

Job Shadowing

What is Job Shadowing?

Job shadowing is a type of on-the-job employee training in which an employee desiring to become familiar with a different job follows and observes a trained and experienced employee.

Job shadowing allows an employee to gain comprehensive knowledge about what an employee who holds a particular job does every day. It provides an opportunity to observe how the employee does the job, the key deliverables expected from the job, and the employees with whom the job interacts.

Job shadowing can provide enough information about the new and different job to allay the employee's fear of the unknown. So, job shadowing is a handy tool when you want employees to have career opportunity via job transfers or lateral moves.

Who Participates in Job Shadowing?

- a new employee who is onboarding
- Longer term employees who want to learn about different jobs in the organization

When Is Job Shadowing Most Important and Effective?

Job shadowing is effective for any job in which the **seeing is more graphic than the telling**, or when **the seeing is an important component of the learning**. When job shadowing, the individual sees the actual performance of the job in action. But, in job shadowing, the participant also sees and experiences the nuances of how the service is provided or the job performed.

What Happens in Job Shadowing?

The participant experiences the employee's approach, the interpersonal interaction required, the steps and actions necessary, and the components needed to effectively perform the job that the employee might never think to mention.

A job shadowing employee can attend meetings, participate in brainstorming sessions, take notes during planning sessions, debrief job candidates, and participate in a variety of non-confidential activities.

When Is Job Shadowing Essential?

Finally, job shadowing becomes essential when an employee is trained internally for his or her next role. For example, the HR manager shadows the HR director when the director is expecting a promotion to vice president; an HR assistant shadows the HR generalist when the generalist expects a promotion to HR manager.