FREELANCER SURVEY

2019

THE FREELANCERMAP MARKET STUDY

FINANCIALS, INDEPENDENCE,
DEMOGRAPHICS, TRENDS

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FIND EXPERTS AND PROJECTS

FOREWORD

External know-how, fewer personnel bottlenecks and higher productivity in a short period of time – working with freelancers will bring enormous advantages for companies in 2019 and in the future.

At times of a shortage in skilled workers, freelancers play an extremely important role – this makes it all the more important to scrutinize freelancing background and trends more closely.

1,645 participants completed our survey in full, and answered questions about their working situation, income development, challenges, and in general on the evolution of the IT market.

We would like to thank all participants and hope you enjoy reading the study.

- The Freelancermap Team

" In 2019 freelancers are extremely satisfied with their field of activity. Positive forecasts for hourly rates and workload promise an attractive development in the market. "

Thomas Maas | CEO freelancermap GmbH

AGENDA

FINANCIALS

Rates, gross income, job satisfaction, workload, gender pay gap

INDEPENDENT WORK

Challenges, benefits, disadvantages, time working on projects, situation compared to full-time employment

DEMOGRAPHICS

Countries, differences in income, educational background, specialization, fields, companies size

PLANS AND DEVELOPMENT

Forecasts, market development, order situation

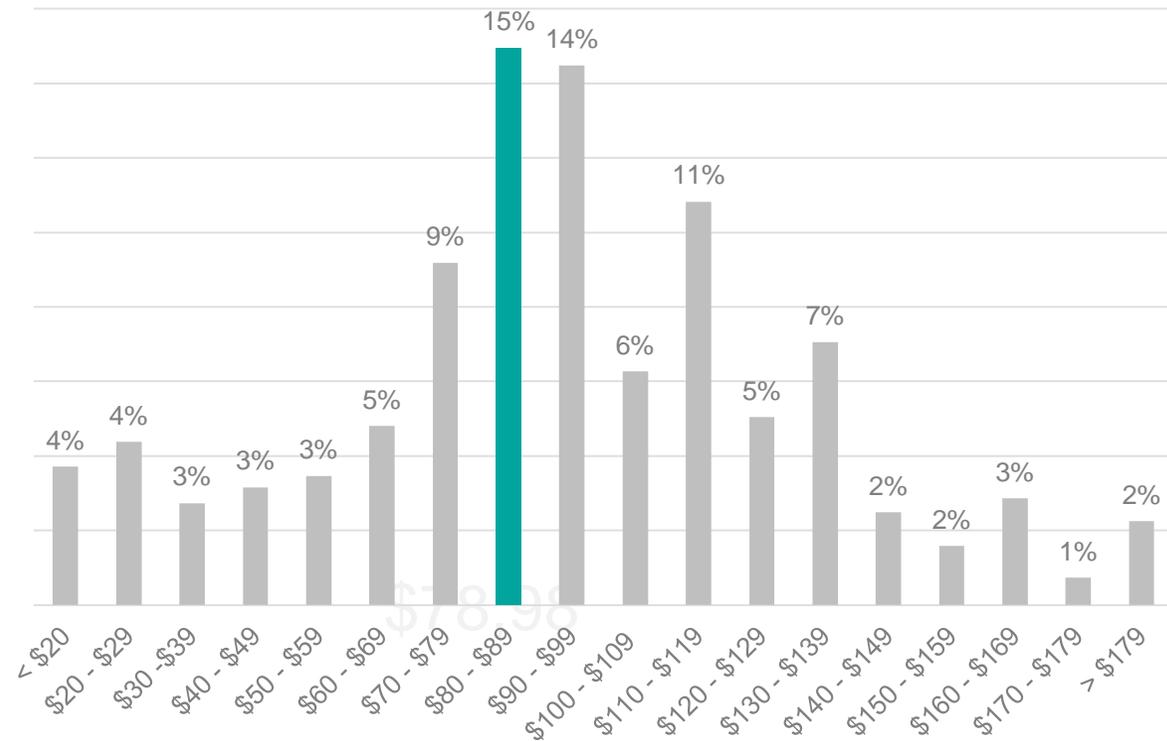# FINANCIALS

AVERAGE HOURLY RATE 2019

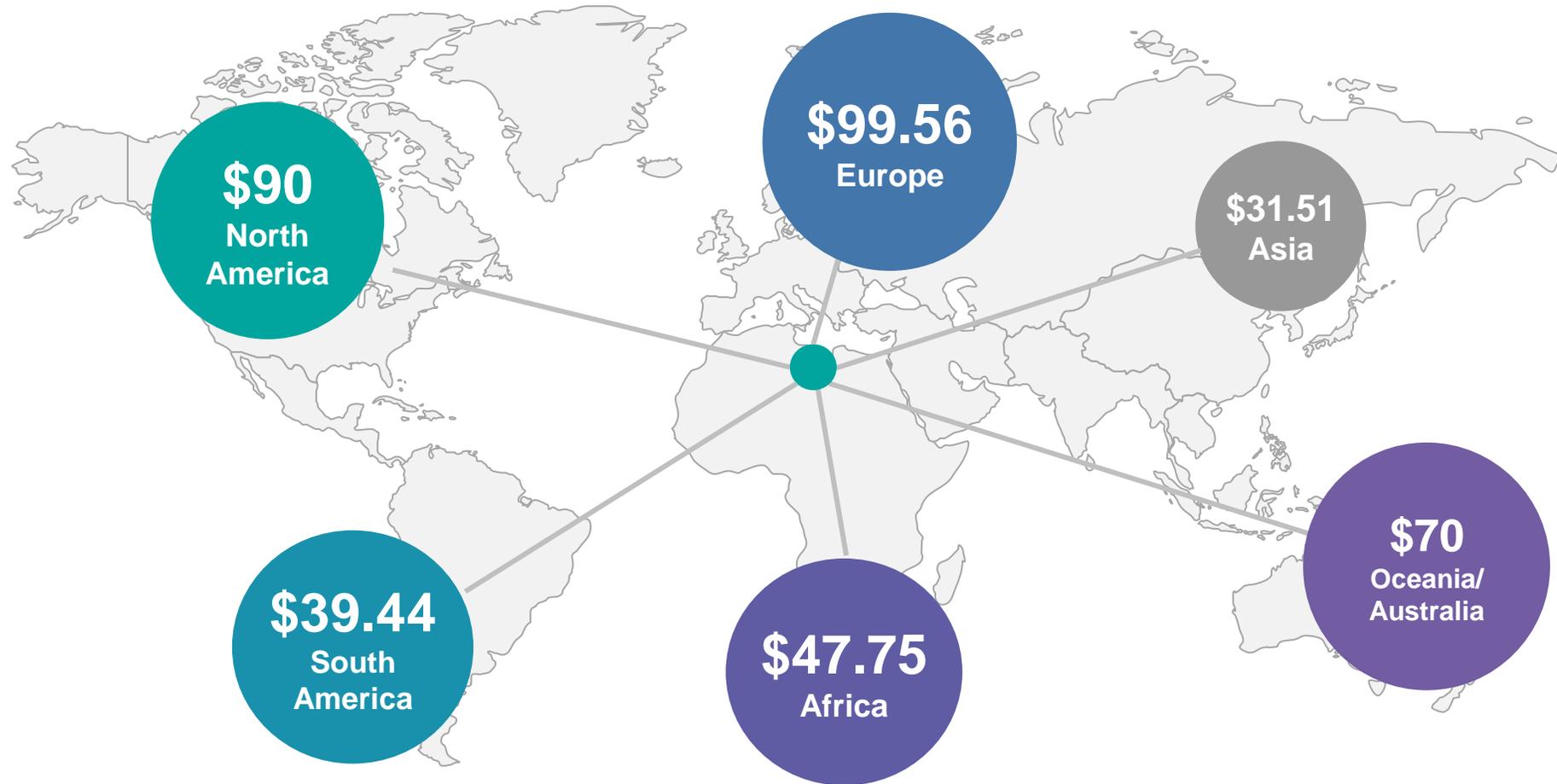What is your hourly rate in USD? (VAT not included)

HOURLY RATE:

$93.24/hr.

