

THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW IF YOU'RE CONSIDERING THE FREE AGENT WORKSTYLE

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INTRODUCTION

FREE AGENT, DEFINED

A free agent is an independent professional (e.g., freelancer, independent contractor, entrepreneur, temporary/contract employee) who moves from project to project, location to location, enhancing his or her skills and knowledge with each assignment. Free agents prefer freedom and flexibility over the security of traditional employment, and look for challenging and rewarding work that complements their personal goals.

Seize the opportunity

The workplace is changing. While there are many factors that influence this change—including economic conditions, an aging workforce, and changing worker attitudes—the bottom line is that the workplace has become unpredictable for businesses and workers alike. As a result, businesses need flexible talent to fill gaps, and at the same time, workers are looking for more freedom and flexibility.

The free agent workstyle is an ideal solution, and our in-depth research indicates it is on the rise. While both employers and workers enjoy many advantages of this workstyle, the research also indicates that the increased freedom, flexibility, and opportunities free agency provides is the primary reason that workers choose it over traditional employment. In fact, skilled professionals from all generations are voluntarily engaging in this new way to work.

Clearly, opportunity is knocking. Could the free agent workstyle be right for you?

Following are five things you need to know if you are considering the free agent workstyle.





01

KNOW *why*

WHY ARE EMPLOYERS INCREASINGLY TURNING TO FREE AGENTS?

It's not just about lowering costs or cutting benefits, today it's about having a flexible workforce in order to meet fluctuating business demand as well as accessing the right skills at the right time.

Companies realize that many workers want flexible schedules and variable work arrangements. They also see the benefit in retaining talented individuals with key skills and company intelligence. Thus, the free agent workstyle can fit well into their workforce strategy.

CONSIDER THESE STATISTICS:

- A recent global survey of senior executives asked how the employee experience will change at their organizations over the next 10 years. Sixty-two percent of respondents said they expect a growing proportion of workers to be "contingent" (i.e., contract-based rather than permanently employed).*
- A recent report on job creation and America's future indicated that more than one-half of employers expect to use more part-time, temporary, and contingent workers in the years ahead. **

* Source: [Global firms in 2020: The next decade of change for organisations and workers](#), Economist Intelligence Unit, September 2010

** Source: [An Economy that works: Job creation and America's future](#), McKinsey Global Institute, June 2011



02

KNOW *what*

WHAT IS YOUR EMPLOYMENT SITUATION?

Has something changed recently that makes you wish you had more freedom and flexibility? Do you wish you had more control over your career? Do you have experience and skills that would be marketable in a project-based setting? If so, you may want to seriously consider investigating the free agent workstyle.

It's smart to regularly sit down and assess your employment situation—perhaps every six months—because a lot can change in that timeframe. If free agency seems appealing to you, it's also a good idea to talk with free agents you might already know. You may be surprised at how large the free agent network around you really is. Ask them how they got started. You never know when the time might be right to try out free agency.



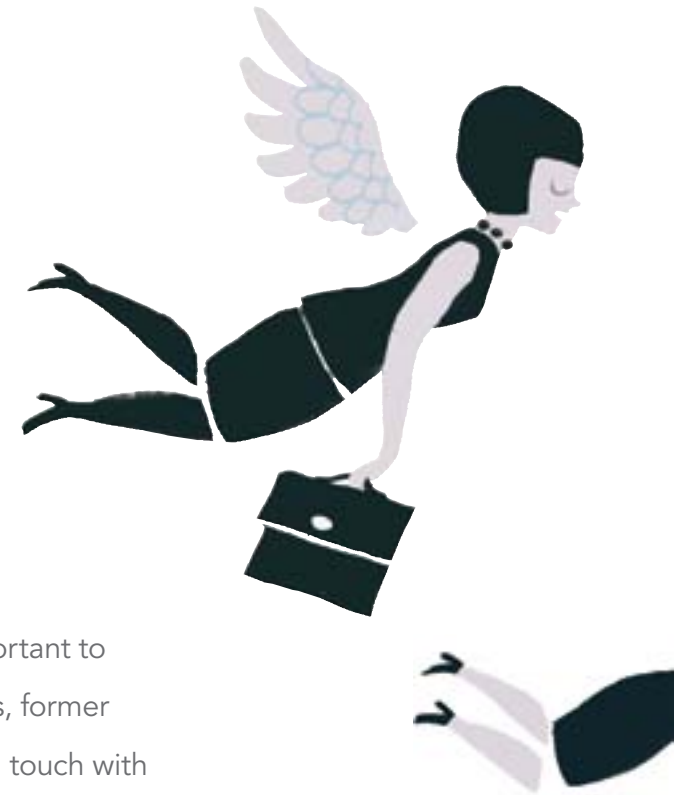
03

KNOW *how*

HOW YOU CAN FIND WORK?

Never stop building your professional network—plain and simple. It's important to continuously build your professional network of colleagues, peers, vendors, former classmates, and bosses. Why not devote 10 minutes each day to staying in touch with current contacts and cultivating new ones? In the free agent world, landing your next gig most often hinges on your existing connections or new connections made for you.

For more information on making the most of your networking opportunities, check out the [Career Forward guide](#) from Kelly Services®.





04

KNOW *who*

WHO ARE YOU?

