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## Case study: Factory worker makes jewellery in spare time

Einar Parker hardly had a lot of spare hours: his full-time job at a car seat factory in Staffordshire involved working day shifts, night shifts and plenty of overtime on the assembly line, all to earn about £22,000 to £24,000 a year. Yet in 2012 he found time to learn how to make jewellery and to sell it through Etsy, an online marketplace, to customers as far away as Vietnam and the US.

It was tiring, juggling jewellery-making with his factory job, but it fulfilled his desire to do something creative and helped pay the bills, bringing in an extra £3,000 with the potential for rapid growth.

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“It came out of my creative urge but I already knew every single bracelet had to bring some profit,” the 44-year-old father-of-two said. “It was 50:50, because we bought a house and we had no money to buy a house, so we struggled a little bit with money.”

Mr Parker is one of hundreds of thousands of workers who fit in second jobs during their evenings and weekends. The numbers in his position, combining a full-time job with self-employment, have risen 40 per cent since 2006 to 450,000.

A proliferation of freelancer websites like PeoplePerHour and online marketplaces such as Etsy and Ebay have made it easier than ever for people to work for themselves, for as many or as few hours as they want. Very little capital is needed to start an Etsy shop and there is hardly any risk, since most sellers only make products on demand.

“You have the means and the tools to go out there and get work for yourself, more than you did at any time in history, so the fear factor is dwindling,” said Xenios Thrasyvoulou, PeoplePerHour’s chief executive.

Benedict Dellot, a senior researcher at the Royal Society of the Arts, surveyed 600 Etsy shop owners last year and said they told him “how their shops gave them a sense of purpose that was absent in their day job”.

Mr Parker felt that way. He enjoyed exchanging emails with his customers, trying to perfect their bracelet or ring. “I didn’t feel like I’m a factory just producing those bracelets . . . I wanted to have a more personal touch,” he said.

Now he hopes to run a business of his own full-time, and has put his jewellery-making on hold while he learns how to be a company director. “I grew up in communistic Poland and my family wasn’t very entrepreneurial minded,” he said. “But over the years I changed, and I don’t see now any other way for me than just being on my own.”

Sarah O’Connor

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