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**SARAH RYAN +
ROWENA DITZELL**
Marketing Director,
Snacking, Campbell Arnott's

HOW TO... **SNAG A JOB SHARE** WITH SIMONE MCLAUGHLIN, FOUNDER OF JOB SHARED, A JOB SHARE FINDING SITE

Finding someone to share a job with has been one of the biggest hurdles for job-sharing becoming more mainstream. I don't think there's anything wrong with being upfront about the possibility of job-sharing. If you know someone who is wanting more flexibility and not sure how to go about it, they would probably be grateful for the suggestion.

Finding the right person is critical to the success of job-sharing. That's why it's important to meet with your potential partner first. Ideally you want someone with complementary experience. Another important point is to ensure you both have the same career aspirations, so you're working towards the same goal and not competing against each other. The other key factor to look for is someone you can collaborate [with] and disagree with – you'll need to have difficult conversations sometimes and you need to work with someone you can comfortably do this with.

If flexible solutions are not currently embraced in your workplace it's better to go to your boss with the solution. Have a job share partner already lined up, and a plan for how you're going to split the role. A good argument to put forward would be, two people for the price of one (two lots of experience) and holiday cover whenever one person is away on leave.

A lot of successful job share teams share an email account so there is no confusion for other staff or clients [about] who to email. A good old-fashioned folder with regularly updated handover notes is also a great tool.

SARAH: We were both working at Coca-Cola Australia in brand marketing in 2002, and were due to go on maternity leave at around the same time. We had a very supportive marketing director at the time who asked us whether we would consider a job share. We started job-sharing in October 2003, after our maternity leave, and since then have worked at two additional companies (Unilever Australasia and Campbell Arnott's), in eight different roles.

ROWENA: From time to time we have come across a colleague or manager who has found the concept of job share challenging and was not prepared to embrace it. These situations have been rare but quite difficult.

SARAH: We talk often together about our careers – how we are each feeling in our current roles, what we see for ourselves next. Luckily, we have always been very aligned around what we wanted. We have even both been happy to move companies together twice.

Each time, we interviewed together, which was interesting for us and for the interviewers!

ROWENA: We work two and a half days each. We have half a day each week together in the office to do our detailed handovers, planning and alignment and critical team meetings. We have a shared set of KPIs, so this ensures we are fully united always in achieving the same outcomes.

SARAH: In more senior roles, the decision-making and project contact is daily, so we make sure we are up-to-date on everything. This means more work outside of our official work times to communicate updates to each other and to check emails and review documents.

SARAH: As job-sharers we've been able to maintain roles at work that challenged us and that have allowed us to continue to progress our careers. This progression may not have been possible if we were both working separately part-time. 📌