2019 study reported an average hourly rate of **$93.24**.

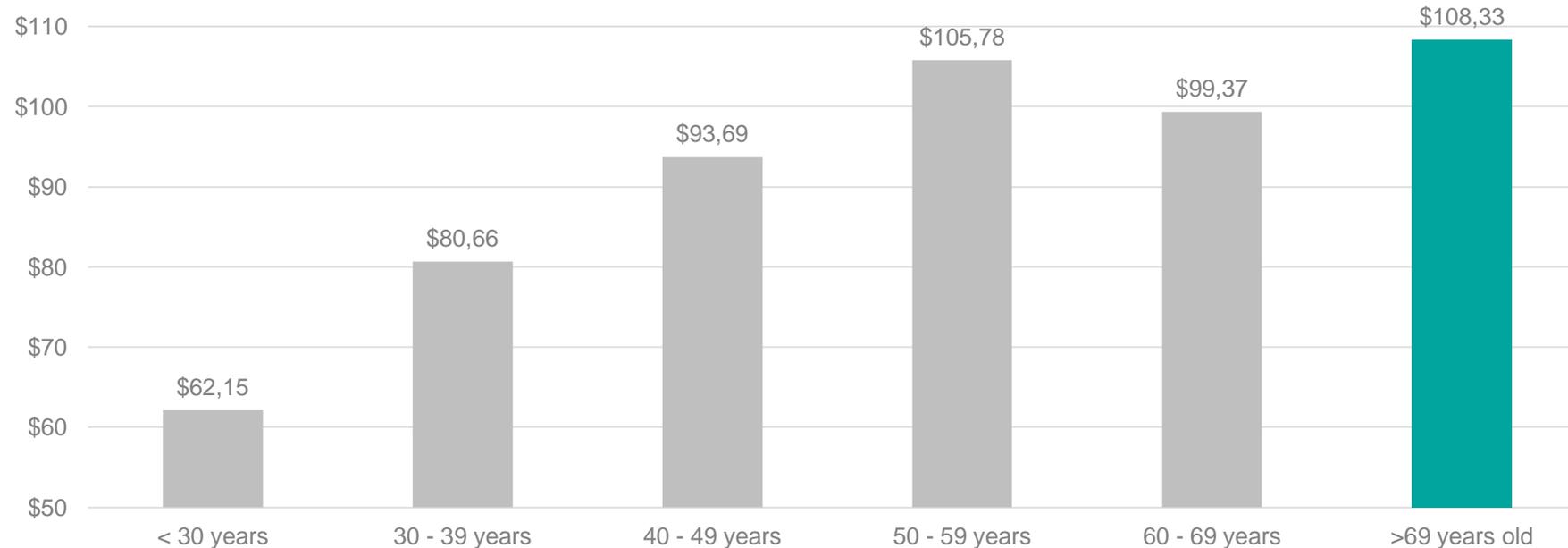The majority of freelancers (**55.72%**) charge between **$70 and $119 per hour**.

Range	Percentage
< $20	4%
$20 - $29	4%
$30 - $39	3%
$40 - $49	3%
$50 - $59	3%
$60 - $69	5%
$70 - $79	9%
$80 - $89	15%
$90 - $99	14%
$100 - $109	6%
$110 - $119	11%
$120 - $129	5%
$130 - $139	7%
$140 - $149	2%
$150 - $159	2%
$160 - $169	3%
$170 - $179	1%
> $179	2%

HOURLY RATES BY CONTINENT

Which continents have the highest hourly rates?

$99.56
Europe

$90
North America

$31.51
Asia

$39.44
South America

$47.75
Africa

$70
Oceania/Australia

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HOURLY RATES BY AGE

Hourly rates according to age

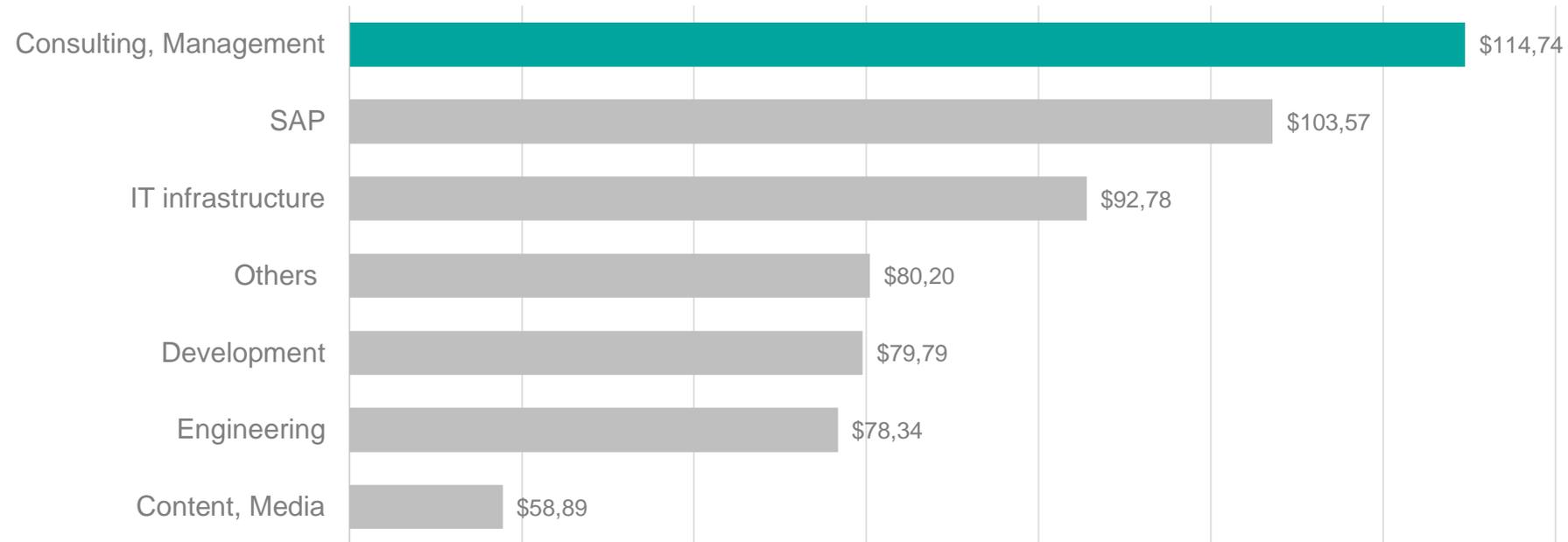| Age	Rate
< 30 years	$62,15
30 - 39 years	$80,66
40 - 49 years	$93,69
50 - 59 years	$105,78
60 - 69 years	$99,37
>69 years old	$108,33

$108.33

Freelancers **over 69 years** old charge the highest rates at **$108.33**, followed by those between 50 and 59-year old who receive **$105.78 / hr.**

The youngest freelancers (**under 30 years old**) receive the lowest rates with $62.15 / hr. on average.

