

— THE 2020 —

FREELANCE PROFESSIONAL REPORT



Hi friends,

Hot off the press is our 2020 Freelance Professional Skill Report!

Our research and preparation for this year's annual report took on a completely different meaning in light of COVID-19 and the resulting economic impact that has unfolded since the beginning of 2020.

With widespread unemployment affecting virtually every country around the globe, we were particularly interested to see how the Freelance economy was directly impacted either positively or negatively. Our findings this year were actually quite encouraging; we will unpack them further in this report.

As well, we saw an entire workforce "return home," with many businesses transforming overnight from in-house operations to a network of remote workers. The idea of working remotely with employees (or Freelancers) has now become a viable option for many businesses who previously believed it was better for employees to be centralized in an office.

Over the past couple weeks, we conducted a comprehensive survey with over 275 active Freelancers to get their perspectives on the trends and opportunities that are currently shaping our industry. This timely report is a compilation of all their valuable feedback covering a variety of pertinent topics from the most requested services during this Global Pandemic to the best ways to find new clients.

I believe this report will offer some valuable information for your Freelance business as you continue to navigate a challenging and uncertain time. If you find it useful, please do share the link with your peers and those interested in working from home as a Freelancer or Virtual Assistant.

Now, grab your favorite beverage and let's dive into this action-packed report!

To Your Success,

Craig Cunnings

Craig Cunnings

Co-founder / Chief Learning Officer

Freelance University



REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

Here is a quick summary of some of the most interesting findings from this year's report.

- 29% of the respondents are working either a full-time or part-time job while building their Freelance businesses.
- The top motivation for starting a Freelance business was flexibility.
- Since the onset of COVID-19, 66% of respondents shared that their Freelance businesses either stayed the same or grew during this uncertain time.
- The most popular method of learning new skills was courses, the same as last year, followed by video tutorials and webinars or livestreams.
- The top five skills cited as most important to their businesses right now were Writing/Editing, Technology, Digital Marketing, Social Media and Project Management.
- The top three SOFT skills that our respondents felt were most important to their Freelance success were Service, Communication and Problem Solving.
- The most effective way to find new clients was through Professional Connections such as colleagues and former employers. This was followed by social networks and past clients.
- When it comes to websites, WordPress continues to dominate, with 56% of the respondents currently using this platform, followed by Wix.com at a distant 13%.
- Facebook continues to be the #1 preferred social network for building their businesses, followed very closely by LinkedIn.
- In light of our current Global Pandemic, a resounding 78% of our respondents believe that the opportunities in the Freelance space are still increasing – very encouraging news!
- 72% of the respondents feel that the opportunities for VAs and Freelancers are only increasing – The future is bright!

How long have you been working as a service-based entrepreneur? (Freelancer, VA, Consultant)

288 out of 288 answered



How would you classify your current Virtual Business?

