



## SPOTLIGHT



## Key Takeaways

- Job sharing is a new kind of work arrangement which allows two part-time employees to take up the work of a full-time employee.
- MTR launched its Job Sharing Scheme in June 2023 so as to tackle its manpower challenges. Apart from external hires, they also welcome retirees with valid qualifications and valuable experience/job knowledge in the railway industry to join the Scheme.
- The Scheme not only provides more flexibility for the Corporation to utilise their manpower, but also attracts new talent that does not wish to be bound by conventional work arrangement.
- To implement a job sharing scheme, the company has to carefully examine its operation and business needs and plan thoroughly.

## Sharing Job, Sharing Talent – Nature of job sharing and how it helps tackle manpower challenges

----- DOREEN SIU, GENERAL MANAGER - HUMAN RESOURCES  
MTR CORPORATION LIMITED

**As the recent waves of emigration and changing perceptions and preferences for work arrangement are fundamentally altering the local labour market, it has been difficult for companies to tackle their manpower challenges.**

This situation calls for some innovative solutions. As one of the major public transport services providers in Hong Kong, MTR launched the Job Sharing Scheme in June 2023 to help its various departments fill their vacancies, build a more inclusive workplace and unleash the potentials of the hidden workforce.

Doreen Siu, General Manager - Human Resources of MTR Corporation Limited sheds light on the MTR Job Sharing Programme and how it helps MTR face its recent manpower challenges.

### The Launch

In June 2023, MTR launched the Job Sharing Scheme. Essentially, the Scheme is a form of flexible work arrangement which allows two persons to share the job responsibilities of a full-time job to suit individual needs and

circumstances. In this context, each half-time employee will work 4 hours per day for 5 days per week, i.e. 20 working hours in total per week. They may be required to work on other pre-determined patterns to suit operational needs.

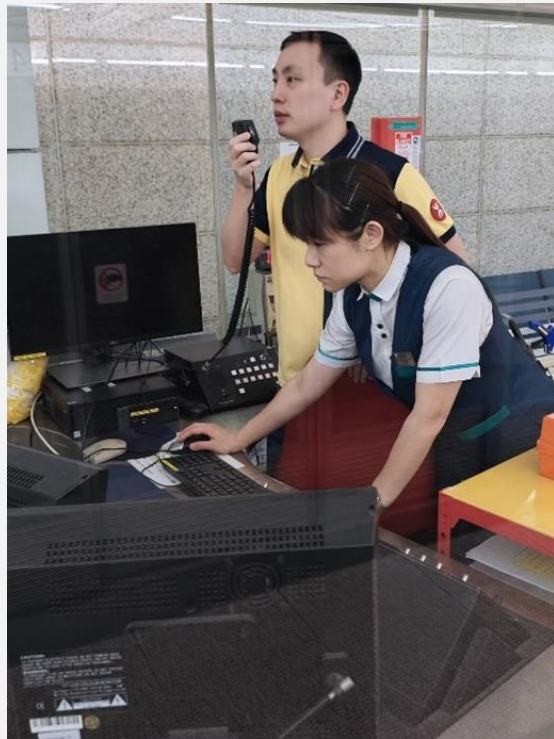
Doreen explains that by introducing the Scheme, MTR now has more flexibility in resourcing as it provides job seekers with an additional option and allows people with different backgrounds, aspirations and family status to join or re-join the workforce and earn an income.

Moreover, this helps MTR tap into previously hidden workforce as the Scheme makes career in MTR available for those who cannot commit to full-time work due to individual circumstances or considerations, such as housewives, caretakers, slashers and people with education or other personal pursuits.

This also means that the Scheme is not only helping MTR solve its manpower challenges but also helping the company create an inclusive workplace by providing its staff with a flexible mode of employment.



### SPOTLIGHT



*Paul Yeung, Customer Care Officer at Tsing Yi Station*

*Paul worked in e-commerce industry with frequent travel before joining MTR Corporation under the Job Sharing Scheme. Following the covid pandemic, Paul decided to go for a more flexible working pattern and consider a change in his career path. After joining the Corporation, Paul appreciated the diligence of colleagues and subsequently successfully applied for a full-time position as Trainee Senior Station Control Officer. The comprehensive training received under the Job Sharing Scheme helped enhance Paul's knowledge and competency in station operations. Paul is now working in the Tsing Yi Station, one of the major interchange stations. Paul expects to seek wider exposure through the role for further career development within the Corporation.*

#### The Implementation

However, implementing the Scheme is no easy matter. Doreen explains that a lot of considerations have gone into how to effectively implement the Programme. For example, HR colleagues worked closely with the line managers of user departments in designing the Scheme by exchanging ideas on the mechanism, work shift patterns, training programmes etc.

On top of that, the Scheme was initially only rolled out to designated frontline positions such as stations, train crew, etc. Later on, the Scheme is further rolled out to the maintenance department and Corporate Relations department.

#### The Results

Since the Scheme's launch, MTR has received around 4,000 applications for these job sharing positions and as of August 2024, around 180 half-time employees are now working in more than 25 MTR stations.

Out of the 4,000 applications, it is noted that around 70% of them are female and more than 40% of these applicants are holders of Bachelor / Master degree or above. Doreen also notes that the applicants come from very diverse backgrounds, including housewives re-joining the workforce, caretakers, part-time students, early retirees, people working full-time but hoping to earn more, those with personal pursuits, and those who want to better utilise their spare time to contribute to the community etc.

These applicants also indicated that they prefer positions with fixed shift patterns as they can

have better control over their schedule. Morning shifts are also particularly popular among the applicants.

Besides quantitative results, the Scheme is also enjoying qualitative success. Doreen observes that their full-time colleagues welcome the launch of the Scheme as half-time employees help alleviate their workload. They also find it interesting to work with the new generation, understand their mindset and gather new ideas from them to enhance daily work.

Doreen also mentions that other global railway leaders are noticing the success of the Scheme and recognising this innovative work arrangement.

#### The Future

Looking forward, Doreen mentions that they are now encouraging more business units and functions to designate job roles for inclusion in the Job Sharing Scheme.

MTR has also developed and launched an in-house e-recruitment platform called "Slashes". They are now planning to include the half-time workforce to this platform, so as to provide additional crossline support to meet operational needs when needed.

For companies that are interested in adopting a similar arrangement, Doreen advises that it is important to ensure robust planning prior to the implementation and carefully consider relevant factors and steps, such as conducting trial run before official launch, formulating clear policies and guidelines, gauging colleagues' opinions, valuing the contributions made by half-time employees, and conducting regular reviews.

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