

## Employment and multiple jobs

The Covid-19 pandemic and the development of digital technologies has upended the various labour markets, which are today marked by major job shortages and a significant number of workers who have left their industry and changed career.

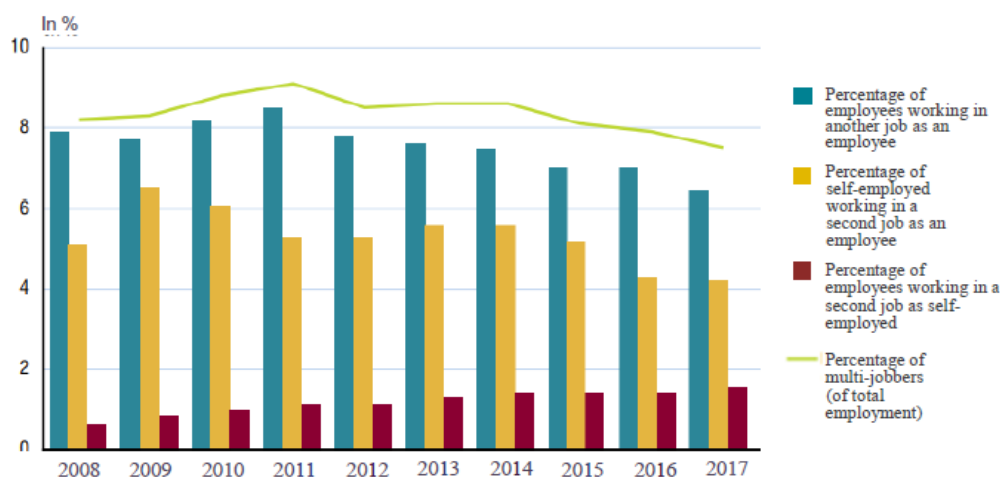
Against this backdrop of profound transformations, various actors are pointing to the emergence of new forms of employment, midway between self-employed and employee status. Multiple careers or “multi-jobbing”<sup>1</sup> is part of this phenomenon.

### The emergence of slashers

At the start of last summer, one of the emerging trends in the labour market highlighted by the newspaper Les Echos<sup>2</sup> was the increasing number of employees who were choosing to develop one or more activities alongside their main employment. The name “slashers” comes from the slash symbol that they use to separate the professions that they exercise simultaneously.

In 2016, the *Salon des Micro Entreprises (microenterprise trade show)* published the results of a study according to which 16%, or 4 million employees, were slashers. The term covers a wide range of situations: some identify as slashers because they hold several “roles” at the same time within the same job, while others do so because they have two different statuses (e.g. both self-employed or freelance and part-time employee). Some workers started “slashing” for economic reasons then found that it was convenient and offered a balance. This study shows that a majority of slashers were “slashing” by choice and because they liked it.

*Multi-jobbing between 2008 and 2017*



Scope: France excluding Mayotte, persons aged 15 or over in employment  
 Source: French statistics office Insee, Estimates of Employment

<sup>1</sup> The holding of several jobs by a person over the same period, either because they have several employers, in the case of employees, or because they are both self-employed and employees at the same time.

<sup>2</sup> [Le Slashing : nouvelle tendance du travail ? \(Slashing: a new work trend?\)](#) Les Echos 28 June 2021

For 2017, government figures (previous graph) show half the number of multi-jobbing employees: just under 8% of total employment and around 2 million people. The percentage of employees working in a second job as self-employed remained minor.

Several reasons may explain this still uncertain emerging trend: the introduction of the status of sole trader (*auto-entrepreneur*) and the appearance of direct digital platforms between service providers and customers are facilitating the growth in parallel work to employment as an employee, while digital tools are allowing for increased mobile working.

If it continues, this trend will mark a break with the industrial age that culminated in the 30-year post-World War Two boom and led to significant job specialisation and an increase in expertise, which has not, up to now, been truly challenged. Proponents of multi-jobbing point to the aspirations of new generations of employees who refuse to be tied to one area and, curious and eager to engage with the world, want to develop their full potential and diversify their skills. It is claimed that developing multi-jobbing will enable companies to recruit and retain these new employees.