288 out of 288 answered



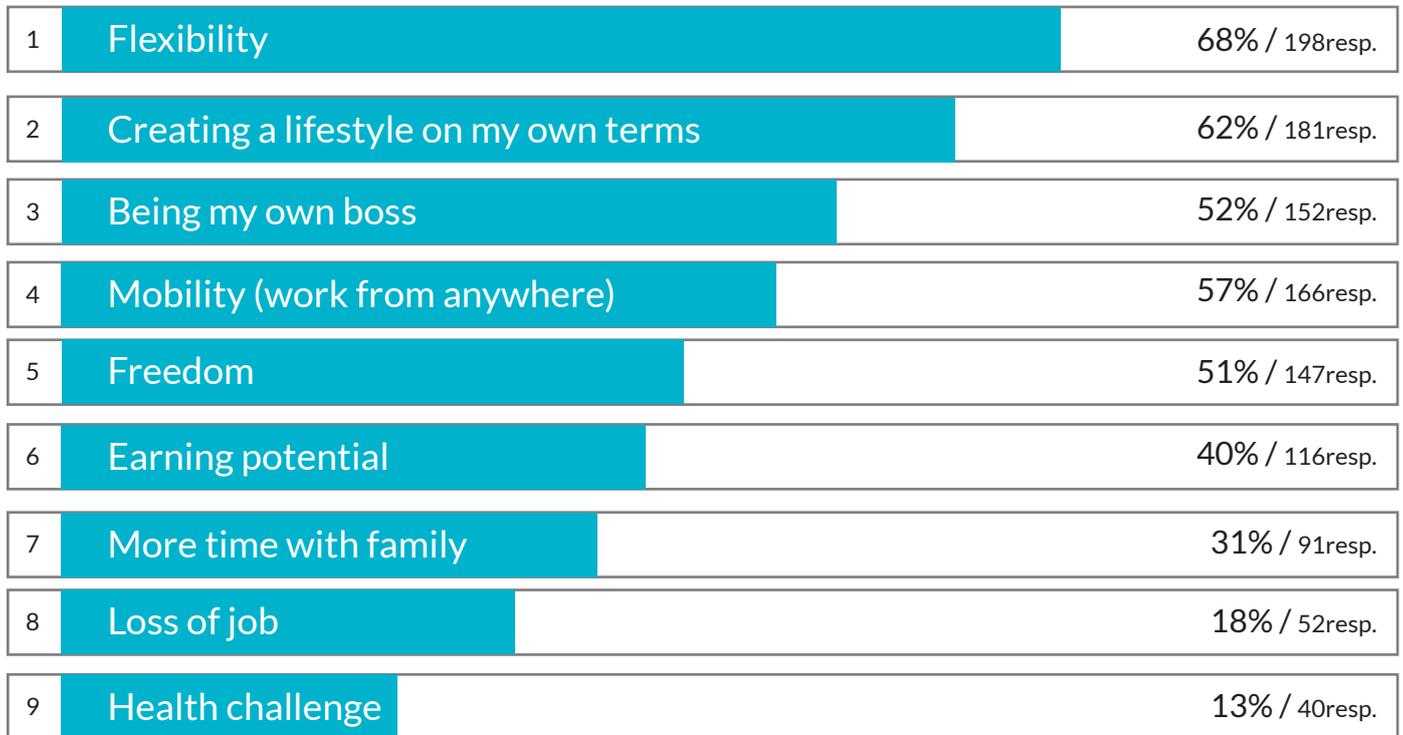
Are you currently working at another job while running your business?

288 out of 288 answered



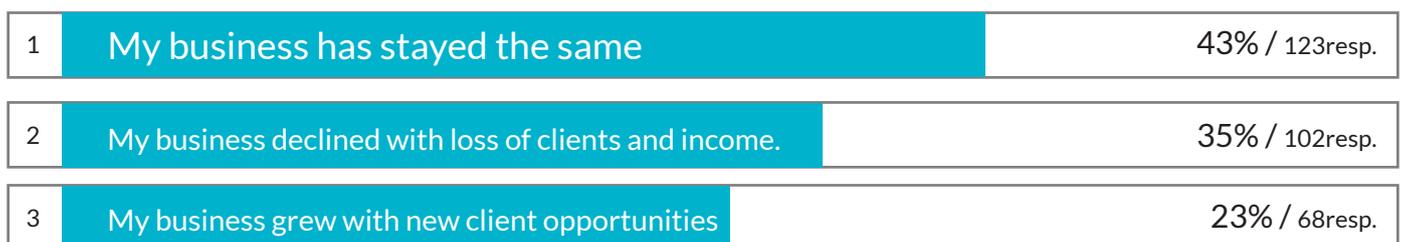
What was your primary motivation for starting your Freelance or VA business?

