

41% of US Job Seekers Juggle Side Hustles on Company Time, While Half of Employers Lack Policies to Prevent It

Latest Results from The Harris Poll

OKLAHOMA CITY, Oct. 9, 2024 — Nearly 90% of U.S. job seekers say they've worked a side hustle with 41% admitting to double dipping on the clock either part-time (24%) or full-time (20%). While employers are concerned about workers' divided attention, 50% say their company has no code of conduct or policies prohibiting working more than one job on company time.

This is according to a recent Express Employment Professionals-Harris Poll.

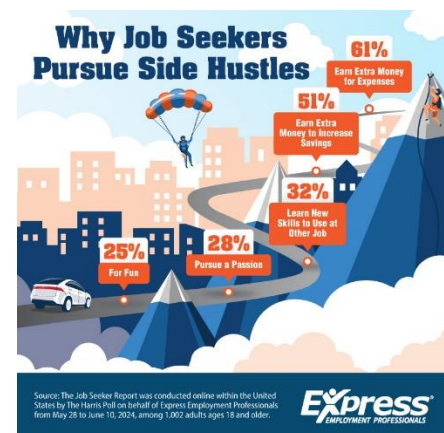
More than half of hiring managers (55%) have discovered employees working side hustles during company time, raising concerns about lower productivity (50%), decreased focus and attention to detail (47%) and reduced engagement (37%).

On the other hand, most job seekers (57%) believe employees should be allowed to pursue side gigs during work hours, as long as it doesn't affect their productivity for their primary job.

There is a clear generational divide, with Gen Z and millennial job seekers more likely than their Gen X or boomer/senior counterparts to agree with this sentiment (67% and 64% vs. 44% and 34%). A smaller majority of job seekers (52%) agree that employees should be allowed to work a side hustle during company time if their primary income isn't sufficient to cover essential expenses.

The most common reasons job seekers cited for working a side hustle or gig during company time were to earn extra money for expenses (61%) or to increase savings (51%).

Some even work a side hustle to bridge their professional skills or work situation, such as learning new skills they can use at their other job (32%), training or improving on existing skills they can use at their other job (26%), trying out a new industry/field (23%) or to slowly transition out of their other job (16%).



Side Hustle Sacrifices

Balancing a side hustle with other responsibilities requires job seekers to make significant trade-offs. Approximately a third (35%) reported having less free time or struggling to manage their time (33%), and more than a quarter (27%) feel more burned out.

To a lesser extent, some of those job seekers reported challenges related to running their own business — having to invest their own money (20%), fear of failing/not being successful (19%), having to learn new or different skills (18%), not receiving benefits as they would through a company (16%) and/or having to pay self-employment tax(es) (15%).

Among job seekers who have never worked their side hustle during company time, some aren't shutting the door completely on that option as 28% say they are likely to work their side gig/hustle during company time in the future.

The door to working a side hustle during company time swings open even further if they think they can get away with it.

Forty-seven percent of job seekers would likely work a side hustle during company time if they thought they could get away with it. Gen Z and millennial job seekers are more likely than Gen X or boomer/senior job seekers to have this attitude (52% and 57% vs. 34% and 22%, respectively).

Notably, most companies do not seem to be prepared to deal with their workers doing a side hustle gig during company time.

Only 36% of employed U.S. job seekers report their company's code of conduct or policies prohibit employees from working more than one job during company time. Twenty-two percent are not sure if their company's code of conduct or policies prohibit it.

Consequences Vary; Most Undefined

Most companies that discover an employee is working a side hustle during company time take some kind of action, most commonly asking the employee to only work on their secondary endeavor outside of company time (37%) or giving them a verbal warning (28%).

To prevent such situations, 42% of hiring managers say their company has updated policies.

With the growing acceptance of side hustles during company time, job seekers generally favor a lenient approach toward employees found engaging in these activities.

Approximately half of job seekers (51%) think companies should simply request that these employees limit their side hustles or gigs to outside work hours. In contrast, fewer job seekers support stricter actions, such as termination (12%), demotion (7%) or salary reduction (6%).

“While it’s clear side hustles reflect ambition, drive and sometimes, necessity, they often come at the expense of focus during company hours,” said Bill Stoller, Express Employment International CEO. “The data shows that many organizations haven’t yet developed the framework to support employees balancing multiple commitments. This growing challenge requires a proactive approach to ensure both company and personal goals can thrive without compromise.”

Survey Methodology

The Job Insights survey was conducted online within the United States by The Harris Poll on behalf of Express Employment Professionals between May 16 and June 3, 2024, among 1,003 U.S. hiring decision-makers.

The Job Seeker Report was conducted online within the United States by The Harris Poll on behalf of Express Employment Professionals from May 28 to June 10, 2024, among 1,002 adults ages 18 and older.

For full survey methodologies, please contact Sheena.Hollander@ExpressPros.com, Director of Corporate Communications & PR.

If you would like to arrange for an interview to discuss this topic, please contact Sheena.Hollander@ExpressPros.com, Director of Corporate Communications & PR.

About Bill Stoller

William H. "Bill" Stoller is chairman and chief executive officer of Express Employment International. Founded in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, the international staffing franchisor supports the Express Employment Professionals franchise and related brands. The Express franchise brand is an industry-leading, international staffing company with franchise locations in the U.S., Canada, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand.

About Express Employment Professionals

At Express Employment Professionals, we’re in the business of people. From job seekers to client companies, Express helps people thrive and businesses grow. Our international network of franchises offers localized staffing solutions to the communities they serve across the U.S., Canada, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand, employing 492,000 people globally in 2023 and more than 11 million since its inception. For more information, visit ExpressPros.com.