

O

THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT FREE AGENTS

JOCELYN LINCOLN AND MEGAN M. RAFTERY



INTRODUCTION

Free agents are independent and experienced professionals who move from project to project, location to location, enhancing their 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. Does this sound like anyone you know?

It's a whole new game out there (We're not talking about sports!)

We're talking about the workplace, because it's become unpredictable for businesses and workers alike. This ebook is about coping in this new environment. You see, something interesting is occurring in the workplace today. Businesses need to fill gaps with flexible talent, and at the same time, workers are looking for a better work-life balance.

Consider these statistics from recent Kelly Services® research:

- **Flexible options are increasingly desired.** Among traditional workers, the importance of a greater balance between job and personal life such that more flexible options are desired is significantly higher in 2011 than it was in 2008.
- **Traditional employees are seeking a change.** Thirty percent of traditional employees say they are likely to explore the free agent workstyle in the future.

Doesn't it make sense, then, for businesses and workers to come together to form a mutually beneficial solution? Clearly, a convergence is at hand.

FINDING A HAPPY PLACE

Free agency is quickly emerging as a just-in-time, mutually beneficial talent solution. Businesses can use free agents to fill talent gaps and respond to unpredictable business conditions, while workers who become free agents can thrive with a new-found work-life balance.

Following is a list of the top 10 things you need to know about free agents that we compiled from our free agent research. What you learn might surprise you!



JOCELYN LINCOLN



MEGAN M. RAFTERY



01

FREE*lance*

THE FREE AGENT WORKSTYLE IS ON THE RISE

A free agent is an individual who freelances, consults, does temporary or contract work, or has their own business. Today they make up 44 percent of the active workforce in the United States.

As the labor market recovers and the nation returns to more stable employment conditions, we believe the proportion of free agents in the U.S. working population will reset to 30 to 35 percent.

02

FREE*will*

MICROPRENEURS ARE LEADING THE WAY

Freelancers, independent contractors and entrepreneurs without staff are called **micropreneurs**.

This segment of the free agent population is growing fast. It now represents 30 percent of the U.S. workforce, an increase of nearly 70 percent since 2008.



03

FREEthinking

**IN EVERY GENERATION,
WORKERS ARE CLASSIFYING
THEMSELVES AS FREE AGENTS**

Within every generational group, there is a significant increase in the percentage of workers who classify themselves as free agents today compared to 2008.

SILENT GENERATION (1935–1945)



BABY BOOMERS (1946–1964)



GENERATION X (1965–1979)



GENERATION Y (1980–1992)



2011
2008





04

FREEstanding

THE TENDENCY TO WORK AS A FREE AGENT INCREASES AS A WORKER PROGRESSES IN HIS OR HER CAREER

Together, Baby Boomer and Silent Generation workers—each with decades of work experience—represent two-thirds of the free agent population.

What does the “free” in free agent really mean? It means self-governing, independent, and available.

05

FREEspoken

FREE AGENTS SAY A STAFFING FIRM HELPS

The percentage of workers who work with the help and support of a staffing or recruiting firm has increased significantly since 2008. These workers are increasingly realizing the numerous opportunities available to them by working with an experienced career partner.

In fact, 45 percent of Gen Y free agents work with the help and support of a staffing company or recruiting firm. These young workers see the benefits of working with a staffing/recruiting firm as they build their skills, experience base, and professional networks.

Firms are also realizing this trend and are engaging with staffing and recruiting firms to access this agile talent pool.

06

FREEflight

FREE AGENTS ARE HIGHLY SKILLED AND WELL EDUCATED

Compared to traditional employees, more free agents possess a technical or professional skill set. Free agents also are better educated than traditional workers, with more than a third of free agents possessing a master’s degree or higher.





07

FREEtime

IT'S ABOUT FREEDOM AND FLEXIBILITY

Seventy-three percent voluntarily choose the free agent workstyle because they value the freedom, flexibility, and entrepreneurial benefits. Free agents cite an increase in work-life balance, the desire to work as an entrepreneur, and the empowerment that goes along with being their own boss as reasons for choosing the free agent workstyle.