288 out of 288 answered



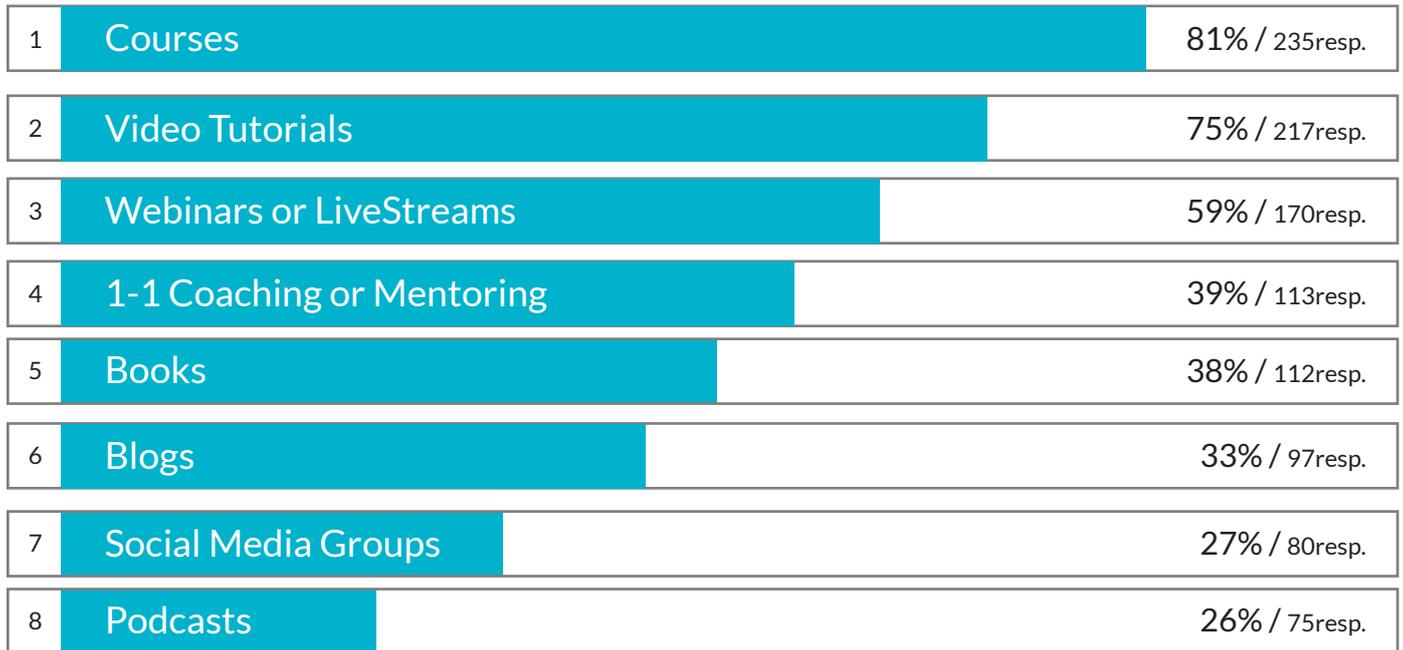
How has your business been impacted during this Global Pandemic?

286 out of 288 answered



What are your preferred methods of learning new skills?

288 out of 288 answered



Would you consider yourself a...

288 out of 288 answered



What skills are most important in your Freelance business right now?

288 out of 288 answered

1	Writing / Editing	48% / 140resp.
2	Technology	46% / 135resp.
3	Social Media	42% / 123resp.
4	Digital Marketing	42% / 122resp.
5	Project Management	40% / 116resp.
6	Customer Service	39% / 114resp.
7	Online Business Management	37% / 108resp.
8	Content Management	33% / 97resp.
9	WordPress	28% / 83resp.
10	Web or Graphic Design	24% / 71resp.
11	Digital Advertising (Facebook Ads)	17% / 50resp.
12	Financial Management	16% / 46resp.
13	Media Production (Podcast or Video Editing)	12% / 35resp.
14	Product Launches	11% / 32resp.
15	Ecommerce / Shopping Cart	10% / 31resp.
16	Basic Programming	4% / 13resp.