### **The first company agreements on multi-jobbing**

Multi-jobbing is not a new phenomenon. The real change lies in the decision by certain companies to promote forms of multi-jobbing that were, up to now, seen by management as weakening job commitment within the business.

For example, the Orange group recently signed a new inter-generational agreement<sup>3</sup> with 3 trade unions (F3C-CFDT, FO-COM and SUD-PTT), covering the period 2022 – 2024, which came into force on 1 January 2022. Alongside the recruitment of 8,000 permanent employees in France over the same period, the company is developing support measures for employees midway through and at the end of their careers, through multi-job contracts. Orange is therefore offering an attractive voluntary Senior Part-Time scheme until 1 January 2023, which permits eligible employees to organise their working hours over a period of 18 to 60 months preceding their retirement.

A “breather” is also offered to employees midway through their career in order to take a break from their job. They may, on a voluntary basis, enrol in a university course or training programme unrelated to their professional activity, get involved with associations, provide training in schools, universities and research institutes, or contribute to projects in start-ups or SMEs, for a period of 3 to 12 months. In this way, Orange wants to offer staff an opportunity to experience new personal and professional adventures, to develop new knowledge, new working methods or the skills to adapt to new environments.

This intergenerational agreement aims to overcome several challenges that the company is facing: a generational and cultural challenge in terms of the population pyramid and balance between the generations and jobs; a skills challenge, to anticipate and support the development of digital jobs in order to strengthen its positions in high-growth activities such as cyber defence, AI and data.

Multi-jobbing applies to numerous business sectors, not only in the area of intellectual services. Last-mile delivery allows for an independent form of employment, which is both profitable and dignified, as shown by the experience of Stuart, an express delivery service that is part of the La Poste group.

### **Potential for multi-jobbing at different periods of a person's career**

The OSI proposes considering the issues and conditions for developing multi-jobbing at different moments of a professional career. The objective is to think about this form of work as a means of

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<sup>3</sup> [Orange intergenerational employment agreement 2022-2024](#) . Signed on 17 December 2021, it comes into force on 1 January 2022.

encouraging practical adjustments (skills sharing, employability, reduction in working time) rather than as a social phenomenon to be promoted.

The hope that younger generations would be less hesitant about enrolling in careers that incorporate multi-jobbing is worthy of examination, both quantitatively and in terms of the conditions that will enable businesses to respond to this trend. At a time when these businesses are seeking maximum job commitment from employees, when ties to the company are becoming looser, the growth in multi-jobbing requires, even more profoundly so than hybrid working (on-site and remotely), a change of management methods.

In mid-career, multi-jobbing can further a career change, the employability of workers and skills adjustment while enabling the company to transform its organisation of work and position itself in new strategic business sectors.

Finally, at end of career, multi-jobbing offers solutions that combine retirement that is both more progressive and dynamic for employees, with a reduction in payroll for companies.

There are multiple applications at the start as well as end of career, but existing legal solutions prevent catering for certain needs and encourage informal practices.

The roadmap of the working group that OSI has established includes the following points:

- Observation and analysis of the phenomenon of multiple careers, its connections with the talent shortage, the different maturity levels of young people and its concrete, structured or informal manifestations;
- Consideration of the different motivations of businesses, as well as the various reasons for employees;
- The territorial dimension of the experiences identified;
- The issues and managerial, legal and economic obstacles influencing multi-jobbing and the opportunities that are likely to emerge to tackle employment challenges, with a view to assessing the inclusive nature of the practices developed.

With this in mind, the composition of the working group brings together:

- Company managers interested in sharing experience in this area,
- Experts and universities, public actors;
- Trade unionists (heads of federations and/or confederations).

Several managers have been contacted at ENGIE, Manpower, Orange, France Stratégie (C. Jolly) to start in May.