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HOURLY RATES BY INDUSTRY

Hourly rates depending on the field of work

| Industry	Rate
Consulting, Management	$114,74
SAP	$103,57
IT infrastructure	$92,78
Others	$80,20
Development	$79,79
Engineering	$78,34
Content, Media	$58,89

Freelancers providing **consulting services** earn the highest rates at **$114.74/hr.**

SAP experts are charging $103.57 per hour for their services. The lowest hourly rates are charged by freelancers working in the area of content and media.

INCOME SATISFACTION

Are you satisfied with your income?
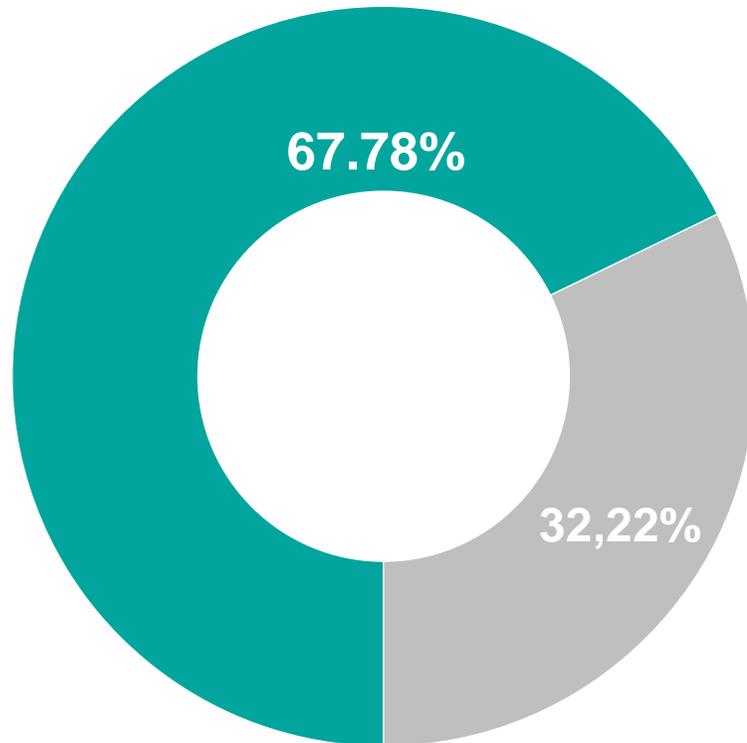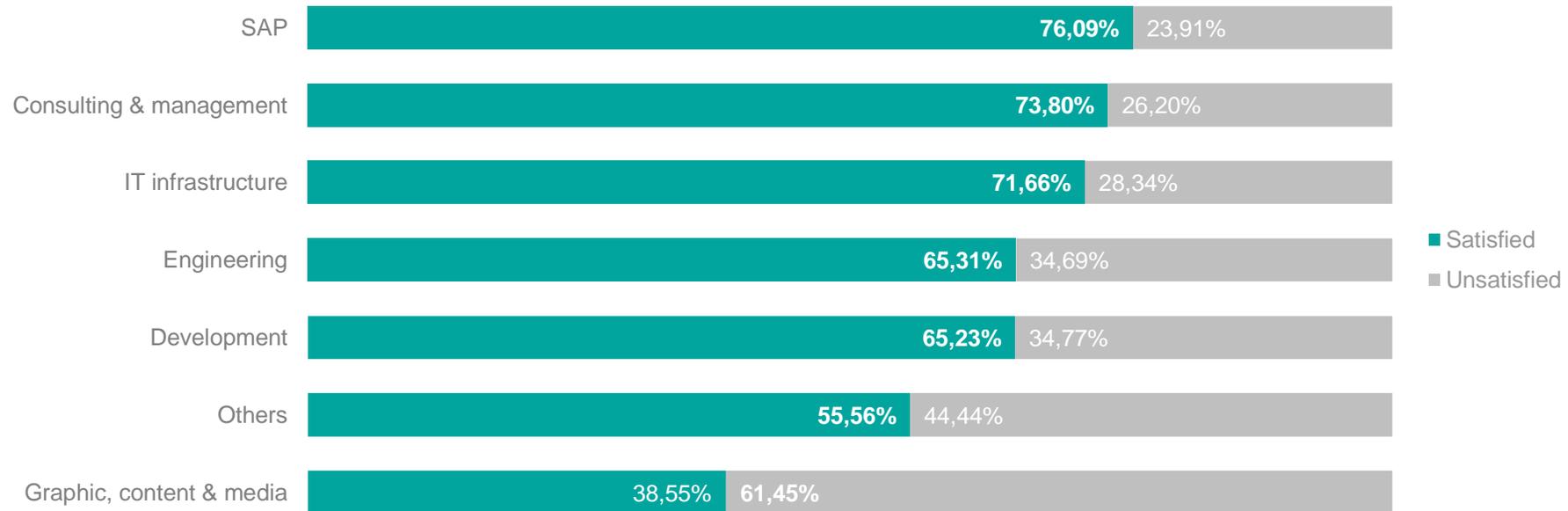
67.78%

32,22%

Yes No

YES

67.78 % of all participants claimed to be satisfied with his actual income.

NO

32.22 % of the freelancers surveyed claimed to be unhappy with their income.

Source: freelancermap.com/market-study

INCOME SATISFACTION

by industry

Industry	Satisfied	Unsatisfied
SAP	**76,09%**	23,91%
Consulting & management	**73,80%**	26,20%
IT infrastructure	**71,66%**	28,34%
Engineering	**65,31%**	34,69%
Development	**65,23%**	34,77%
Others	**55,56%**	44,44%
Graphic, content & media	38,55%	**61,45%**

■ Satisfied
■ Unsatisfied

+70% of freelancers working in SAP, consulting and IT infrastructure are happy with their income.

On the other hand, just 38.55% of freelancers working in content, media and graphics are currently satisfied.

HOURLY RATES WOMEN VS MEN

Is there a gender gap in the hourly rates for women and men?

WOMEN

$81.90

The average hourly rate for female freelancers is thus $12.83 lower than the hourly rate for male colleagues..
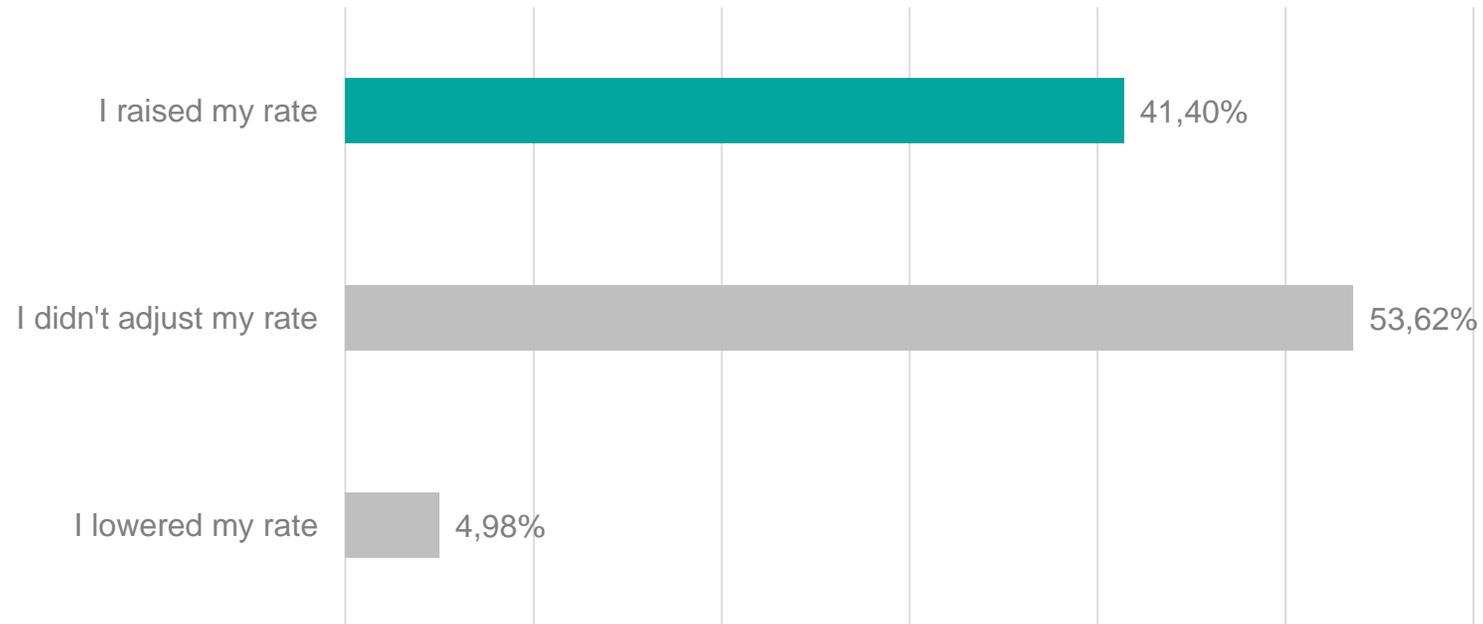
$5,147 monthly income

