

Help your employees kickstart a side hustle

The rise of remote work, coupled with an increased cost of living across South Africa, has led to a surge in full-time employees taking on a side hustle. From running an e-commerce store selling homemade crafts or teaching online, to restoring antique furniture out of a garage - South Africans are skilled at turning their passions into profit.



Source: www.pexels.com

“A business owner’s first instinct might be to discourage side projects that could prevent their team from becoming distracted. However, a work environment that embraces intellectual freedom, creative pursuits, and self-improvement is more likely to attract hard-working, motivated individuals that can grow the business in innovative ways,” says Thomas Vollrath, head of 1-grid.com.

Just under 30% of South Africans have a side hustle or second job, according to a 2021 report by the Henley Business School. Of these, 71% use their extra work to supplement their income. The study also found that the culture of the side hustle in Africa is driven by innovation and creativity.

“Entrepreneurs should think of side hustles as internal startups, which have the potential to be incorporated into a business’s core operations. If an employee has an idea that aligns with your services and offerings, you can help them build out the project and turn it into a business unit that they can own, manage, and benefit from,” says Vollrath.

Rewarding team members with the freedom to experiment in their personal time ensures they feel seen and heard by the company; “Especially if they perform exceptionally well in their full-time role. Encouraging entrepreneurial thinking also gives your employees the ability to identify new opportunities and ideas for your business, as well as grow in whatever role that they may be in,” says Vollrath.

Giving employees an opportunity

One way that employers can support employee side hustles is by providing basic tools to help them get off the ground – such as a website. In order to reach customers and build their trust, even small businesses need an online presence. Employers can supply ambitious employees with a website builder tool to use independently, in exchange for improving their businesses existing website as they learn. This facilitates active skills development, with the added benefit of personal investment from the employee.

Data from the 2021 Momentum Unisa Household Index shows that the most popular side hustles fall under the trade, catering and accommodation industry. Many entrepreneurs make their extra cash by selling produce or food – such as baked goods or pre-made meals from their home or at the office – or clothing, jewellery, cosmetics, or similar products via online stores or social media.

“Giving people an opportunity to explore their passions makes them happier and helps them develop skills that they might not have otherwise learnt. By embracing this and empowering them with the freedom to explore their interests, while doing their job, your team is more likely to see you as a partner in their success,” says Vollrath.

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