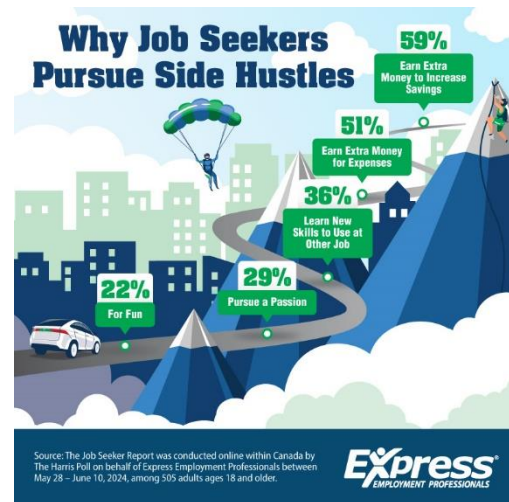


## 1 in 3 Working Side Hustles on Company Time; Half of Canadian Employers Lack Rules to Prevent It

### *High Cost of Living Top Reason for Multiple Jobs*

**TORONTO, Oct. 9, 2024** — Twenty-nine percent of Canadian job seekers admit working a side hustle on company time, and while employers are concerned about workers' divided attention, half of companies have no policies prohibiting it, according to a newly released Express Employment Professionals-Harris Poll.

A majority of Canadian job seekers (87%) say they have worked a side gig at one point in their career. Of the 1 in 3 (29%) who admit to currently having a side gig during work hours, 10% do it full-time and 19% do it part-time.



The door to working a side hustle during company time could swing open even further, with 38% of job seekers saying they would do it if they thought they could get away with it. There is a clear generational divide, with Gen Z (41%) and millennial (47%) job seekers more likely than Gen X (25%) or boomer (28%) job seekers to have this attitude.

Among job seekers who've never worked a side hustle during company time, 1 in 4 (23%) say they are likely to work a side gig during company time in the future.

Fifty-two percent of job seekers believe employees should be allowed to pursue side gigs during work hours if it doesn't affect their productivity for their primary job. Again, a clear generational divide exists among respondents, with Gen Z (47%) and millennial (53%) job seekers more likely to agree with that sentiment than their Gen X (39%) or boomer (41%) counterparts.

Almost half of job seekers (45%) also agree employees should be allowed to work a side hustle during company time if their primary income isn't sufficient to cover essential expenses. Gen Z (52%) and millennials (54%) are also more likely to feel this way than Gen X (28%) and boomer

(35%) job seekers.

The most common reasons job seekers cited for working a side hustle or gig during company time were to earn extra money to increase savings (59%) and cover expenses (51%). Some work a side hustle to learn new skills they can use at their job (36%), to help them transition out of their job slowly (17%), to train or improve on existing skills that they can use at their job (14%) or to try out a new industry/field (10%).

Balancing a side hustle with other job responsibilities requires job seekers to make significant trade-offs. Approximately a third report increased burnout (29%), less free time (28%) or struggling to manage their time between their side gig and other responsibilities (25%).

To a lesser extent, some of those job seekers reported challenges related to running their own business — fear of failing and not being successful (17%), having to invest their own money (14%), having to learn new or different skills (13%), having to pay self-employment taxes (12%) and not receiving benefits as they would through a company (12%).

### **Rise of the Side Hustle — Employer Reaction**

On the employer side, half of Canadian companies (51%) have discovered employees working side hustles during company time, raising concerns about lower productivity (55%), decreased focus and attention to detail (47%) and reduced engagement (38%).

Despite the prevalence of employees working side hustles during company time and the concerns companies have about it, half of companies (49%) do not have a code of conduct or policies that prohibits such.

Furthermore, a large proportion of Canadian job seekers are unaware of their employer's rules when it comes to side gigs on company time. Fifty percent say their company does not have any policies in place to prohibit it, and 1 in 5 (21%) are unaware if their company has any rules in place. Only 29% of employed job seekers knew their company had rules to prohibit employees from working more than one job during company time.

### **Consequences Vary; Most Undefined**

Most companies that discover an employee working a side hustle during company time take some kind of action (61%), most commonly asking the employee to only work on their side gig outside of company time (32%), giving them a verbal warning (30%) or asking the employee to quit their side gig altogether (15%). Only a small percentage of companies take strict action such as firing the employee (11%), reducing their salary (5%) or demotion (4%).

To try to prevent employees from working side hustles during company time, 29% of hiring managers say their company has updated its policies.

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

More than half of job seekers (52%) think companies should simply request that these employees limit their side hustles to outside work hours. Few job seekers support stricter actions, such as termination (10%), salary reduction (8%) or demotion (7%).

“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 Canada by The Harris Poll on behalf of Express Employment Professionals between May 16 – June 3, 2024, among 504 Canadian hiring decision-makers between May 16 – June 3, 2024.

The Job Seeker Report was conducted online within Canada by The Harris Poll on behalf of Express Employment Professionals between May 28 – June 10, 2024, among 505 adults ages 18 and older.

For full survey methodologies, please contact Ana Curic at [Ana@MapleLeafStrategies.com](mailto:Ana@MapleLeafStrategies.com).

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If you would like to arrange for an interview to discuss this topic, please contact Ana Curic at (613) 858-2622 or email [Ana@MapleLeafStrategies.com](mailto:Ana@MapleLeafStrategies.com).

### **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.

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