MEN

$94.73

$6,747 monthly income

Source: freelancermap.com/market-study

HOURLY RATE DEVELOPMENT

How did your hourly rate changed in 2018?

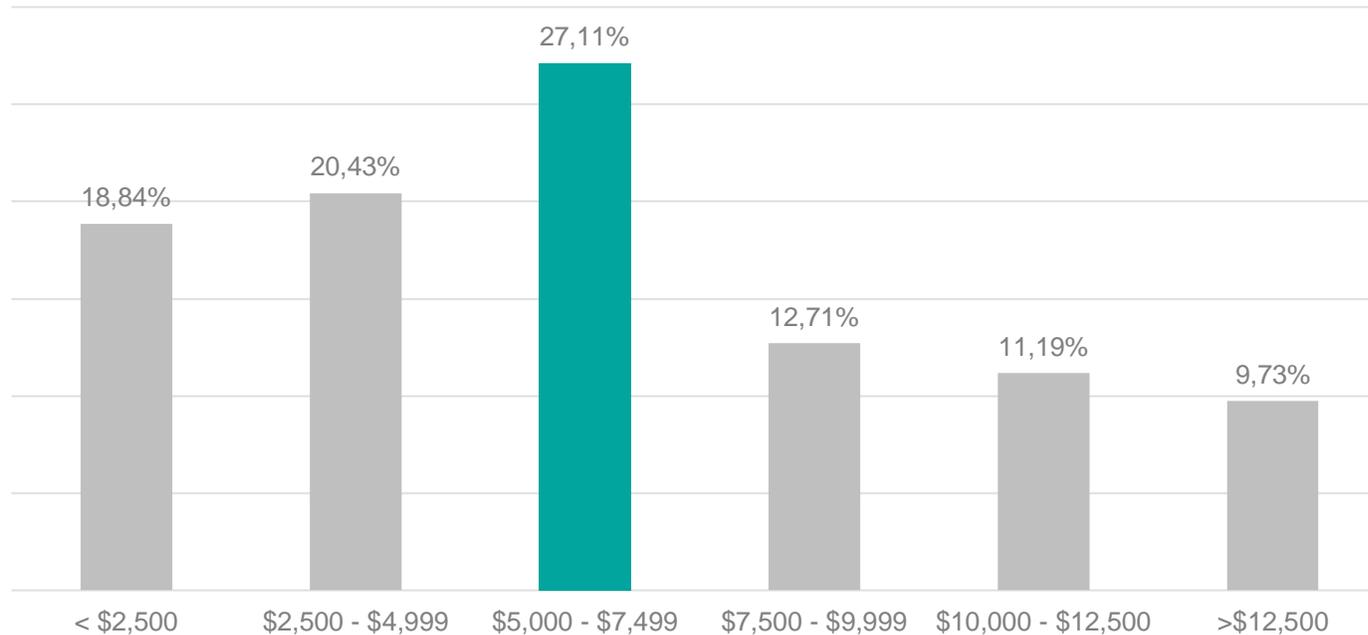|	
I raised my rate	41,40%
I didn't adjust my rate	53,62%
I lowered my rate	4,98%

41.40% increased their hourly rate when compared to 2018.

The majority of freelancers (53.62%) didn't adjust their rates this year.

MONTHLY INCOME

On average, what is your monthly net freelance income?

18,84%	20,43%	27,11%	12,71%	11,19%	9,73%
< $2,500	$2,500 - $4,999	$5,000 - $7,499	$7,500 - $9,999	$10,000 - $12,500	>$12,500

Average monthly income:

$7,218

27.11% claim to have an average monthly income between $5,000 and $7,499.

Less than 10% indicated an average freelance income over $12,500.

INDEPENDENCE

DEFINITION

Which term do you most relate to?

Self-employed	30,21%
Freelancer	29,60%
Independent contractor	21,34%
Business owner	12,95%
Employee	4,92%
Others	0,97%
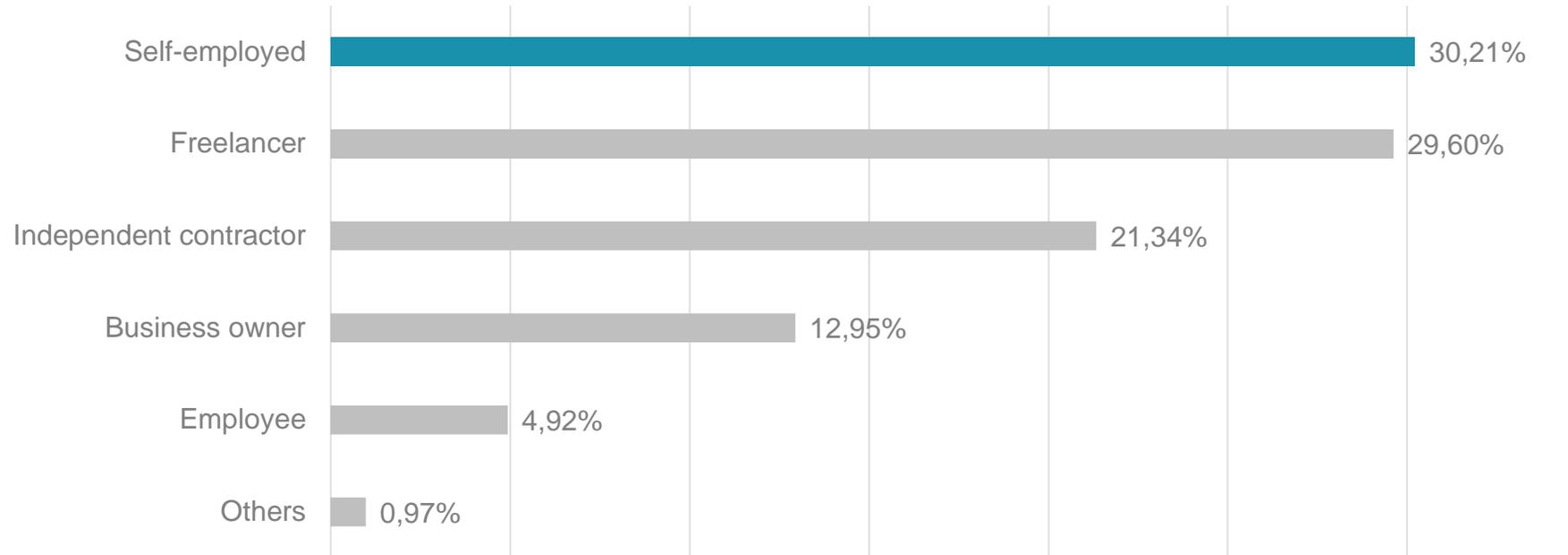
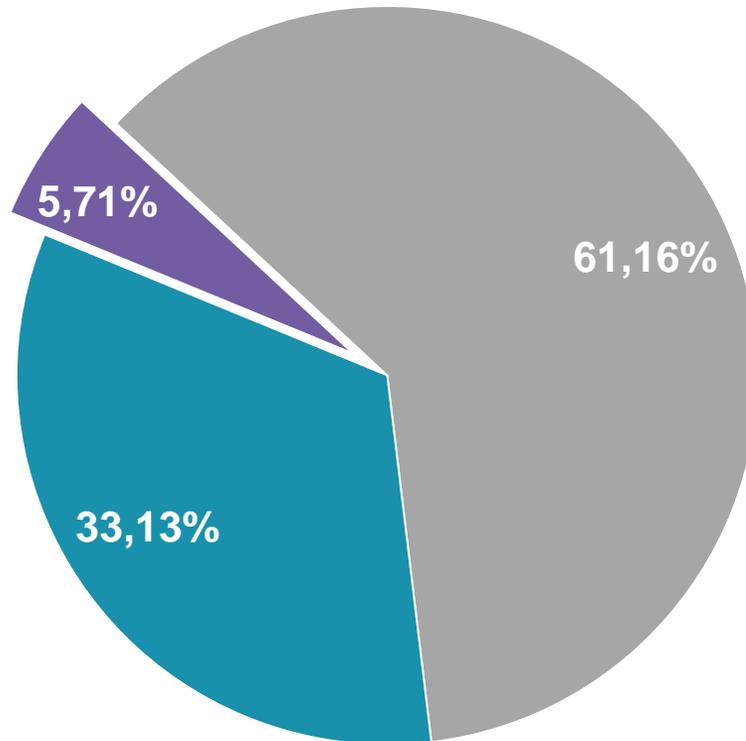**30.21%** of all participants said they define themselves as self-employed, followed by 29.60% of them who said they were freelancers.

