

Workplace Flexibility Case Study
KPMG LLP and Job Sharing
by Ken Giglio

Company: KPMG LLP (www.us.kpmg.com)

Company profile: KPMG LLP, the audit, tax and advisory firm, is the U.S. member firm of KPMG International, with headquarters in New York. KPMG International's member firms have nearly 100,000 professionals, including 6,800 partners, in 148 countries.

Program profile: KPMG has been offering a job sharing option to its employees for several years. Requests for job sharing are primarily generated by the employees themselves. Usually, it starts with an employee who wants to work a reduced schedule and knows of someone else in a similar situation, with compatible desires and skills. The job sharing option – in fact, all the company's flexibility programs – are available to all employees throughout KPMG. The process begins with an employee filling out a request form and submitting it to his or her manager, who is trained to approach such requests with a "how can we make this work" attitude. The company estimates that more than 50 percent of its employees take advantage of some form of workplace flexibility, including flextime, telecommuting, compressed work schedule and job sharing.

The Challenge: Job sharing initially was undertaken at KPMG in response to a specific need – two individuals wanted to reduce their hours – and it worked for that specific job. With a few successes, the firm began to promote it more actively, soon making a more formalized program in support of KPMG's Employer of Choice initiatives, which include a number of programs built around workplace flexibility, career development and mentoring, employee wellness, diversity and community involvement.

Benefits to employees: Job sharing allows employees to have greater flexibility in their lives, both at work and outside the job. Through job sharing, employees gain a job partner, making them less likely to have to worry about job-related matters when they are not at work. In other words, they know the job is still getting done, even when they are not there, because there is someone else equally as committed to getting the job done.

Benefits to employer: KPMG says the first obvious benefit it receives from having a job sharing option is that it is able to retain two valuable employees who otherwise might have felt the need to look at other arrangements, including the possibility of leaving the company. As a result, continuity is preserved and client needs are better met. In addition, flexibility in the workplace supports the firm's recruiting and Employer of Choice initiatives.

Lessons Learned: KPMG believes that its job sharing program helps the firm retain talented and valued employees trying to balance the demands of career and family. Job sharing arrangements can be a win-win for the individual and the firm. They also visibly

demonstrate to others that the firm is flexible and supportive of working mothers and others who have interests and responsibilities outside of work.

Personal profile: Kerri Lein is a senior administrative assistant at KPMG's Montvale, New Jersey office, where she has worked for almost 7 years. She began as a temporary worker for six months before being hired full-time. After she had her first child, Kerri came back to work four days a week. When she returned to work in August 2003 after the birth of her second child, she began the job share. Originally, one of the job share partners would work from Monday through Wednesday morning, with the other partner working from Wednesday afternoon through Friday, handling the same job duties. Beginning in September 2005, the job share arrangement changed so that Kerri now works more than 50% of the time. The change came about after the job partner needed to alter her work schedule to better handle the needs of her family. Kerri says the change has worked out "wonderfully," noting that she is able to volunteer as a scout leader for her older daughter and also take her younger daughter to gymnastics class. She adds that the overall experience of job sharing has been equally pleasant. "I feel like I can have a career, but still have extra time with my daughters and that's what I was looking for initially with the job share. It has given me peace of mind, knowing that I am doing my best in my role here at KPMG and as a mother as well. It has made such a huge impact in my life and my children's lives, and for my husband, to have this kind of job flexibility."