working patterns

This won't be set in stone, but it is the first question an interviewer will ask so you must have a clear answer.

Typically, sharers split the week but this can be flexible depending on the production schedule and how you hope to work with your sharer.

Whether you overlap for a whole day, half a day, or a couple of hours depends broadly on the employer and the production budget.

The optimum is somewhere between a half and a full day but if this isn't possible then it is still possible to carve up the working week to make it work (read the handover section on page 14 to understand what you will be doing during this overlap).

Will you share an inbox and diary?

We strongly suggest you do – it:

- Helps you to speak with one voice within the production and with external suppliers.
- Means that no-one is left out of important communication.
- Makes it much more difficult for you to check your emails on your non-working days.

Use your email signature to say that you're job sharers and who is working when.

Managing a team

- This must be as seamless as your work.
- You should ensure from prep that you both have a strong relationship with your department.
- Crew should always use your joint email address.

Handover

Sharing updates and insights so that you deliver seamlessly.

What?

You'll cover updates on the previous few days and the week ahead.

When?

Have a face-to-face session whenever you overlap. As well as knowing your working pattern, you should know when you'll be handing over.

How?

Keep a shared running note after each meeting or event, and at the end of each day. As well as formal readouts, you should include insights from passing conversations.

Also

Get into the habit of talking about what has gone well and what has been tricky

There is never one way to get things done, and that part of job-sharing is living with those differences.

In public, you should NEVER undermine your job share partner. But during your handover it is good to explore how you might have tackled something differently and how to approach a similar situation next time.

Your shared offer

Have answers to the following:

- The key benefit of this approach is that we would bring our collective experience [insert a sentence or two summarising your experience – you want to make clear that this is a level move for you, and that you have been successfully operating at this level for some time].
- Together we bring a huge breadth of skills [insert sentences which summarise your skills, emphasising how they dovetail to offer more than a full-time candidate can bring].
- We have [insert a sentence which highlights an area of shared knowledge or experience].

You should also

Agree productions you would both be happy to work on i.e. longer HETV productions, shoots away from home and use this to identify roles for which you would both like to be considered for.

Make sure your individual CVs are up to scratch and they dovetail beautifully. If you have similar strengths or complimentary skills make sure your CVs reflect that.

Create a joint CV – your goal is to make the point that together you bring more to the role than any single employee is able, and to show how your skills and experience dovetail. We do this for every job share pair we work with.

When you have a role

(but before you start)

Once you are in post, you will build on all of this thinking and planning by focusing on the specificities of your new role.

You will think about how to collectively bring your respective strengths and experience to the role.

“One of the most tangible solutions to the systemic exclusion of parents and carers from the screen industries that we at Raising Films have uncovered is job-sharing. It enables people to continue and develop their careers in a way that makes more sense for them as caregivers, and allows them to return to full-time work at a later date if they want.

The more awareness we can create of the benefits of job-sharing to the employees and the productions they work on, the better for everyone.”

Hope Dickson Leach, Co-Founder, Raising Films

Applying for roles

Applying for roles

Although many roles are not yet explicitly open to sharers, many Line Producers and HODs are open to sharing if you just ask.

When you enquire about job-sharing, attach our one pager which introduces job-sharing to set the scene and answer any questions. You can download it at bectu.org.uk/taketwo or furtherandmore.com/taketwo

When you are approached for a role, or during an initial conversation with the HOD or supervisor, take the opportunity to demonstrate how your job share will operate (to reassure) and to emphasise the breadth of skills and experience you jointly bring (to inspire interest).

Prepping for interview

1

Think through the most likely questions.

2

Have a short (2/3 minute) response for each.

3

Be sure that your examples dovetail with your job share partner's – emphasising how your skills complement one another – and are consistent with your joint CV.

4

Have clear answers to how your job share will work at a practical level.

5

If you have any gaps in your CV, have an unapologetic explanation for each. Try to think of at least one skill you developed for each, and be proud to set them out.

6

Make sure your up to speed on the production and key people already attached to it.

Getting your CV into great shape

Tailor your CV

This does not mean fib or embellish. It does mean that you've doubtless done A LOT of stuff, and you don't need to tell them EVERYTHING.

This means:

- More detail for the recent, more senior roles.
- Be precise – details like size of budgets, numbers of people you managed, specialist skills – move a CV on from feeling a bit flyaway to grounded and impressive.

Be succinct

This means:

- Lots of white space – give it room to breathe, and MAKE IT EASY TO READ.
- Bullets – which should be no more than two lines long.
- While it is good to have a couple of interesting facts about yourself on your CV mainly focus on your credits.

Job share interviews

If you are arranging a meeting with a production about a position our best advice is that you do so jointly, but offer to have individual interviews to show that you are each able to deliver the role.

Your joint interview is to demonstrate chemistry, to answer questions (spoken and implicit) about your job share and to again emphasise what you jointly bring to the role.

“I cannot commend BECTU more for developing this training opportunity. As someone who has job-shared, I can speak with some experience of one of the best times of my career. It allowed me to apply for a senior role at a time in my life when I wanted to claim some time back with my family and it allowed me to continue to progress in my career. Well done BECTU!”

Donalda MacKinnon, Director, BBC Scotland

TakeTwo is a new initiative which promotes and nurtures job-sharing in film and television drama in Scotland.

BECTU Vision, in partnership with Further&More, provides:

- A job-sharing blueprint covering finding a partner, applying for roles, and setting up your job share.
- Help for potential sharers to identify what to look for in a partnership.
- Job share coaching.
- Information sessions and advice to Line Producers and HODs.
- Impartial support to job sharers and their production.
- Advocacy for job-sharing and flexible working.

If you would like to find out more about TakeTwo please go to:

bectu.org.uk/taketwo furtherandmore.com/taketwo

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