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Trends Watch:
The Flexible Workforce

A quarterly snapshot of the market trends driving the push towards a more flexible workforce

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The Evolution of the Flexible Workforce

For years, it was predicted that the future of work will be flexible. Work will be done remotely. Offices will shrink as work becomes increasingly decentralized. Skills will evolve so rapidly that job descriptions will lose their importance. Companies will embrace flexibility, building teams that resemble movie crews to increase productivity and drive projects forward. The research in this report illuminates why this isn't the future; it's happening now.

57M independent professionals freelanced this year

53M

2014

+ 4M

57M

2019

35% the U.S. Workforce
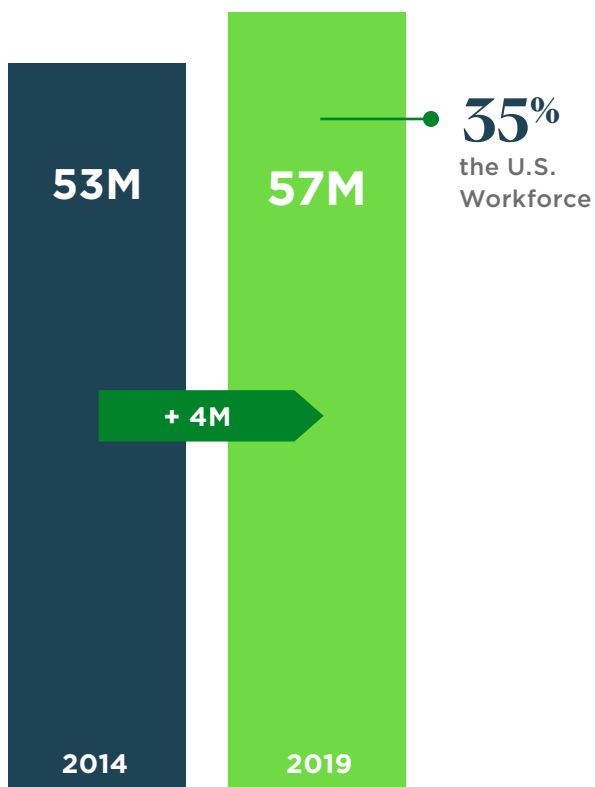
Hiring managers are using more independent professionals

42% increased usage of freelancers in past 3 years

Companies are developing freelancer programs

75% had made progress developing a program

Freelancing income is nearly $1T

Percent of GDP (Selected industries)

Industry	Percent
Manufacturing	11.4%
Professional, scientific, tech services	7.6%
Information	5.5%
Freelancing	4.8%
Construction	4.1%
Transportation & warehousing	3.2%
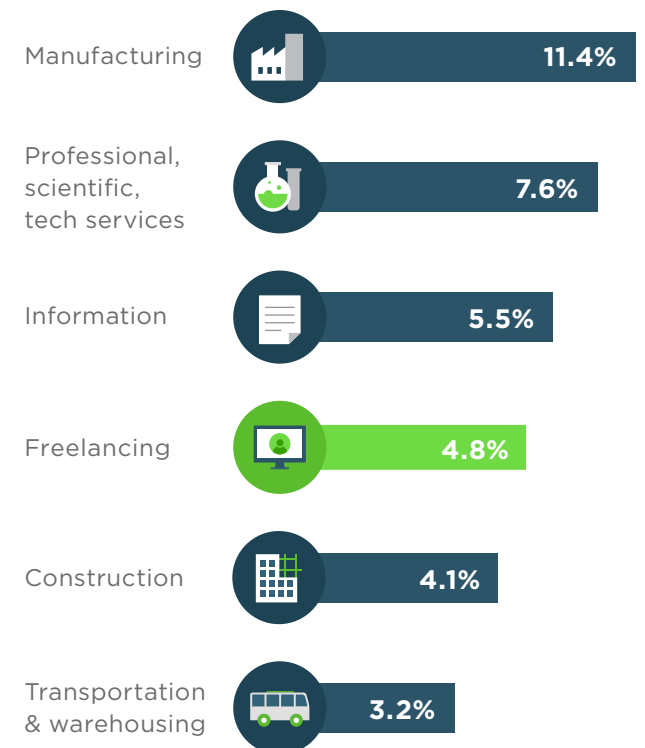
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Skills Are Evolving

The Upwork 100: The 100 fastest-growing, in-demand skills businesses seek

All skills experienced
45% YOY growth

$43.72
Avg. hourly for top skills in Q3

Popular projects and highly-sought skills

Create a product video

Skills:

Adobe Premiere Pro

Adobe After Effects

Video editing

Motion graphics

Elasticsearch

Build a custom Android app

Skills:

Android

C

Firebase

GitHub

SEO copywriting for websites

Skills:

SEO writing

Google Analytics

Link building

Landing pages

Web scraping and data extraction

Skills:

Data mining

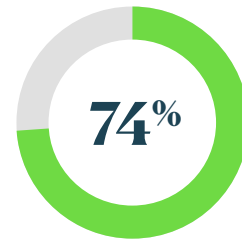Data scraping

Data visualization

Elasticsearch

Younger Generations are Leading the Way

Millennials and Gen Z managers are ascending into managerial roles and challenging companies to rethink traditional ways of working
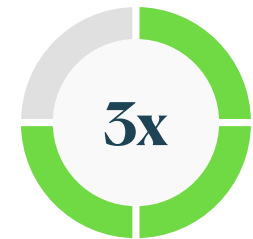
The impact of Millenials and Gen Z

58% of the workforce by 2028

74% of younger gen hiring managers **have remote teams**

3x more likely **take on the onus of reskilling**

3x more likely to **prioritize future workforce planning**

Tips from Millennials on retaining younger gen workers

" Before I take on anything I want to see there is a clear path to impact. And when the impact is made, I know what will happen next. If I spend 80% of my life at work, I want to make sure I'm doing something that makes a difference.

Matthew Mottola, Product Manager at Microsoft

" People may think we're disrespectful because we question things. We question because we need to know why something exists. If we agree with the reason, we'll do it. If we don't agree, we'll look for a different way.

Ahmad Hares, Product Manager at SunPower

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