What Soft Skills do you feel are most important to your success as a Freelancer? (Select your top five)

288 out of 288 answered

1	SERVICE: A commitment to providing the best quality service and experience for your clients	79% / 228resp.
2	COMMUNICATION: The ability to write and speak in a clear and professional manner	76% / 220resp.
3	PROBLEM-SOLVING: The ability to quickly diagnose a problem and identify potential solutions	67% / 195resp.
4	EMPATHY: Understanding your client's unique needs	66% / 191resp.
5	ADAPTABILITY: Responding positively to changing circumstances	60% / 173resp.
6	SELF-DISCIPLINE: Taking a regular inventory of your strengths and weaknesses	53% / 155resp.
7	GRIT: The ability to persevere in the face of obstacles	51% / 147resp.
8	PROJECT MANAGEMENT: The ability to observe, plan and oversee a project for your clients	44% / 127resp.
9	STRESS-MANAGEMENT: The ability to maintain and regain composure in the midst of a stressful project or unforeseen problem	30% / 89resp.
10	TEAM-BUILDING: The ability to work with and manage a diverse team of professionals and personalities	16% / 47resp.

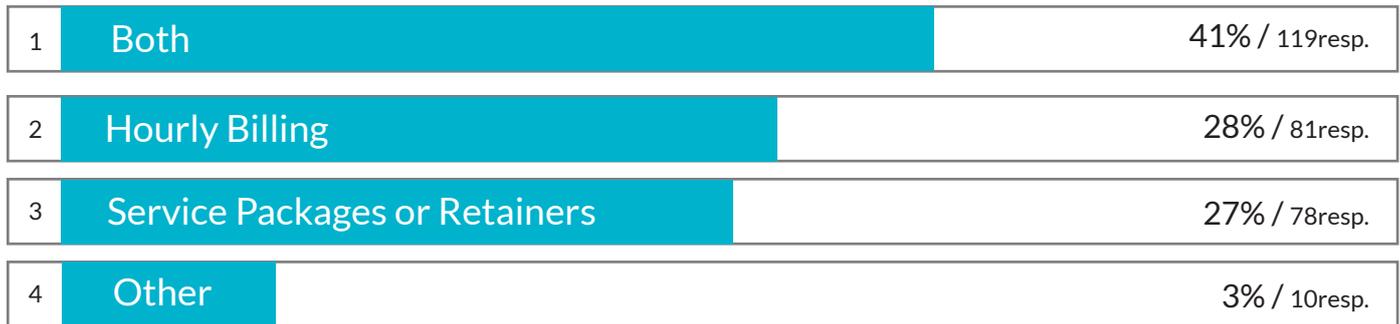
What types of services do you currently offer?

288 out of 288 answered

1	Virtual Administration	47% / 137resp.
2	Writing / Editing	44% / 129resp.
3	Social Media Management	32% / 93resp.
4	Customer Service	29% / 86resp.
5	Email Marketing	29% / 86resp.
6	Project Management	28% / 81resp.
7	Online Business Management	24% / 70resp.
8	Content Formatting & Production	23% / 67resp.
9	Content Marketing	20% / 58resp.
10	Website Design & Support	20% / 58resp.
11	Graphic Design	16% / 47resp.
12	Bookkeeping	15% / 44resp.
13	Other Technology Support	14% / 42resp.
14	Webinar / Online Event Management	13% / 38resp.
15	Online Course Creation & Management	12% / 36resp.
16	Marketing Funnels	11% / 33resp.
17	Product Launches	10% / 30resp.
18	Search Engine Optimization	9% / 27resp.
19	Video Creation / Editing	8% / 23resp.
20	Setting Up Membership Sites	7% / 21resp.
20	Podcast Production	3% / 11resp.
20	Web or App Development	2% / 6resp.
20	Other	4% / 12resp.

How do you currently structure your services?

