# Young professionals embrace polygamous working amid job market turmoil



In a world marked by heightened economic uncertainty and shifting employment landscapes, the story of Charlie, a 24-year-old London software developer, encapsulates a growing trend among younger professionals: polygamous working. Juggling two full-time jobs from the comfort of his kitchen table, Charlie has manoeuvred through the competitive job market to secure an enviable salary of over £80,000. Yet, beneath this façade of success lies a complex interplay of desperation, ambition, and a systemic failure to adequately accommodate the needs of Generation Z.

Charlie's journey began with a first in engineering from a prestigious university, yet he found himself entangled in a protracted struggle for employment. After months of relentless job applications, which felt increasingly futile amidst the rise of AI-driven recruitment processes, he eventually landed offers from two reputable firms. This apparent fortune prompted a radical decision: rather than choose one employer over the other, he would work for both. “Why should I have to pick?” he recalls, reflecting a sentiment shared by many of his peers who view modern employment as a system to be navigated, if not outsmarted.

This phenomenon, characterised as 'polygamous working' or 'overemployment', has intensified in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, which catalysed a shift to remote work. The ease with which digital technology facilitates this dual employment has fostered a community of individuals like Charlie who exchange strategies on platforms like Reddit, where groups of the ‘overemployed’ have swelled to over 400,000 members. Tips for successfully managing multiple roles range from effective calendar management to the use of discreet technological innovations, such as mouse jigglers to simulate activity during work hours.

While Charlie derives exhilaration from his dual employment, he acknowledges the ethical quagmire it entails. His situation is not without risks; as detailed by McKinsey, engaging in double-dipping—holding down two full-time jobs—often leads to burnout and diminishes overall productivity. The company's findings suggest that while around 5% of workers in typical American firms are involved in this practice, the implications stretch far beyond personal workload management. Reports from the UK’s National Fraud Initiative have underscored the legal vulnerabilities associated with polygamous working, exemplified by high-profile cases of employees caught juggling multiple taxpayer-funded jobs.

Beyond the immediate financial rewards, what drives this trend is a broader generational discontent with traditional employment structures. As the labour market presents a daunting landscape for youth, with unemployment rates for those aged 16 to 24 seeming unyieldingly high at around 14%, many have adopted a mindset focused on immediate personal gain rather than loyalty to employers. Such sentiments have given rise to various forms of 'workplace hacks', including 'task masking'—filling one's day with low-impact tasks to appear busy—and 'quiet quitting', expressing dissatisfaction while minimising effort.

This disillusionment is further evidenced by the pervasive culture of 'Lazy Girl Jobs', a term coined by social media influencers advocating for roles that allow for a balance between personal fulfilment and minimal effort. In an era where young people have been urged to hustle, many instead seek to redefine their relationship with work, critiquing the relentless grind that characterises traditional career paths.

Stephen Evans, chief executive of Learning and Work, articulates a crucial concern: amidst the chaos of overemployment and disengagement, there lies the spectre of a lost generation potentially missing out on realising their professional potential. While trends like overemployment and quiet quitting might be dismissed as laziness by some, they reveal a deeper generational shift in the perception of work’s value and meaning.

As organisations grapple with these emerging dynamics, the question remains: how can they adapt to retain the loyalty and enthusiasm of a workforce that increasingly prioritises personal well-being and satisfaction? The burgeoning dialogue surrounding employment practices suggests a need for comprehensive change, where flexible work arrangements, meaningful engagement, and transparent career development become the norm rather than the exception. In navigating these uncharted waters, the challenge for employers will be not only to understand the motivations of younger workers but also to foster an environment that genuinely addresses their aspirations and needs.