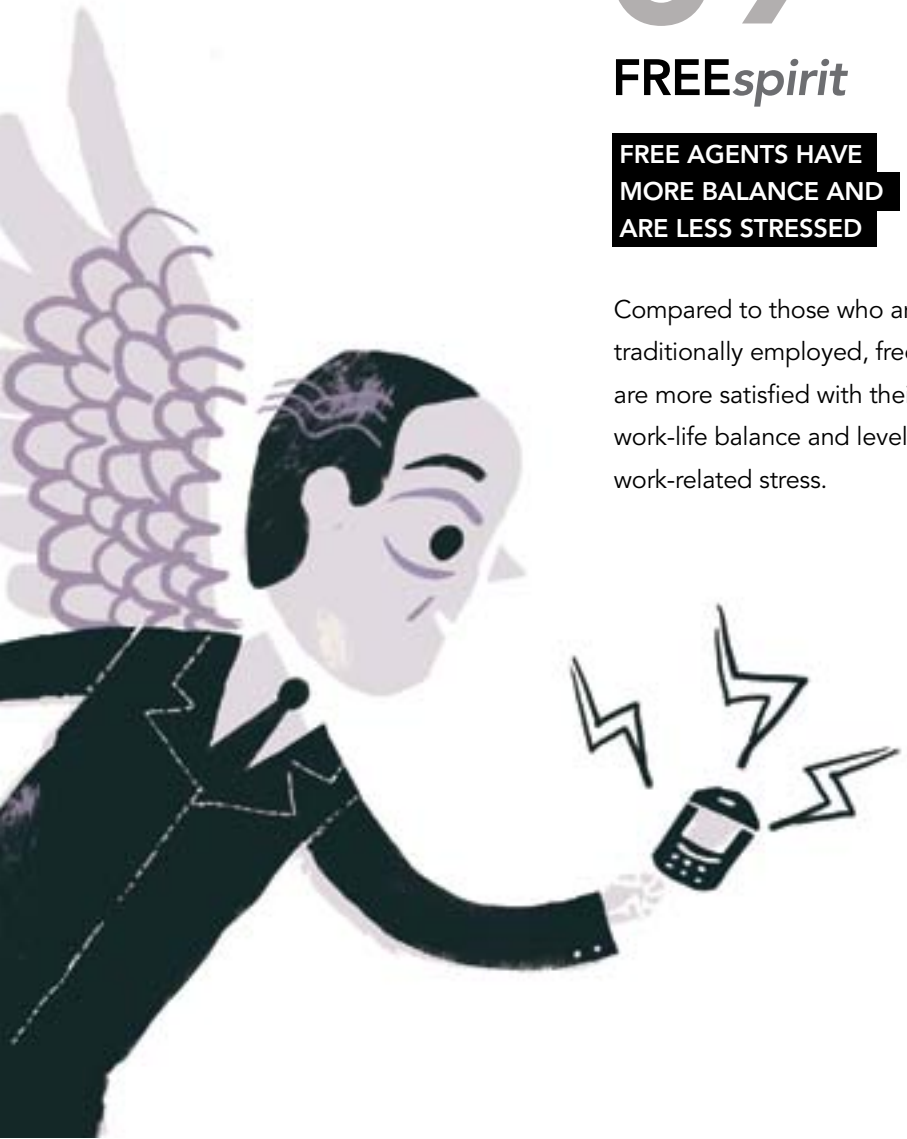
08

FREEreign

FREE AGENTS HAVE MORE CONTROL OVER THEIR CAREERS AND HAVE MORE OPPORTUNITIES TO BUILD SKILLS

Compared to traditional employees, free agents are more satisfied with their opportunities to advance their careers and expand their skills. The majority of free agents agree that free agency affords greater control over their career paths, giving them the ability to work on diverse work projects and assignments.





09

FREEspirit

FREE AGENTS HAVE MORE BALANCE AND ARE LESS STRESSED

Compared to those who are traditionally employed, free agents are more satisfied with their work-life balance and levels of work-related stress.

10

FREEenergy

FREE AGENTS ARE FOCUSED ON THE WORK

Free agents choose their next assignment or project primarily based on the type of work they will be performing and their interest in it. The earnings potential of the project or assignment and the reputation of the client are the second and third most important factors for free agents.



CONCLUSION

It's apparent that the free agent workstyle is gaining momentum. So what now?

Businesses should consider partnering with a workforce solutions company that can help them build an employment strategy that includes multiple worker populations, including free agents. And we advise workers to examine their employment situation every six months. You never know when the time might be right to try out free agency.

WANT MORE INFORMATION?

If you're interested in easing the unpredictability in your workplace or want more information on free agency, you can [download a copy of our free agent research](#) today.

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.





This ebook is extracted from *Free Agents: How 'Knowledge Workers' are Redefining the Workplace*

 **DOWNLOAD YOUR
FREE COPY TODAY.**

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.



MEGAN M. RAFTERY is senior manager, Workforce Research and Intelligence, at Kelly Services, Inc. Megan has more than 20 years of marketing and human resource-related experience. She is responsible for research and business intelligence concerning employment trends, workforce solutions, and the future of work.



ABOUT KELLY

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®.

