Britain is a side hustle nation

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Almost one in three Brits selling items online claims to have a side hustle, trading goods to the tune of £200 a month. A poll of 3,000 adults, commissioned by Royal Mail Parcel Collect, found that two thirds (67 per cent) love trading their second-hand wares and send or receive an average of seven parcels per month, while a quarter (27 per cent) claim selling online is their main source of income.

The love for small business is real, with 47 per cent saying they support side hustlers and independent businesses more than any other online retailer. Clothes, books and electronics are the most popular products shoppers and sellers are exchanging across the UK.

Of those who sell, just under half feel a sense of achievement when they ship a parcel off to its new home. While 36 per cent of buyers claim it puts a spring in their step when their parcel arrives, with 32 per cent describing a parcel delivery as the 'highlight' of their day.

Nick Landon, Chief Commercial Officer for Royal Mail Parcel Collect, which carried out the study to celebrate surpassing six million items being collected since its launch in 2020, says: "It's wonderful to see the nation's entrepreneurship blossom and grow.

"We are delighted to play a pivotal role in making that possible, supporting the nation's small businesses and side hustlers to distribute their precious cargo up and down the country, safely and reliably, from doorstep to doorstep.

"We are proud to be an enabler of everyday people, looking to pursue their dreams amid the cost-of-living crisis. We aspire to make our services as convenient as possible so everyone can manage their business from home, removing the need to trek heavy parcels to the local drop off point whenever they make a deserved sale."

The study also found eBay, Facebook Marketplace and Etsy were the online marketplaces that respondents use most frequently, with one in five using Vinted.

Top reasons for using online platforms like these are saving money (42 per cent), enjoying the thrill of hunting down the perfect item (35 per cent), allowing someone else to enjoy something they no longer need (35 per cent) and giving items a new lease of life (31 per cent).

Environmental factors also play a role, with a third using online marketplaces because it's better for the environment, while 28 per cent want to set a good example to their kids about buying and selling pre-loved items, rather than buying new.

Sales are going so well for some that 41 per cent of those polled have plans to develop their side hustle into their main source of income. The over 65s are most likely to have plans already in place (60 per cent), with Londoners leading on this charge (58 per cent) versus six per cent in East Anglia.

Royal Mail's spokesperson Nick Landon adds: "As the UK's leading parcel delivery provider, we know how important the nation's parcels are. Getting them to their new homes, in good hands, is our top priority. Our Parcel Collect service is part of our ongoing commitment to create innovative and convenient ways to collect and deliver precious parcels from our customers doorsteps, every day. We are constantly transforming and evolving our services to offer customers the greatest ease, convenience and value for money – now and in the future.

Over a quarter (29 per cent) of those polled already have their parcel collected from home by a delivery company (41 per cent for 18–24-year-olds) and 55 per cent are likely to consider using Parcel Collect*, showing the growth potential of Parcel Collect."

Holly Tucker MBE, long-term partner of Royal Mail and founder of notonthehighstreet and Holly & Co, says: "It's impressive to see how entrepreneurial we are as a nation and how many of us are selling and sending parcels across the UK, from handmade wares through to second-hand goods.

"With many of us juggling side-hustles and full-time jobs, it's important to be efficient with our time when it comes to running our 'shops', tapping into the tools and services available to support us."

Holly Tucker has shared her five time-saving tips for sellers and side-hustlers:

Grab a notebook and scribble down everything that springs to mind for your creative rituals, your ordering system, customer service and marketing. Then identify the low-hanging fruit (the things you can change now) and the slow burners (the things you need to work on to change them). Try and tick a few things off each week, from both lists.

Each day, pick the three key tasks you need to prioritise. These are the jobs that will move the dial so tackle them first. I like to dedicate the hour before anyone wakes up in my house to this special and highly important list. Dedicating yourself to moving the business forward is not only great for the business, but also brilliant for your mental health.

New technology is launching all the time,

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allowing you to automate your least favourite tasks and time-consuming processes – there's a real beauty in streamlining your business. Outsourcing can save you time and allow you to focus on driving your business forward in the areas you are most confident in. There's no shame in reaching outside the business and asking for advice and help from others. The small business community is a vibrant and loving group, and if you don't have the skills or knowledge, I can guarantee someone else will or will know exactly who to turn to. Instead of trekking to a drop off point with arms full of parcels, have you considered having your post collected from your doorstep? Look for couriers who collect from home and wave goodbye to the effort and aggro of having to go out. Simply coordinate a collection time from your doorstep instead. Sounds good, right?

Stephanie Marshall, who runs vegan bakery business Treehouse Bakery, has been using the Royal Mail Parcel Collect service to deliver her baking kits for two years. She says: "I started Treehouse Bakery in lockdown, offering an eco-friendly baking experience without the waste. I spend a lot of time and energy looking for the most sustainable packaging and services out there. That's why I chose Royal Mail as my courier, as they are already visiting every address in the UK.

"When I've got my orders ready to go, I just book the collection online, select a time and hey presto, they are picked up by my local postie. I've posted my kits from my home in Stockport to customers as far south as St Ives and as far north as the Orkney Islands. I am always proud every time I talk to a customer and they tell me they love my product. That's the reason I keep doing what I do."

Nicola Hutchinson, who runs Hutch Cassidy, a luxury stationery and homeware brand from her home in North Yorkshire, says: "Starting my own business has given me a treasured creative out

Source: Royal Mail

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