

Master the juggling act

A side project can bring in extra cash but don't take on too much, writes **Sue White**.

In an era when multiple jobs are becoming commonplace, Pete Jones may be the ultimate slashie – the term for those who juggle jobs. “I’m a full-time, employed property valuer, have run an online meat-delivery business and sing and play [guitar] at pubs and weddings,” he says. Which makes him a property valuer/meat deliverer/guitarist.

It's a hectic life. His valuing job involves 10-hour days, his meat business demanded an hour a day and one weekend a month and, until recently, Jones spent every Friday night playing a music gig.

“It was crazy,” he says. “I was living with two mobile phones.”

While the extra cash came in handy, it wasn't just money that propelled his triple-barrelled career. “I didn't get up and think, ‘How many jobs can I do today?’ but I like to have my fingers in a few pies,” he says.

Strong time-management skills helped him make it work.

“I'm a bit of a systems man; I'm very structured,” he says. “Running my business while working, I had dates of the month to get the meat ordered or organise a van for deliveries. It could be very hectic.

“If you forgot [one thing], it'd all fall apart.”

In the changing world of work, where marketers moonlight as Pilates instructors and everyone knows somebody trying for global success with a fledgling online

business, Jones's story is becoming more common.

“We come across people with a business who need additional income or people wanting second jobs because they're not getting the hours they need as a part-timer or casual,” recruiter Linda Enever says.

But, according to Enever, making your sideline slot into your day job might require some serious sweet-talking. “It's about honesty,” she says. “What are the requirements of the second job? How will it affect the first?”

“From the recruiter's point of view, we look at what the commitment is to the client.”

The job, industry and your attitude will likely all affect your employer's opinion.

“Some employers say no,” Enever says. “With privacy laws, you probably don't want recruiters working for another recruiter.

“But clients in the hospitality industry are quite open – they think being in other roles helps staff pick up other skills.”

But if you are juggling more than one role, yawning your way through a shift will get even the most obliging boss offside.

“Employers are often scared of losing their staff to the second job and they do worry you'll be tired,” she says. “As a recruiter, I worry about that, too.”

Life coach Denise Duffield-Thomas agrees burnout can be a



Several hats ... juggling jobs takes good time management. Picture: Getty Images

problem for people who stack on too many jobs. However, she believes second jobs are also an excellent way to try something new.

“Use your second job to test out long-held dreams like working with animals, editing books or teaching a creative skill,” she says. “It will bring in extra income but test your real commitment, get you experience and create opportunities for the future.”

If you are using your second job to test a new business or career, you'll buy yourself valuable time.

“It takes time to see yourself in a different way, so I think you need to plan it,” Duffield-Thomas says.

First, find something you're passionate about. “You might not be earning money from it in the beginning but you can build on it for the future,” she says.

“Also, if you hate your day job, you give yourself something to look forward to.”

While Duffield-Thomas says it is possible to hold down several part-

time jobs, adding too many commitments to a full-time job should be only a temporary measure. “You don't want to do it forever because it does lead to burnout,” she says.

It's a problem Jones has now solved. He's sold his business, ditched his weekly gig and is focusing on his work as a valuer.

“My business was an obsession at the time; I really enjoyed seeing it operate but I was happy passing it on now I've found a career I think I'll do for a while,” he says.

But he hasn't changed his habits completely. Jones still plans to keep playing at weddings and the occasional gig.

“It's a mix of love and money,” he says. “Even when you're tired, it's a great release; it's another side of you.”

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