FREELANCER TYPE

Which designation most likely applies to you?

61,16%

33,13%

5,71%

■ Team player   ■ Lone fighter   ■ Others

TEAM PLAYER

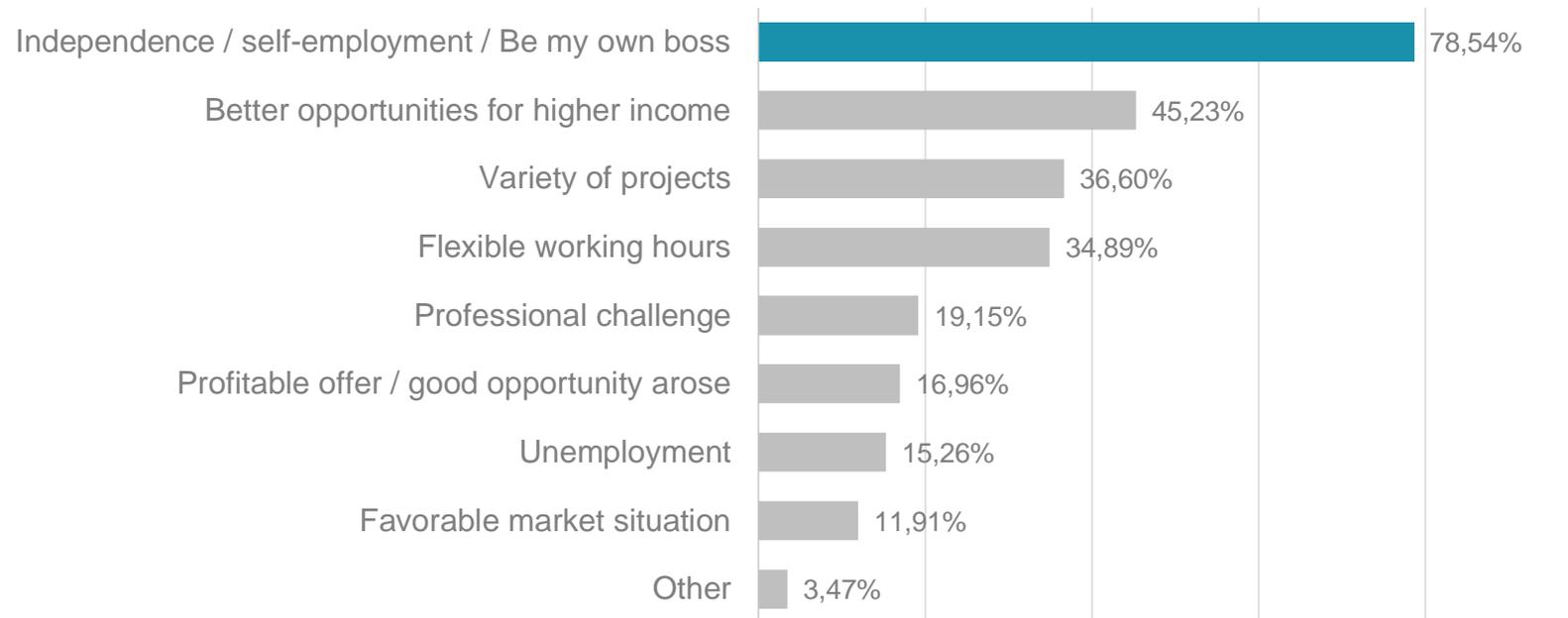61.16 % consider themselves as team players

LONE FIGHTER

33.13 % say that they work better alone

AND THE OTHERS

5.71 % couldn't pick just one.

REASONS TO GO FREELANCE

What reasons made you decide to start freelancing?

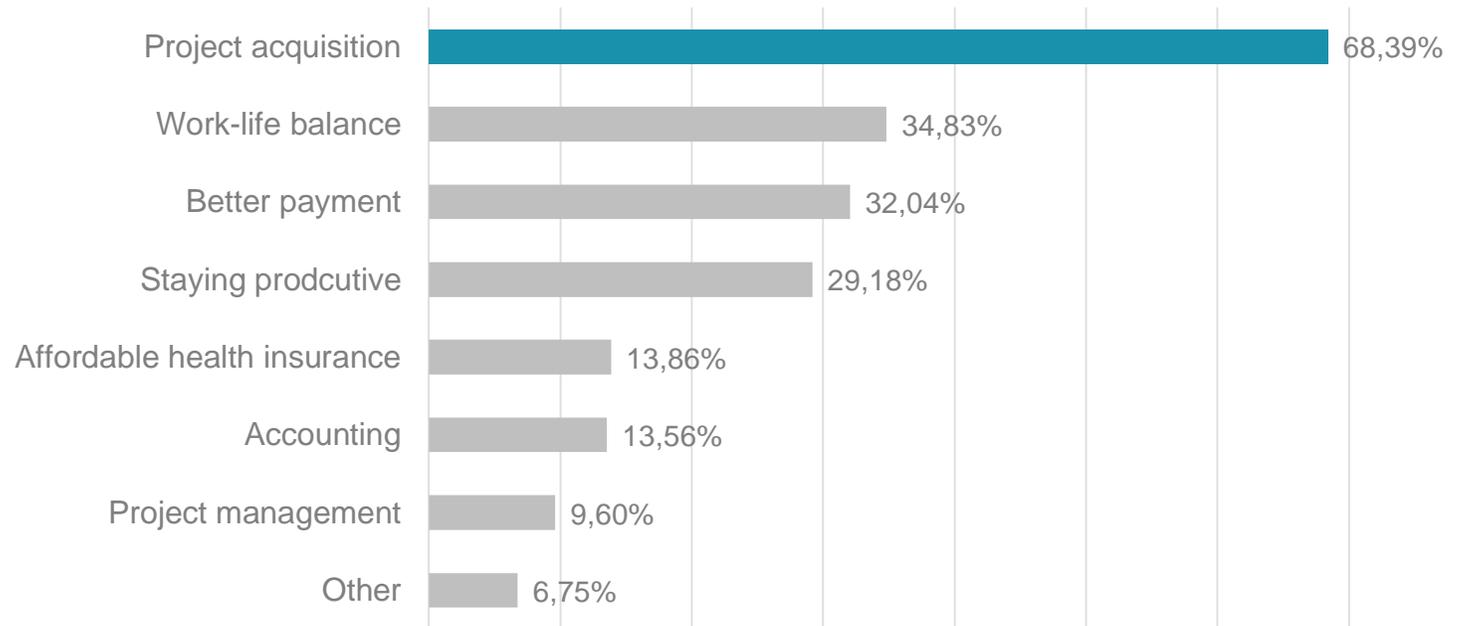| Reason	Percentage
Independence / self-employment / Be my own boss	78,54%
Better opportunities for higher income	45,23%
Variety of projects	36,60%
Flexible working hours	34,89%
Professional challenge	19,15%
Profitable offer / good opportunity arose	16,96%
Unemployment	15,26%
Favorable market situation	11,91%
Other	3,47%

