
UNIVERSITY OF THE PEOPLE

PHIL 1404-01 Ethics and Social Responsibility - AY2024-T2

Written assignment unit 7

Instructor: Cynthia Donnelly

Job sharing arrangements allow for more flexible working schedules and additional time off compared to traditional full-time positions. As Byars and Stanberry (2019) explain, these arrangements mean that employees can achieve an improved balance between work and their personal lives. Under job sharing, people split the responsibilities and hours of a full-time role. This flexibility enables them to take time away more easily from work duties when needed for family, leisure activities, or to deal with emergencies. Because job sharing workers can cover for one another, they are less likely than full-time employees to be fully absent from work when personal obligations arise. The ability to balance personal and professional commitments is a key benefit of dividing a full-time job.

Potential Benefits

Implementing a job-sharing plan could provide some benefits to both the company and employees. For the company, the plan could reduce labor costs by avoiding paying for health insurance and other benefits for part-time positions. This could directly improve profit margins and cash flow. Additionally, as older employees' phase into retirement, job-sharing allows the company to still retain some of their institutional knowledge and expertise by keeping them on in part-time roles. For employees seeking work-life balance or supplemental income streams, part-time flexibility could be valuable. Some job applicants may actively prefer these types of arrangements.

Potential Negative Impacts

However, there are also a few potential negative consequences to consider. Most notably, the loss of full-time positions with strong benefits could significantly hurt employee morale, retention, and recruitment efforts. Talented individuals may choose to look elsewhere rather than accept part-time work without health coverage or other benefits they value. This could lead to higher turnover rates. Administratively, managing a larger number of part-time staff could also introduce complexity and reduce productivity if not handled effectively.

Additionally, if the change is perceived by customers or the public as an unfair cost-cutting measure, it could negatively impact the company's brand reputation.

Discrimination Risks

There are also ethical risks to evaluate regarding potential discrimination claims. For example, if the plan specifically targets roles mainly held by older employees approaching retirement, it could constitute age discrimination. Is the company trying to force out older workers? Additionally, some groups like pregnant women or individuals with disabilities may not be able to accept part-time jobs without health coverage or other benefits. This dynamic could trigger pregnancy or disability discrimination concerns. More broadly, replacing full-time positions with part-time roles complicates efforts to ensure diversity, equity and inclusion in the company's hiring and promotion practices.

Recommendation

Given the talent, ethical, reputational, and administrative risks, I would not recommend fully implementing this job-sharing plan across the entire company. There are simpler ways to manage labor costs, like leaving certain vacated full-time positions unfilled. Some targeted job-sharing arrangements may be suitable in specific cases, but overall, the risks seem to outweigh the potential cost savings here. I would suggest starting with a small pilot program to gauge effectiveness before any wide scale roll out. We want to make careful staffing decisions, not rash reactions to temporary economic challenges.

References:

Byars, S. M., & Stanberry, K. (2019). Business ethics. OpenStax College and Rice University. Retrieved from: <https://openstax.org/details/books/business-ethics>

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