

Freelance and Contract Opportunities Open up as Employers Face Qualified Labor Shortages Sologig.com Survey Finds

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As the unemployment rate holds steady at less than five percent(i) and the pool of qualified labor continues to shrink, those looking to go out on their own may have more opportunities than ever. More than two-in-five (55 percent) companies have either relied on freelance or contract workers or intend to in the future according to a new Sologig.com survey, conducted by Harris Interactive of more than 2,400 employers and 5,600 employees. Sologig.com is a CareerBuilder.com site that connects freelance job seekers with employers that have contract-based opportunities available.

Of those companies that hire freelancers and independent contractors, 20 percent say that given the shortage of qualified labor, they are relying on independent talent more than a year ago. Nearly two-thirds (64 percent) of these companies intend to hire freelancers or contractors in the second half of the year.

"Freelancing can not only help workers achieve greater work/life balance, but it can also contribute to greater job satisfaction because it offers variety of work and allows workers to pursue their entrepreneurial passions since they are effectively running their own businesses," said Ben Jablow, senior director of Sologig.com. "From the employer side, hiring contractors gives companies access to diverse perspectives and allows them to control costs and respond quickly to changes in the marketplace."

Who wants to go out on their own? Where are the opportunities?

Forty-five percent of workers say they would consider becoming a freelancer or independent contractor. IT workers are among the most likely with 66 percent reporting they would consider freelancing. More than half (52 percent) of employed men would consider freelancing compared to 37 percent of women.

According to the survey, 36 percent of companies that hire freelancers or contractors say they are primarily hiring technology-based freelancers(ii). Other areas/functions that companies hire outside help for include: consulting (13 percent), accounting/financial operations (ten percent), design (seven percent), marketing (six percent), human resources/staffing (six percent), administrative/clerical/secretarial (six percent) and sales (five percent).

How much do freelancers make?

When it comes to compensation, one-in ten employers said they are willing to pay \$100 per hour or more for freelance or contract help. Nearly one-in-five (18 percent) are willing to pay \$75 or more and more than a third (34 percent) said \$50 or more. Sixty-three percent of employers said they will pay \$25 an hour or more. IT continues to be one of the strongest segments, with 56 percent of IT employers reporting that they are willing to pay \$50 or more per hour.

Jablow recommends the following tips for workers interested in going out on their own:

- Get your name out there -- join associations and attend industry conferences. Pen thought leadership pieces to distribute to clients and prospects. Write a monthly newsletter and speak at local or industry events. Reach out to former employers, clients, vendors and personal contacts. Also think about relationships you've cultivated in your local community.
- Think broadly about opportunities -- most businesses need marketing, financial and technology services, so don't limit yourself to a particular industry. If you're in the IT industry, don't just attend IT events, reach out to your local Chamber of Commerce and attend local business gatherings.
- Consider a referral program
What source are you more likely to believe -- a brochure in the mail or a referral from someone you trust? Referrals are one of the quickest and most effective ways to grow a business. Make sure to capture the positive feedback you receive and ask if you can name clients as

references, capture testimonials and write case studies based on your work. Also consider implementing a referral program. Give satisfied clients materials they can pass on. When referrals come in, be sure to send a thank you note and consider a small gift or discount on services to show your appreciation.

-- Position your skills

Be sure to customize your resume or marketing materials for the opportunity at hand. Create a summary statement at the top that quickly highlights the experience that is most relevant to the position. Follow the summary statement with some bullets that highlight specific, relevant qualifications and accomplishments. If you're in the creative industry or simply want to set yourself apart, create a portfolio that includes examples of your work.

-- Gain a seat at the table -- get the work that full-time employees "want" to do

One challenge freelancers face is getting the work no one else wants to do. In order to avoid just getting tactical assignments, freelancers need to effectively market their skills and experience. Don't just position yourself as part-time help, instead help clients see you as an indispensable resource and business partner. Create professional and relevant marketing materials, build a web site, create a portfolio of past work and write position papers. This can not only differentiate you from other freelancers, it can help you secure higher fees and elevate your level of responsibility.

Survey Methodology

This survey was conducted online within the United States by Harris Interactive on behalf of CareerBuilder.com among 2,417 hiring managers and human resource professionals, (employed full-time; not self-employed; non-government; with at least significant involvement in hiring decisions) and 5,600 US employees, (employed full-time; not self-employed; non-government; with no involvement in hiring decisions), ages 18 and over within the United States between June 1 and June 13, 2007. Figures for age, sex, race/ethnicity, education, region and household income were weighted where necessary to bring them into line with their actual proportions in the population. Propensity score weighting was also used to adjust for respondents' propensity to be online.

With a pure probability sample of 2,417, one could say with a ninety-five percent probability that the overall results have a sampling error of +/-1.99 percentage points, and with a pure probability sample of 5,600, one could say with a ninety-five percent probability that the overall results have a sampling error of +/-1.31 percentage points. Sampling error for data from sub-samples is higher and varies. However that does not take other sources of error into account. This online survey is not based on a probability sample and therefore no theoretical sampling error can be calculated.

About Sologig

Sologig.com is owned by CareerBuilder.com, the nation's largest online job site with more than 22 million unique visitors and over 1.5 million jobs. Sologig.com connects individuals seeking freelance, contract and consultant job opportunities with employers looking for independent talent. There are currently more than 60,000 freelance opportunities available on Sologig.com and nearly 3.5 million freelance job seekers visit the site every year. Employers can search Sologig.com's resume database for qualified candidates and can post freelance projects that are available with their companies. Freelance candidates can search and apply to thousands of available opportunities at no cost and get advice on managing their freelance businesses. For more information, visit <http://www.sologig.com/>.

- (i) U.S. Department of Labor, August 2007
- (ii) Technology projects include- Computer/Mathematical, Information Technology, Engineering

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