The idea here is to market yourself by creating brand “You.” Part of being a free agent is being able to sell yourself to potential employers. What makes you different? What do you stand for? What can you promise to deliver if hired for the next big, interesting project? Create an elevator speech that highlights—in 15 seconds or less—the value you can bring on day one.



05

KNOW *where*

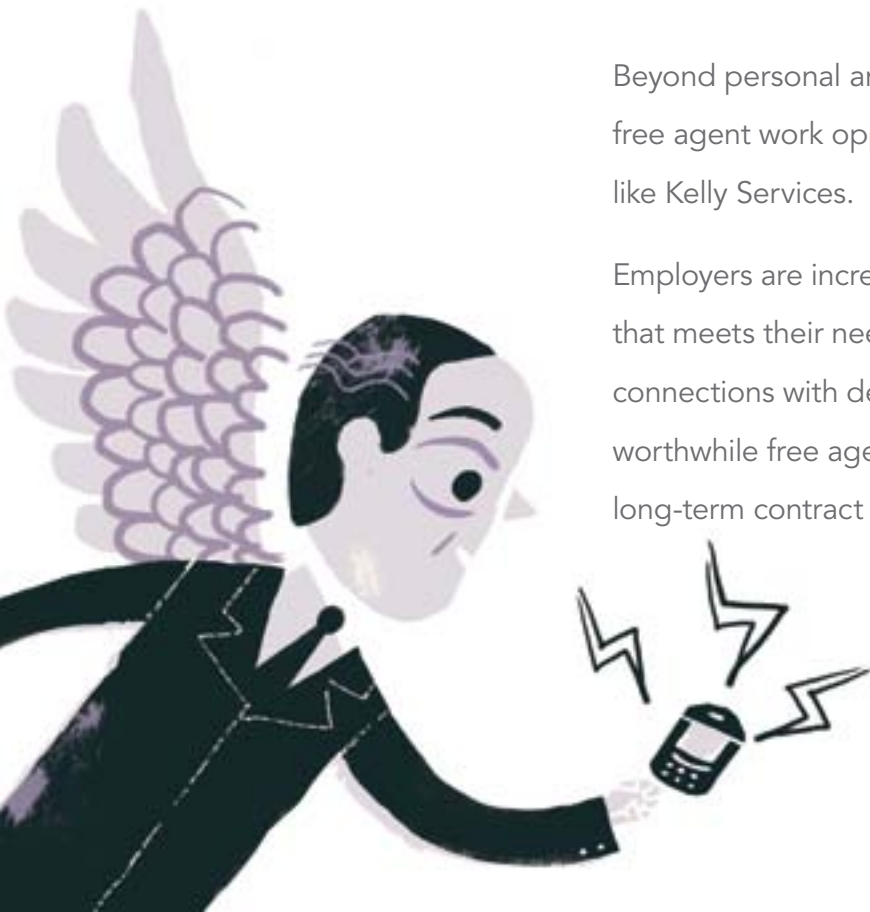
WHERE ARE THE CONNECTIONS?

Beyond personal and professional referrals, make sure you are aware of all of the free agent work opportunities available to you through staffing and recruiting firms like Kelly Services.

Employers are increasingly turning to companies like Kelly® to help them find talent that meets their needs. Workers with even the most specialized skills maintain connections with dedicated professional recruiters to continuously find challenging, worthwhile free agent opportunities, including project-based work and short- and long-term contract positions.

OPPORTUNITIES ABOUND

While it's always a good idea to make new connections on your own, don't underestimate the additional doors that staffing and recruiting firms can open for you.



CONCLUSION

Final thoughts

One more thing you might not know:

FREE AGENT SATISFACTION SOARS

Compared with traditional workers, free agents report being significantly more satisfied with many aspects of their careers, most notably:

- Ability to manage their own career path and development
- Opportunity to expand their skills
- Annual salary
- Work-life balance
- Level of work-related stress

There's a shift going on in the workplace today, and this is an exciting time for workers.

If being a free agent isn't something you see yourself doing now, it may be a good fit in the future.

Being "in the know" will help you embark on the free agent journey with confidence.

Want to see if you've got what it takes? [Take a free agent quiz](#) on Facebook® to learn about your free agent potential. Feel free to share your results with friends!

Don't forget to check out the [Career Forward guide](#) from Kelly Services. This comprehensive resource contains useful information for every stage of the job search process.





WANT TO LEARN MORE? Download our ebook, *10 Things You Need to Know About Free Agents*, for more information.



ABOUT THE AUTHORS

JOCELYN LINCOLN is vice president of Recruitment Operations for the Americas Region of Kelly Services, Inc. In this role she is responsible for candidate sourcing and recruiting strategies. She holds a master's degree in marketing from the University of Detroit-Mercy and a bachelor's degree in advertising from Michigan State University.



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ABOUT KELLY SERVICES

Kelly Services, Inc. (NASDAQ: KELYA, KELYB) is a leader in providing workforce solutions. Kelly® offers a comprehensive array of outsourcing and consulting services as well as world-class staffing on a temporary, temporary-to-hire and direct-hire basis. Serving clients around the globe, Kelly provides employment to more than 530,000 employees annually. Revenue in 2010 was \$5 billion. Visit www.kellyservices.com and connect with us on Facebook®, LinkedIn®, and Twitter®.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

The 2011 Free Agent research was conducted online by Inavero on behalf of Kelly Services among a representative sample of adults active in the U.S. workforce.

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