78.54% chose the opportunity to be their own boss as the reason for making the leap.

Better opportunities for getting a **higher income** was voted by **45.23%.** 15.26% mentioned that being unemployed was the reason to freelance but the majority started freelancing by choice.

FREELANCE CHALLENGES

What, in your opinion, are the 3 biggest challenges freelancers face?

|	
Project acquisition	68,39%
Work-life balance	34,83%
Better payment	32,04%
Staying prodcutive	29,18%
Affordable health insurance	13,86%
Accounting	13,56%
Project management	9,60%
Other	6,75%

68.39% agreed that finding new projects was the biggest challenge for freelancers.

Mastering the work-life balance was the second biggest challenge (34.83%), followed shortly by getting better payment (32.04%). Other struggles included staying up-to-date on trends, and time management.
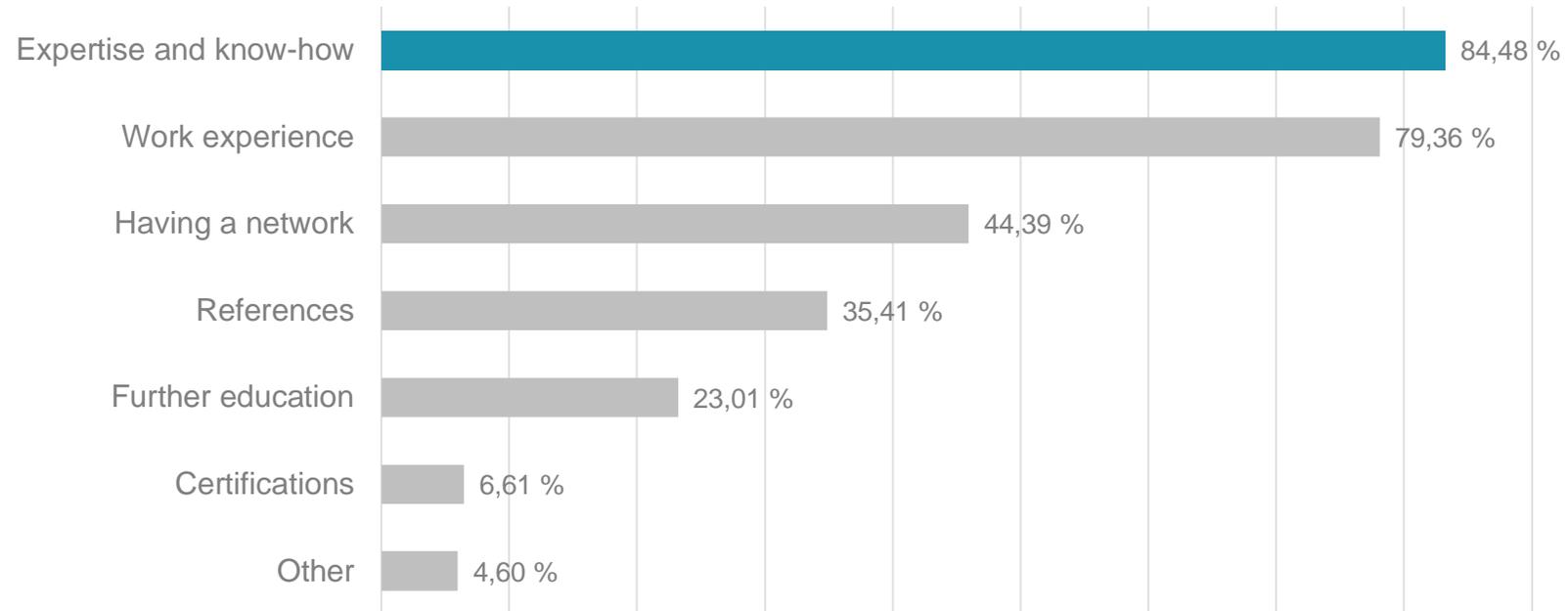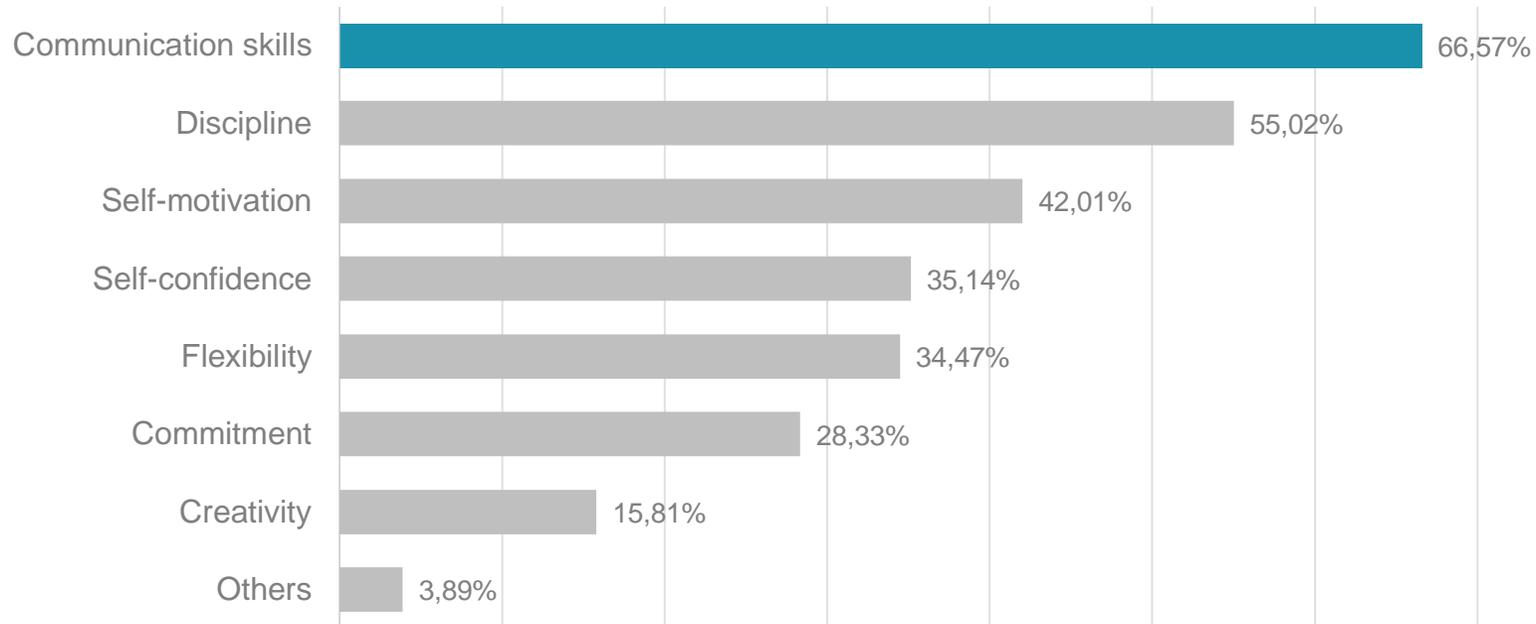
SOFT SKILLS FOR FREELANCERS

What are the most relevant soft skills for freelancers?