288 out of 288 answered



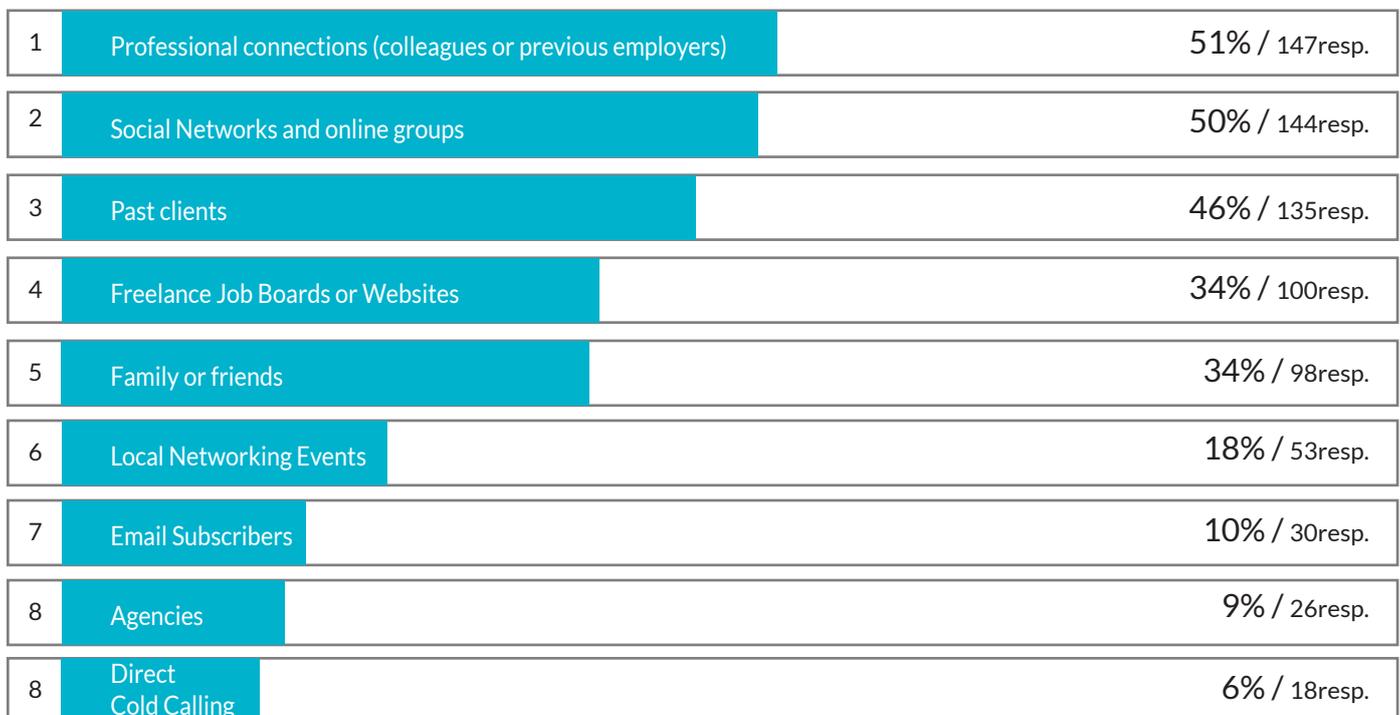
Do you sometimes hire subcontractors in your business?

