



Is One Job Enough?

The vast majority of American wage and salary workers today fall into the middle class. That means an annual income of somewhere between \$30,000 and \$50,000- before deductions for social security, federal and state (and sometimes city) income tax, Medicare, health insurance (if you're lucky enough to be offered it), and a 401K plan. The federal minimum wage is still stuck at an amazingly low \$5.15 per hour, providing half a million minimum-wage workers with less than \$12,000 a year.

One Way Out

Given these figures, it is not difficult to see why one in 17 Americans, or about 7.5 million, work two or more jobs. It's called "moonlighting." Sounds romantic, doesn't it?

Minimum-wage earners moonlight just so they can pay the rent and put food on the table. Middle-income workers cite different reasons, such as

- to attain a higher standard of living
- to pay off debt
- to save for a home
- to save for the future-their children's education, their own retirement

Some moonlighters' extra jobs are part-time, but others work two full-time jobs, or three part-time jobs or some other combination. Obviously, it can be pretty stressful. Moonlighters don't see their families much, because they average 75 hours a week at work. It's an especially sad situation for single parents

More Disturbing Statistics

According to an August, 2006, report on CNN Money.com, "...most workers have not seen wage gains keep pace with inflation during the current economic expansion." And the New York Times reported that while the median hourly wage for American workers has declined 2% since 2003, while prices have increased 4%. Prescription drug costs alone have soared out of control: Americans pay the highest prices in the world. Although corporate profits keep climbing, their employees' shares of those profits-in the form of increased wages-is declining.

Meanwhile, the median price of a home in the US is \$208,000, shutting out the possibility of homeownership for millions of hardworking people. That leaves rentals, and they too are going up in price. Added to the woes of the middle class is the tendency to rely more and more on credit, driving many into depths of debt that seem inescapable.

If you're a average-income worker still hoping to move up in your company, you may want to keep in mind that in the past ten years, there have been 9.7 million job cuts. You know all about it-downsizing, outsourcing, not replacing people who leave and expecting the ones left to pick up the slack. Most of the time, you'll have no clue that a layoff is about to happen. There's always unemployment-but in most states it replaces only about half of your lost income, and to make matters worse, you'll have to pay income tax on it come April 15th.



A Better Way

Spending 75 hours a week watching the minutes creep by on a clock at work isn't appealing to anyone. But what if you could work in the comfort of your own home? Picture this: You have dinner with your family, and then, while everyone is watching TV or doing their homework, you're close by on your laptop-making the extra money you need. You can even take your job with you when you travel.

While this may sound "too good to be true," the Internet has made it possible for millions of people to supplement their incomes and beat the economy at its own game. You may need to put in as little as five hours a week to replace the income you'd make from a grueling 35 hours of moonlighting time at some dead-end second job. And you can put those hours in when and where you want to and deduct many of your expenses on your income tax return. You may become so successful at your "second" job that you'll be able to ditch the first one and work at home full time.

Before you even think about taking a second job away from home, consider the advantages of being your own boss...of being able to go to bed at a reasonable hour...of not having to deal with yet another boss and set of corporate rules.

Do it for yourself.

A home-based business could change your life. It costs nothing to explore the possibility.