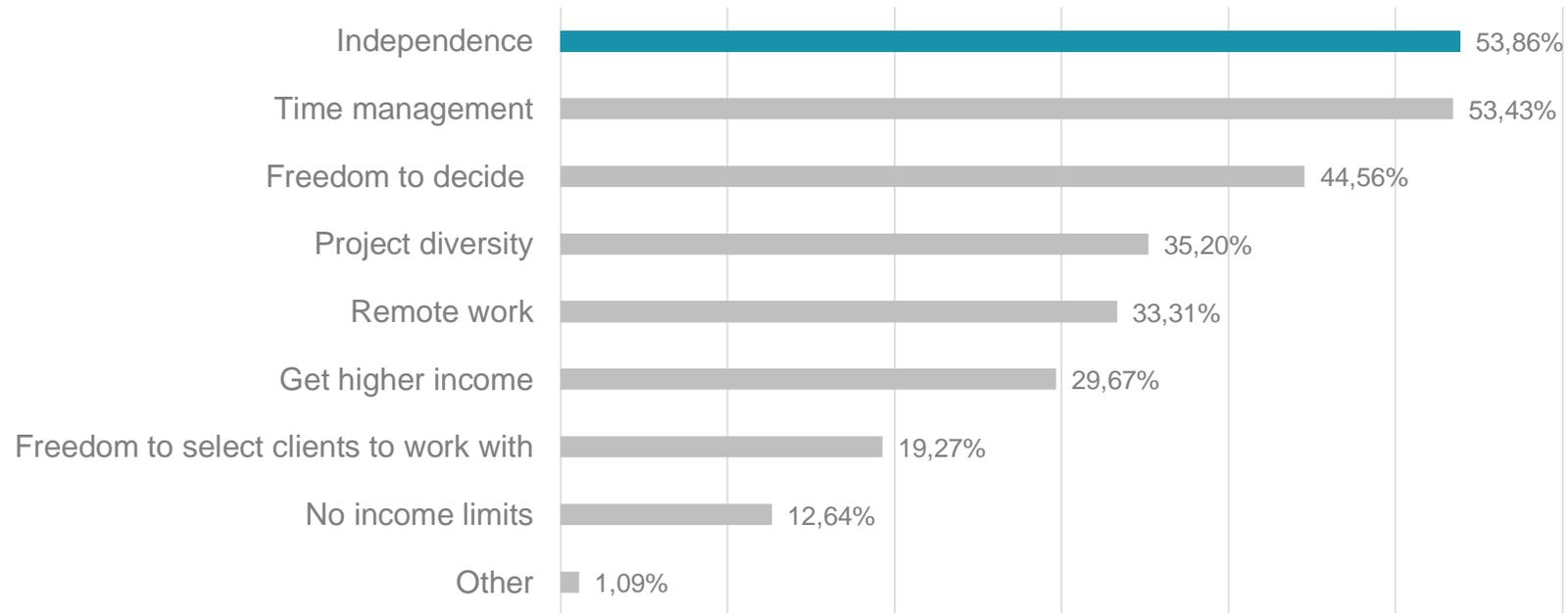| Skill	Percentage
Communication skills	66,57%
Discipline	55,02%
Self-motivation	42,01%
Self-confidence	35,14%
Flexibility	34,47%
Commitment	28,33%
Creativity	15,81%
Others	3,89%

66.57% considered having great communication skills as the most relevant soft skill for freelancers.

Over half of the freelancers (55.02%) also noted discipline as one of the most important soft skills.
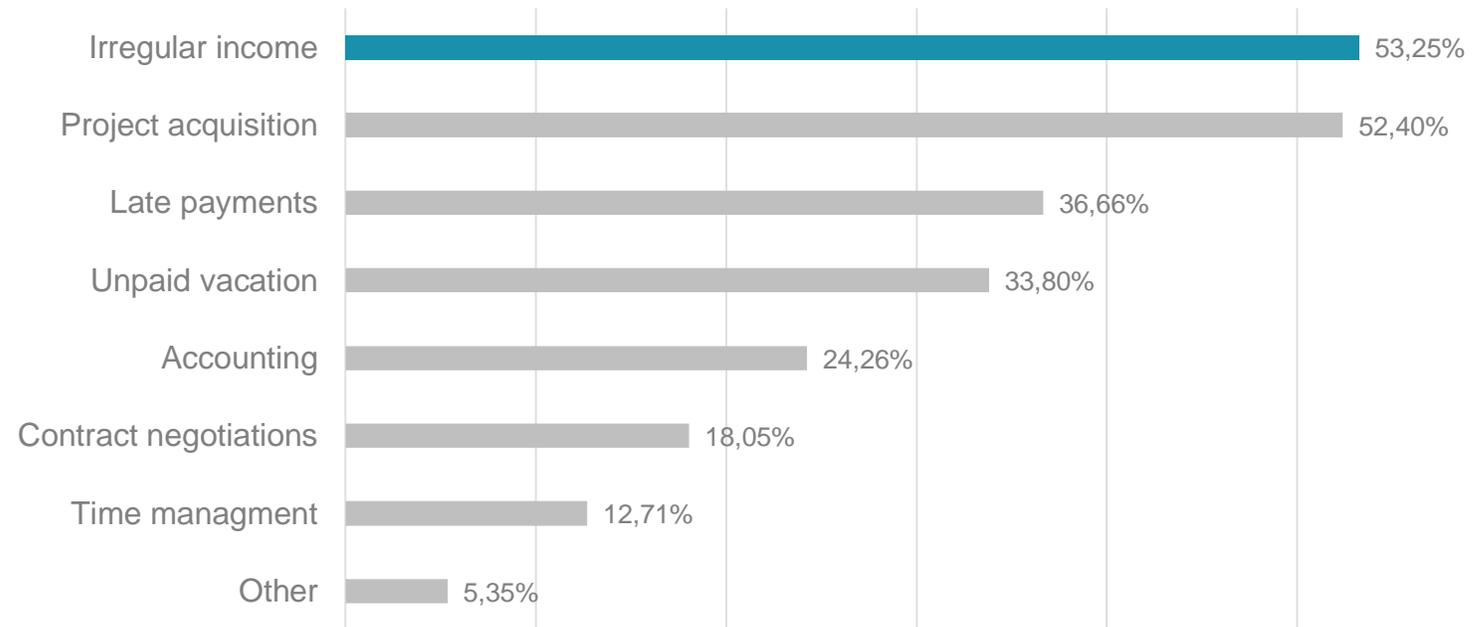
BENEFITS OF FREELANCING

What are the main benefits of freelancing?

