



## More workers forced to try moonlighting

Growing number of workers seeking second jobs to meet rising costs

By Eve Tahmincioglu

updated 8:29 a.m. ET, Mon., April. 14, 2008

Moonlighting is back.

No, not that TV series from the 1980s that starred Bruce Willis and Cybill Shepherd.

I mean this: Lynda Nicely, a 28-year-old public relations administrator for a nonprofit in Milwaukee, found it increasingly hard to make ends meet on her \$40,000 salary because of escalating gas and food prices. So last month she took on a second job as a cocktail waitress at night.

"I don't have cable or the Internet, and I've cut down everything to the bare minimum. You'd think I'd make enough at my job to pay the bills and catch a Brewers' game once in a while, but I don't," she says.

Dave Lattomus, a sous-chef at the DuPont Country Club in Wilmington, Del., despite his good salary recently had to take on a second gig teaching culinary arts at a trade school to cover a second mortgage and child support payments.

"I make pretty decent money," he explains. "If you told me when I was in culinary school in Pittsburgh in 1998 that I'd need a second job even when I made it as a chef after working my way up from line cook, I wouldn't have believed you."

Moonlighting appears to be back in vogue. But it's not because people want to expand their job horizons and try new careers. It's because they need money. Money to deal with recessionary pressures — everything from inflation to fears they may lose their primary jobs.

Another big reason, according to Robert Reich, former labor secretary under the Clinton Administration, is "because wages are falling, adjusted for inflation."

The number of workers in the United States who have a full-time job and also have a part-time job on the side has risen about 5 percent to 4.17 million in 2007 from 3.98 million the prior year, according to Department of Labor statistics.

"We're starting to see more moonlighting by fear," says Christine Durst, director of research for RatRaceRebellion.com, a work-at-home job-leads site. "We usually see moonlighting by choice."

The movement to get an extra paycheck is often most notable among workers in industries that are struggling.

Mary Kurek, who does a lot of public speaking in the housing industry, and is author of "Who's Hiding in Your Address Book," has noticed the moonlighting phenomenon among the workers she meets.

"I've run into some of those same real estate agents from the workshop bartending at local restaurants," she says. "I know one who drives a limo during 'down times' to bring in the extra cash. I know three in the industry who launched into network marketing gigs and another who took a job at a bed-and-bath store to help pay bills."

With housing in the dumps, she says, people fear losing their jobs. "They are crunching numbers and moonlighting to make ends meet. For many the second job is what keeps them in the first job — the one in which they've invested a lot of time and money to get rolling."

Even though there appears to be a growing desire by employees to get a second job, they face an economic

conundrum.

During a recession, employers cut back on the number of jobs as they did last month when U.S. firms cut 80,000 positions, according to the Labor Department. That means fewer jobs to go around, says Gus Faucher, director of macroeconomics at Moody's Economy.com.

"People are much more able to get a second job during an expansion," he notes.

Indeed, Lattomus, the chef from Delaware, hit a brick wall when he tried to find another chef job at a local food establishment even though he has tons of friends and connections in the industry. "I asked other chefs if they had or knew of any part-time work available, but people are just not eating out as much these days so business is quiet," he explains.

In a bright job-networking move, Lattomus put the word out to everyone he knew that he was looking for more work and ended up hearing about a part-time food instructor's job at Delaware Technical & Community College through an associate.

"It's enough to help cover my bills for now. I've been trying to sell my house, which was appraised at \$303,000," he says. He's already dropped the price to below \$300,000 and expects to just break even given how much he owes on the home.

Adding to his financial strife are fuel prices. "It now costs me \$50 to fill up the tank on my Chevy Blazer," he laments.

For many workers, concerns about escalating prices and the struggle to keep current with hefty mortgages won't dissipate any time soon, says Economy.com's Faucher. "I think it will get worse before it gets better," he says of the economy.

But we can't just blame the economy for second-job fever.

Manisha Thakor, co-author of "On My Own Two Feet," says it's also driven by consumerism.

"While some hard-working people are forced to take on second jobs because their primary jobs pay barely a living wage, there is another subsegment of second-jobbers who are facing the consequences of economic indigestion brought on by a supersizing of their consumptive appetites," she says.

"What is considered 'normal' in terms of size of house, festivities surrounding weddings, the amount of clothes in one's closet and food portions — all are significantly larger than in the 1950s or 1960s," she says. "The result is not only second chins but also second jobs."

It might be time to reassess your spending, she adds.

"We tell people to think about your income like it's a pie with four slices," she explains. "A healthy pie has typically at least a quarter for taxes, 15 percent for savings, and that leaves you with 60 percent for everything else."

If your pie is out of whack, she says, you'll have to spend less or earn more.

No matter what the reason, if you're forced to start looking for gig No. 2, be smart about it.

"Rather than doing something for 10 hours a week you hate (just) to stay afloat, find something that enhances what you already do, or enhances your skills," advises Marci Alboher, author of "One Person/Multiple Careers."

And be careful when choosing your second job. You don't want to end up doing something that diminishes you in the eyes of your employers or clients. "Cocktail waitressing, for example, could be the death of you if it's discovered by the wrong person," Alboher says.

For Nicely, who works in public relations by day and waitresses at night, the reaction to her new job has been positive so far. "Everyone has been extremely supportive including my manager," she says.

And the extra money has helped take some of the financial pressure off. She waitresses from 6 p.m. to 11 p.m. three days a week and can make as much as \$200 in tips on Friday nights.

The key is making sure you don't take on too many hours, or you'll end up unemployed from both jobs.

"When one takes on a second job that is added stress to oneself, family and the first and second job," says Kathleen Hall, founder of The Stress Institute in Atlanta. "Absolutely, both jobs could be jeopardized because of the incredible amount of increased stress."

Stress warning signs, according to Hall, include sleep problems, lack of productivity, headaches, stomach issues and depression.

Nicely admits juggling two jobs gets to her sometimes, but she is managing so far. "I grew up with a strong work ethic," she says. "You have to make ends meet, so you do what you have to do."

*Katherine Guiney provided research for this column.*

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