288 out of 288 answered



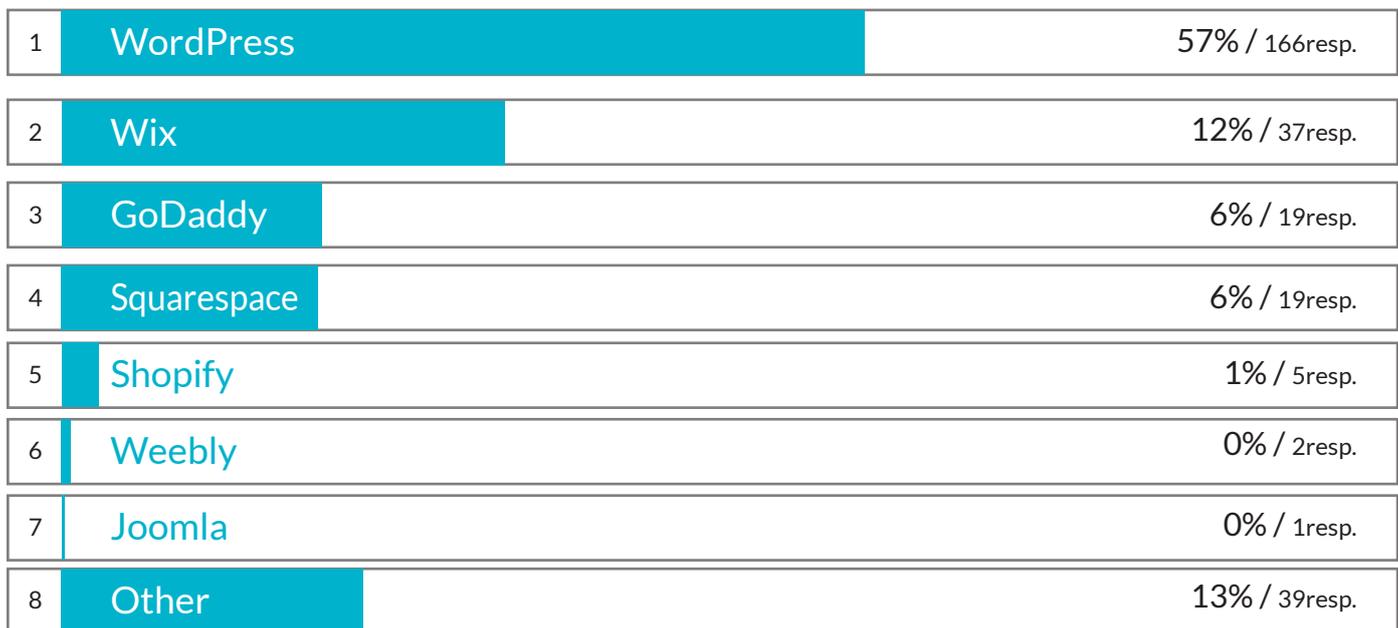
What are your most effective ways to find new clients?

288 out of 288 answered



*What website platform do you currently use?

288 out of 288 answered

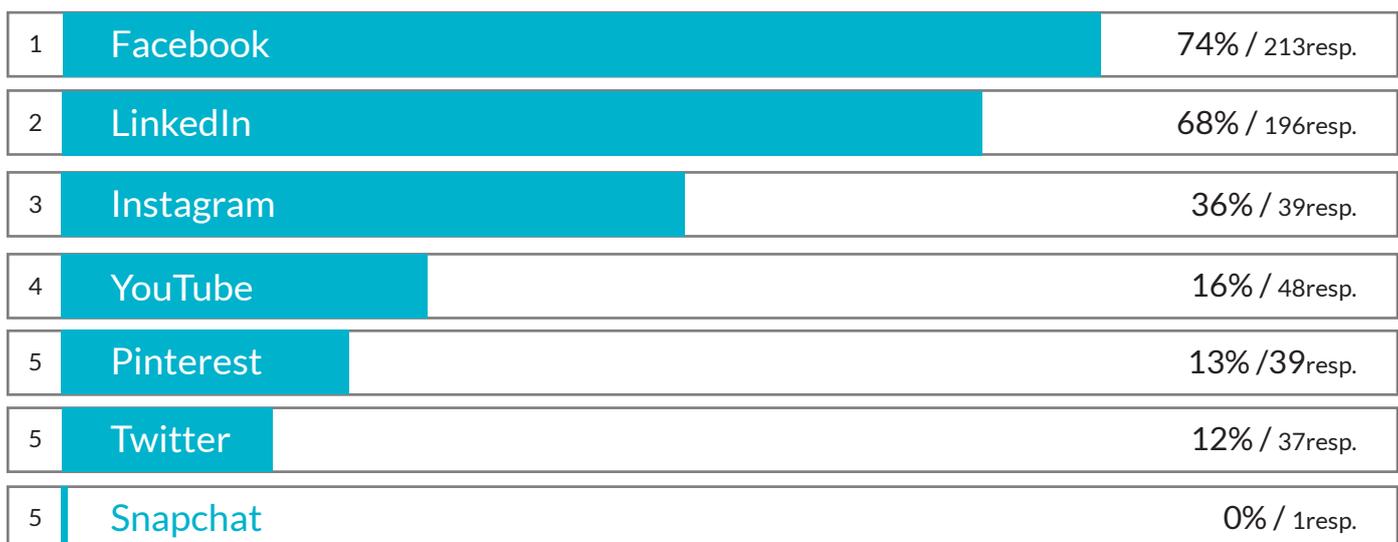


Other website platforms used:

- Websitebuilder.com
- uKit.com
- Yell.com
- Carrd.co
- FatCow.com
- Vistaprint.com

What Social Network(s) are most important to your business right now?

288 out of 288 answered



In light of our current global pandemic, do you feel the Freelance opportunities are...

288 out of 288 answered



How optimistic are you about the future of your freelance business? (1 being NOT so optimistic and 5 being VERY optimistic)

288 out of 288 answered



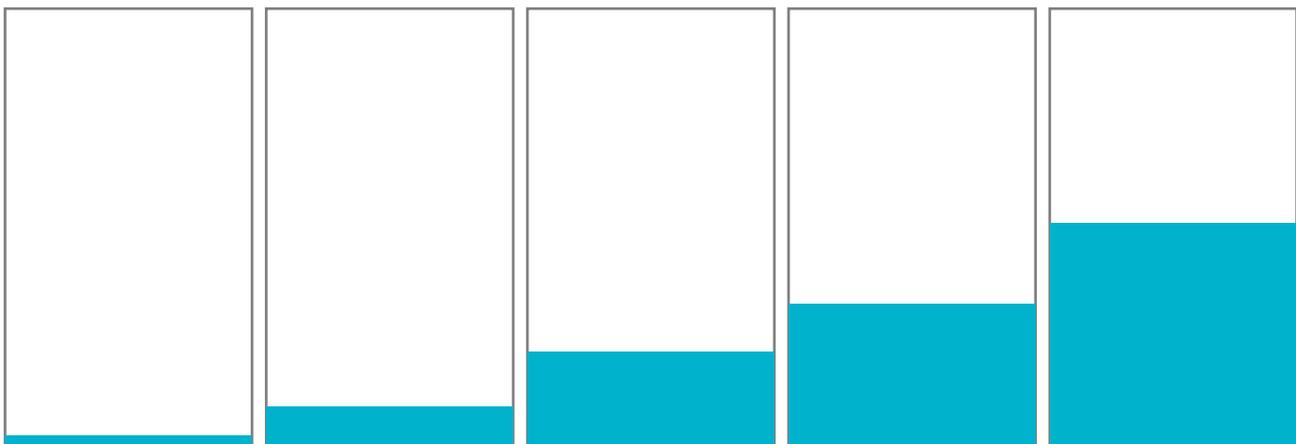
0% / 2resp.

3% / 9resp.

16% / 48resp.

30% / 89resp.

48% / 140resp.



Summary of Requested Services from Annual Survey

What are the most requested services by clients so far in 2020? (Please fill in the blank below.)

- Technology support (e.g. setting up software, launching online businesses, setting up GDPR, helping with online systems, blog support, Zoho support, Zoom Support)
- Website Creation, Design and Development (e.g. designing landing pages, assuming website building for people who have to transition to or add an online presence)
- Website Support, Management and Maintenance (e.g. troubleshooting, performing updates, adding online stores, switching templates, reorganizing content)
- WordPress Management, Development and Support (e.g. WordPress troubleshooting, moving sites to WordPress, and WordPress Design and maintenance)
- Virtual Event Management and Planning (e.g. meeting in a COVID safe environment, moving business from in-person events to online events and meetings via Zoom, Teams, etc., webinar management and support)
- Ecommerce Management and Development (e.g. ecommerce site support)
- Bookkeeping/Accounting (e.g. payroll, Quickbooks management)
- Financial Management
- Email Marketing and Management (e.g. automation, contact management, email inbox management, autoresponders, setting up or cleaning up Mailchimp audiences and emails)
- Social Media Management and Marketing (e.g. social media content creation, profile set-up and optimization, general social media scheduling and repurposing, Facebook Live, Facebook Groups, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Instagram)
- Social Media Strategy (e.g. social media audit)
- Facebook Ads Management (e.g. for course launches)
- Multimedia Editing (e.g. video or podcast editing)
- Podcast Production and Management
- Video Production and Management



