

LinkedIn & lunchboxes

People with kids start the second shift when they get home. They constantly run two full-time campaigns (and the little clients literally can't tie their own shoelaces). Coping takes a village, a bit of AI and the parent tribe, says Rawinia Dolan.



Rawinia Dolan
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Right: Creating systems and focusing on where you add the most value can help focus your energy.

I was lying in bed last night thinking about the juggle that comes with being a mum of four under seven – including twins – while managing a fulfilling (and busy!) marketing career. And I know I'm not alone. Many of my smart, talented friends are in the same boat.

It struck me that I'm running two full-time campaigns: one with deadlines and LinkedIn posts, and one with school drop-offs and lunchboxes.

I feel lucky to have a meaningful career with inspiring people and be present for my kids – this balance means a lot to me. Working part-time gives me the flexibility to show up for both. But the juggle is real. Workplaces are more parent-friendly than ever, yet school schedules still assume one parent is always at home (available for sports days, garden-to-table, school assemblies...). These moments are wonderful, but even with flexibility, keeping up can be a challenge.

I'm writing from a mum's perspective, but I know plenty of dads navigating the same reality. Just last week, while at my daughter's ballet class, I spotted two talented friends doing the juggle in real time. One, a marine ecologist and mum of three, catching up on emails. The other, a dad and IT exec, in his car with his laptop on a client call while his daughter practised pliés.

The truth is, working parents in marketing aren't balancing one role with another, they're running parallel full-time campaigns. Which is why I call our support network 'the modern marketer's village': part AI, part automation and part real-world allies at the school gate.

At work: automate output, reclaim energy

When you work part-time or compressed hours, there's no room for long lunches or casual chats – every minute counts. That's where smart systems (and a few AI teammates) make all the difference. Tools like ChatGPT and Grammarly have been game-changers for me, helping draft content, summarise meetings and reduce admin so there's more time and energy for strategic thinking and creativity.

Knowing your thinking patterns

drives your effectiveness is crucial. Those with a strong 'self-actualising' style know what matters and how to show up. They build strong support systems, ask for help and create space to thrive.

But those of us with 'approval' tendencies can fall into over-functioning. Our instinct is to say yes, do more, be everything to everyone. And while that can feel like being a team player, it can quickly tip into burnout.

Recognising that pattern was a turning point. It shifted my mindset: instead of trying to do everything and ending up feeling stretched and ineffective, I began asking: "Where can I add the most value?"

That helped me focus my energy where it counts and protect the capacity I need to show up fully.

At home: streamline the mental load

The second shift is real, when the workday ends, the home campaign kicks off. I lean on small, consistent systems to keep things running smoothly: Sunday meal prep, simple dinners, laundry rosters and a shared family calendar for school events and activities. I also have a great new family member, 'Robee' our robot vacuum, who cleans the floors while I do bedtime stories.

Where possible, I collaborate: online grocery orders, carpool swaps and playdates, which all help lighten the load. Getting the kids involved gives them independence and me one less thing to juggle.

These systems don't solve everything but they create a rhythm. And that helps to manage limited time and energy.

The parent tribe

Technology can't do emergency daycare pickups or lend you a costume for the Book Week parade tomorrow – that's where your mum squad or parent tribe comes in.

Especially in small towns – which is where I live – many don't have family nearby. So friends become the village: sharing lifts, swapping favours and offering support when it matters most. I've been so grateful for both the practical help and the emotional backup, the chats, the laughs, the sense that we're in it together.

Mindset reset: super parent to strategist

You can't time manage your way to resilience. But you can shift how you think about the load you carry.

Many will relate to the invisible load Dr Libby Weaver describes: that constant mental checklist of planning, remembering and managing. Pairing self-awareness with systems isn't just about getting more done, it's about protecting what matters most.

The real flex

There's still an unspoken pressure to be all-in at work and all-in at home – as if both roles can run at full capacity, all the time. But working parents in marketing are rewriting that story. They're building hybrid support systems, part digital, part human that keep both campaigns going without burning out the person in the middle. The real flex? Not doing it all and knowing you don't have to. ☺



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