

# Variety club

Nurse and dog-walker? Engineer and interior designer? With the idea of a 'job for life' looking increasingly old-fashioned, more of us are discovering that a portfolio career can offer flexibility and fulfilment. So are two jobs really better than one?

BY SOPHIE HERDMAN PHOTOGRAPHY TINA HILLIER

Choosing your career is a big decision. But what if you are unsure about what drives you? Or what if, like many, you are drawn to more than one job? It's not an unusual conundrum. That's why many are rejecting the traditional 'job for life' model, opting instead for a portfolio career, defined as having two or more jobs at once. That could mean working for a few employers – as a teacher and a yoga instructor, say – or working in one job while setting up your own business on the side. It could even >>>

## «Success means doing something you love»

**Katie Antoniou**, 28, is a journalist, stylist, PR and radio DJ

**There is a misconception that to be good at your job, it has to be your only career. I think that having multiple jobs means I am better at each one – being a journalist makes me a better PR, for example. I work seven days a week and most evenings. There's little separation between my work life and home life – my work is my life. I go to lots of events for work where I see my colleagues, so that's work and social.**

**I think the internet has given people the opportunity to experiment more with their career. You can start your own online magazine or jewellery company, and you can work from anywhere. Social media has also hugely helped the way I work. It makes it easy for me to keep my finger on the pulse, to network, and it acts as a platform for my work.**

**There's a generation that finds it hard to understand portfolio careers. My dad believes you have an education so that you can get a high-paying career; he worries about my future. If I wanted to be super successful in a traditional career working for somebody else, perhaps it would be important to have one career. But as a way of life, I am much happier being able to do all the things I enjoy. I would hate to go through life being so focused on journalism, for example, that I never styled a photo shoot.**

**A lot of my blogger friends have portfolio careers, and many of them are women. I think for years we battled to be as successful as men in mainstream careers, but recently we have started making our own definition of success. It's not about being the boss or early retirement – it's about doing something that you really want to do.**

[katieantoniou.com](http://katieantoniou.com)





>>> mean owning several businesses, or having a career that changes seasonally – many ski instructors have second careers in the summer, for example. These jobs could be in a similar area or they might be very different – such as an accountant who is also a backing singer in a band.

Portfolio careers are a relatively new phenomenon, a way of life that is becoming ever more popular and accepted. While research in this area is sparse, one study found that 1.15 million people in the UK have two or more jobs. Of these, 65 per cent said they work this way out of choice, not necessity\*. And that doesn't include the 4 million workers who are self-employed\*\*.

### Multiple choice

The recession has boosted the number of people opting for portfolio careers, says career coach Selina Barker (selina.barker.com). 'The seductive security of permanent, full-time jobs has disappeared,' she says. Opting for multiple careers, rather than putting all your eggs in one basket, can be more financially secure. In fact, Barrie Hopson, whose book *And What Do You Do?* (A&C Black) explores this career trend, says that everyone he interviewed was making more money than before after two years in a portfolio career.

We are drawn to having more than one career for different reasons. Often it

depends on what stage of life we are at. 'In your twenties, portfolio careers are great for experimenting,' says Barker. 'When you reach your thirties, the variety and independence can be appealing. Multiple careers are great for parents, too, as they can be more flexible.'

Hopson, who runs portfolio career seminars, agrees. 'Many people I meet around the age of 55 say they are not ready for retirement, but don't want more of the same,' he says. 'Whereas many of the Generation Ys have seen what has happened over the past few years, with dedicated employees being made redundant, so they've chosen to focus on the present rather than worry about >>>

## «You have to be flexible to handle two careers»

**Jane Travis, 32,** is a PR and works in a vineyard

**I'm not a classic PR girl – although I'm outgoing, love writing and work quickly, I also love the outdoors. So when my husband, Kieron, left the army to become the manager of a vineyard, I decided to give up my job in PR and set up a consultancy firm so I could work part-time in PR, and part-time with him at the vineyard.**

**It's hard to balance the two and at first I was working seven days a week. PR never stops, but my workload changes depending on the season. There's a lot to do on the vineyard from the start of the summer to mid-October, so I spend more time on the vineyard then. But after that I can focus more on my PR.**

**Working on the vineyard is very physical, but when I come home after I've had the sun on my back all day, I feel so refreshed. I've also loved learning new skills. I'd got to that stage in life where I hadn't learned anything new for more than a decade, and I really missed it. This way, I brought learning into my everyday lifestyle. It's important to me that I can still write and have communication with the outside world – I feel involved in what's going on.**

**You have to be flexible to handle two careers. You also need a lot of energy, and to be able to bounce back quickly. It is challenging but very satisfying. People often think that having a work/life balance means working less and relaxing more, but for me it means that when I am working, I'm doing work that I really want to do, in an atmosphere I want to be in. Kieron's decision was a catalyst for me, but even if he hadn't changed careers I would still have taken a second job outdoors.**

*englishwineproject.co.uk*

\*MICHAEL CLINTON, PETER TOTTERDELL & STEPHEN WOOD, 'A GROUNDED THEORY OF THE PORTFOLIO WORKING: EXPERIENCING THE SMALLEST OF SMALL BUSINESSES', INTERNATIONAL SMALL BUSINESSES JOURNAL, VOL 24, 2006, SAGE PUBLICATIONS. \*\*OFFICE FOR NATIONAL STATISTICS

>>> the future. There is also an increasing cynicism in this generation about large organisations.'

### Following a passion

But beyond this, many are simply drawn to portfolio careers because they have more than one passion or skill that they want to use. Hopson calls these 'motivating skills.' 'These are the skills that you are born to use and when you do, you lose all track of time and place,' he says. 'Most careers don't offer the opportunity to use all of them at the same time – that's when

the benefits of multiple careers come into play.'

Of course, not everyone is suited to having more than one job. Perfectionists may struggle with the concept, as there is less time to work on each project. Those who like a regular structure and find project work daunting might also not be right for this way of life. But for those who are excited by variety and like changes in the intensity of work, a portfolio career could be the answer.

## «My two careers nurture two sides of me»

**Camilla O'Donnell**, 37, is a barrister and clothes designer

**I always wanted to be a lawyer – justice is very important to me. I was focused and qualified young as a barrister – it was very much a part of who I was. When my husband and I had children, I decided to work three days a week. With more time on my hands, and having moved to the countryside, I had more space to think about who I really was. I felt a need to fulfil my creative side. Style has always been a big part of my life, so I decided to set up a business designing children's clothes. My father had three careers – a jazz musician, a priest and a lawyer – so I think that had an influence on me.**

**The two careers nurture the two sides in me. Law is stressful, but I love the challenge. I specialise in child law and I really value being able to help children. Apart from the fact that I design for children, the business is quite different. It taps in to the playful, freer side of me. The lawyer side of me is fast-paced, the creative side is slower and more visual. There's also the business aspect to the company, of course. The negotiating skills I've developed as a lawyer have been really useful. I've also had to do a lot of research – it's all about sourcing the right people – and I've really enjoyed that.**

**I practise law two days a week but the clothes company is more fluid. That's the beauty of it, I can work whenever is easiest. I do a lot of juggling, but I've been doing that from the moment I became a mother. Some barristers are born to do their jobs; every part of them is fulfilled by it. I'm not that person. I have more than one passion.**

*annaori.com*



HAIR AND MAKE-UP: LIZZIE COURT AND SALLY MAKIN