- Content Creation, Management and Development (e.g. content curation, scheduling, repurposing, blog optimization, spreadsheets, presentations, guides, newsletters, online forms, data presentations, PowerPoint presentations, magazines)
- Audio transcription
- Interpretation
- Typing/Keyboarding and Word Processing
- Writing (e.g. policies and business documents, grant writing, blog/article writing, copywriting, resume and cover letter writing, biography writing, interviewing well-known personalities, legal letters, reports in a variety of subjects, ranging from simple tasks to difficult studies)
- Editing/Proofreading (e.g. blog editing, book editing, document editing, CV reviewing, post graduate thesis editing)
- Content Marketing (e.g. email, blogs, social media)
- Book Coaching/Critiquing (e.g. author assistance)
- Digital Marketing Management (e.g. branding, optin/landing/"Thank You" pages, lead generation, lead magnet design, lead capture forms, marketing funnels and media buying, online visibility, PPC and SEO)
- CRM Management (e.g. updating of CRM systems)
- Database Management / Data Entry
- Internet Research
- Virtual Administration, Assistance and Support (e.g. personal concierge, executive administration, organization of digital files, setting up administrative processes and SOPs, general admin support, responding to emails)
- Client/Customer Service, Management and Support (e.g. following up with clients)
- Calendar Management (e.g. appointment setting, diary scheduling and management, Acuity Scheduling account set-up)
- Graphic Design (e.g. social/web images, event branding graphics, infographics, print pieces such as cards)
- Membership Site Set-up and Management

- Course Creation / Course Launch Management (e.g. program creation, LMS/course platform set-up, Kajabi management, course development)
- Real Estate Management (e.g. listing services, mortgage scanning, real estate transactions)
- Project Management and Implementation (e.g. setting up project management tools, Clickup set-up)
- Product Launch Management (e.g. digital product development, taking plain info and making it visually easier to digest to serve as a lead magnet or product to sell)
- Business Coaching or Consulting (e.g. advice, problem solving, productivity, accountability, summarizing issues succinctly, determining how to create multiple streams of revenue, retail operations roadmap and solution of different aspects for sustainable retail business, interview coaching, reviewing what businesses have been doing and looking at ways to improve)
- Online Business Management (e.g. small organization management, team building)
- Fundraising



Primary Reasons People Chose to Pursue Virtual Work Opportunities

- Discovered it and loved it
- Desire for something different
- Planning for the future
- Discontented with previous work / corporate job
- Loss of job
- Health challenge
- Family reasons (e.g. to care for children and other family members)
- Nomadic lifestyle
- Financial reasons
- Retirement
- Relocation
- Underuse of skills/knowledge/experience
- Freedom to make own decisions
- Peace of mind
- Flexibility
- Ability to control own schedule
- Lack of opportunities in local area
- Desire to follow dreams
- Better work-life balance
- Desire to travel
- Desire to start own business
- Difficult commute
- Negative work environment
- Age discrimination
- New life chapters

ABOUT FREELANCE UNIVERSITY

At FreeU, we have had the privilege of training over 15,000 VAs, Freelancers and Consultants from 75 countries since 2008.

Freelance University is a one-stop platform to learn new skills, develop in-demand services and create a flexible, work-from-anywhere business that brings incredible freedom to your life!

"The University features over 80 industry-leading certifications and courses that you can work through at your own pace."

FreeU offers live workshops, a thriving learning community supported by a team of talented mentors, and a professional directory to showcase your skills and services to prospective clients.

Check out Freelance University Here

<https://www.freelanceu.com/university>