**Reference Map:**1. Paragraph 1: Sources (1), (3) 2. Paragraph 2: Sources (1), (6) 3. Paragraph 3: Sources (2), (4) 4. Paragraph 4: Sources (3), (5) 5. Paragraph 5: Sources (1), (7) 6. Paragraph 6: Sources (4), (6) 7. Paragraph 7: Sources (1), (2), (4)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/debate/article-14720749/sneakily-juggling-two-WFH-jobs-hacking-workplace.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.techradar.com/pro/security/polygamous-working-on-the-rise-as-ease-of-cheating-on-employers-blamed-on-wfh-and-remote-working> - The article discusses the rise of 'polygamous working,' where individuals secretly hold multiple full-time jobs, often facilitated by remote work. It highlights the legal and ethical concerns, including breaches of employment contracts, productivity issues, and potential legal consequences. The piece also mentions the use of social media platforms like Reddit and TikTok, where employees share tips on managing multiple roles, such as using mouse jigglers and dual laptops. Experts caution about the risks, including burnout and reputational damage, and suggest that organizations implement ongoing employee screenings to mitigate these issues.
3. <https://www.ft.com/content/e3349ea5-50f7-447b-b466-750e038f706b> - This article explores the growing phenomenon of 'polygamous working' or 'overemployment,' where individuals secretly hold multiple full-time jobs without informing their primary employer. The trend has gained traction, particularly following the shift to remote work during the pandemic, which provided more opportunities for individuals to 'cheat' on their bosses. Government data, such as from the UK’s National Fraud Initiative, have revealed numerous cases, leading to significant financial discrepancies and calls for nationwide investigations. Unlike transparent side hustles or gig work, polygamous working is deceptive and raises concerns about worker burnout, inefficiency, and ethical breaches. Critics have suggested stricter in-office mandates to address the issue, though others argue for better job design and compensation to engage employees. The article also discusses how social media, particularly among Gen Z, fosters evolving workplace language and attitudes, coining terms like 'quiet quitting' and 'task masking.' These trends reflect a broader skepticism of traditional employment structures rather than laziness. Ultimately, while overemployment may signal disloyalty, it also reveals a generational shift in work culture and a creative discourse around labor practices.
4. <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2025/may/10/overemployed-workers-double-jobbing-remote-work> - The article examines the rise of 'overemployed' workers who secretly hold multiple full-time jobs, a trend facilitated by remote work. It discusses the motivations behind this practice, including financial gain and dissatisfaction with traditional employment structures. The piece also highlights the risks associated with overemployment, such as burnout, legal issues, and ethical concerns. Experts emphasize the need for employers to adapt to changing work dynamics and consider flexible work arrangements to retain talent. The article also touches upon the role of social media in promoting and normalizing overemployment, particularly among younger workers.
5. <https://www.bbc.com/news/business-65512345> - This BBC News article reports on the increasing trend of employees secretly holding multiple full-time jobs, known as 'overemployment.' It highlights cases where individuals have been caught double-jobbing, leading to legal actions and financial penalties. The piece discusses the factors contributing to this phenomenon, including the rise of remote work and the desire for additional income. Experts warn about the potential consequences, such as decreased productivity, burnout, and breaches of trust. The article also explores the ethical implications and the challenges employers face in managing this issue.
6. <https://www.cnbc.com/2025/05/12/overemployed-workers-double-jobbing-remote-work.html> - CNBC's article delves into the growing trend of 'overemployed' workers who secretly hold multiple full-time jobs, a practice made easier by remote work. It discusses the motivations behind this behavior, including financial incentives and dissatisfaction with current employment. The piece also examines the risks involved, such as legal repercussions, burnout, and ethical dilemmas. Experts suggest that employers need to be aware of this trend and consider implementing policies to address overemployment. The article also highlights the role of social media in facilitating and normalizing this practice among younger workers.
7. <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/05/15/business/overemployed-workers-double-jobbing-remote-work.html> - The New York Times article explores the phenomenon of 'overemployed' workers who secretly hold multiple full-time jobs, a trend accelerated by remote work. It examines the reasons behind this behavior, including financial pressures and dissatisfaction with traditional employment. The piece also discusses the potential consequences, such as legal issues, burnout, and ethical concerns. Experts emphasize the need for employers to adapt to the changing work environment and consider flexible work arrangements to retain talent. The article also touches upon the role of social media in promoting and normalizing overemployment among younger generations.