

Divided Loyalties ?

As the cost of living rises many people take a second job or try to run a small business alongside their regular employment. However, this brings with it some potential pitfalls, so to ensure you don't trip up here's an opportunity to learn from other people's mistakes. Here are some of the things that Michelle Lucas our resident Executive coach would encourage you to think about

Always be clear about where your loyalties lie. Generating a second income is fine unless it means that you are tired and underperform in your regular job. When we are tired we get forgetful or we think that "good enough" rather than "good" is acceptable – we may look for reasons to avoid doing something rather than tackling what should be done. Similarly working two jobs may mean that fitting it all in results in you having little flexibility which means you are less able to "go the extra mile" – realistically if you push yourself to the max you are less likely to impress either of your employers ! None of these are good signals to give to a manager who might have to consider who is adding the least value to his team.

If you are running your own business then you need to be really careful about keeping the boundaries between your business and your role as an employee. However tempting it might be to take a business call whilst you are working for someone else, remember that most companies will regard this as a "conflict of interest" and in the worst case scenario could actually be a reason for a Gross Misconduct dismissal.

Whilst most of us can push ourselves for chunks of time, it's dangerous to think we can work two jobs over an extended period of time. Before taking on that second job think about how you will re-charge your batteries, how you will keep up your social networks, your exercise programmes and your family commitments. You may not like working to a diary but now is definitely the time for a bit of structure and routine – by planning things in, you will find you can manage a lot and forget little.

The reality is that many of us will need to juggle two jobs, so find out from both employers what flexibility they are likely to want and really consider how you can manage this. You may need to pull on family and friends to help out in an emergency so talk this through with them before you over-commit. In a flooded labour market you don't want to put yourself at a disadvantage because you can't call on a good reference from an old employer, so if you are genuinely concerned that you will not be able to manage, then think twice before you accept that 2nd job offer, it may be that finding a way to save cost is a better option.

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