Benefit	Percentage
Independence	53,86%
Time management	53,43%
Freedom to decide	44,56%
Project diversity	35,20%
Remote work	33,31%
Get higher income	29,67%
Freedom to select clients to work with	19,27%
No income limits	12,64%
Other	1,09%

53.86% agreed that independence and freedom to decide about your working time are the main benefits of freelancing. Just 12.64% reported earning more money as one of the main benefits.
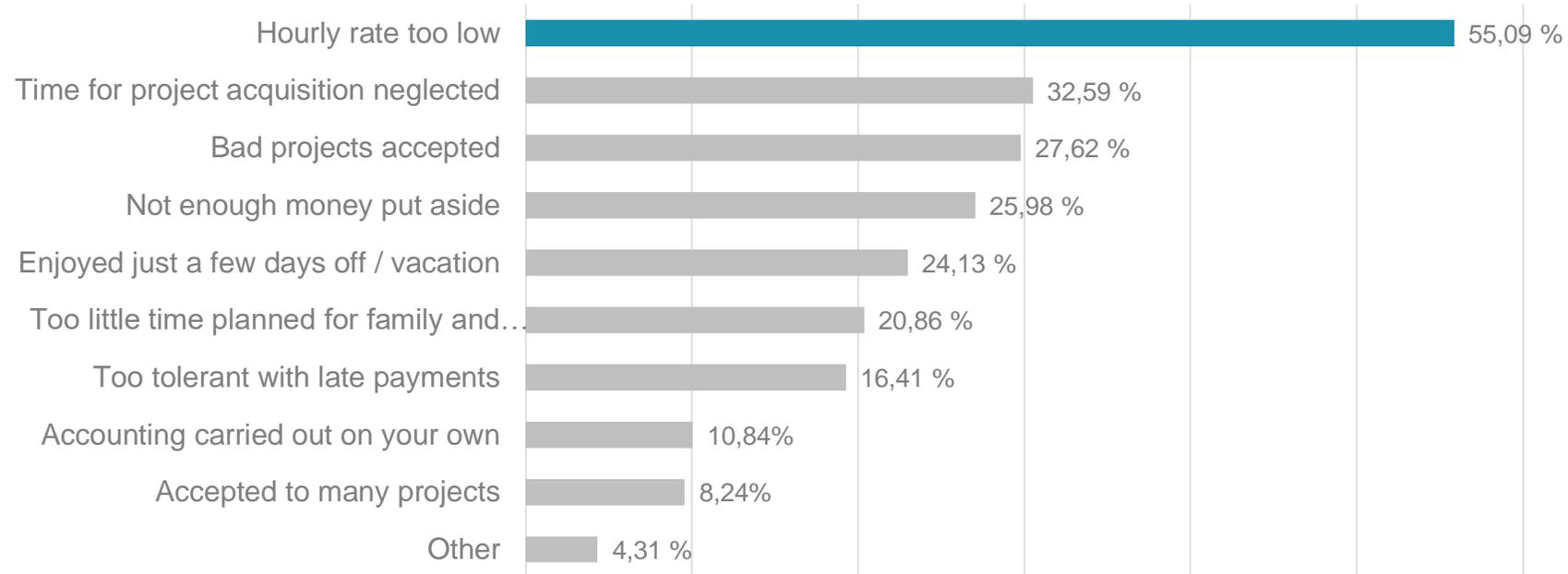
DISADVANTAGES OF FREELANCING

According to you, what are the main disadvantages of freelancing?

Disadvantage	Percentage
Irregular income	53,25%
Project acquisition	52,40%
Late payments	36,66%
Unpaid vacation	33,80%
Accounting	24,26%
Contract negotiations	18,05%
Time managment	12,71%
Other	5,35%

53.25% of freelancers reported fluctuating income as the main disadvantage, closely followed by project acquisition (52.40%). In the third place, late payments were cited by 36.66%.

FIRST MISTAKES AS FREELANCER

Which mistakes did you make more often at the beginning of your freelancer career?

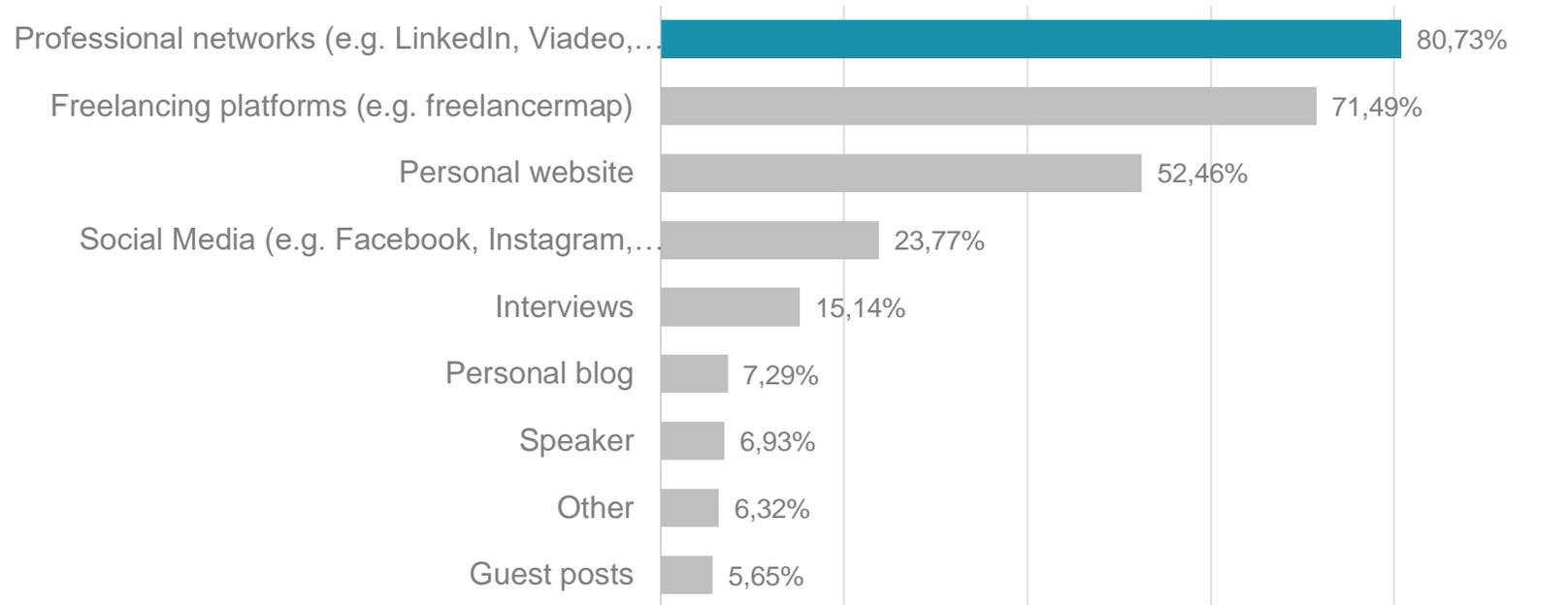| Category	Percentage
Hourly rate too low	55,09 %
Time for project acquisition neglected	32,59 %
Bad projects accepted	27,62 %
Not enough money put aside	25,98 %
Enjoyed just a few days off / vacation	24,13 %
Too little time planned for family and…	20,86 %
Too tolerant with late payments	16,41 %
Accounting carried out on your own	10,84%
Accepted to many projects	8,24%
Other	4,31 %

55.09% of freelancers cited *charging way too low rates at the beginning* as their main mistake.

32.59% said they neglected the time needed in project acquisition and 27.62% admitted to working on bad projects.

SELF-MARKETING
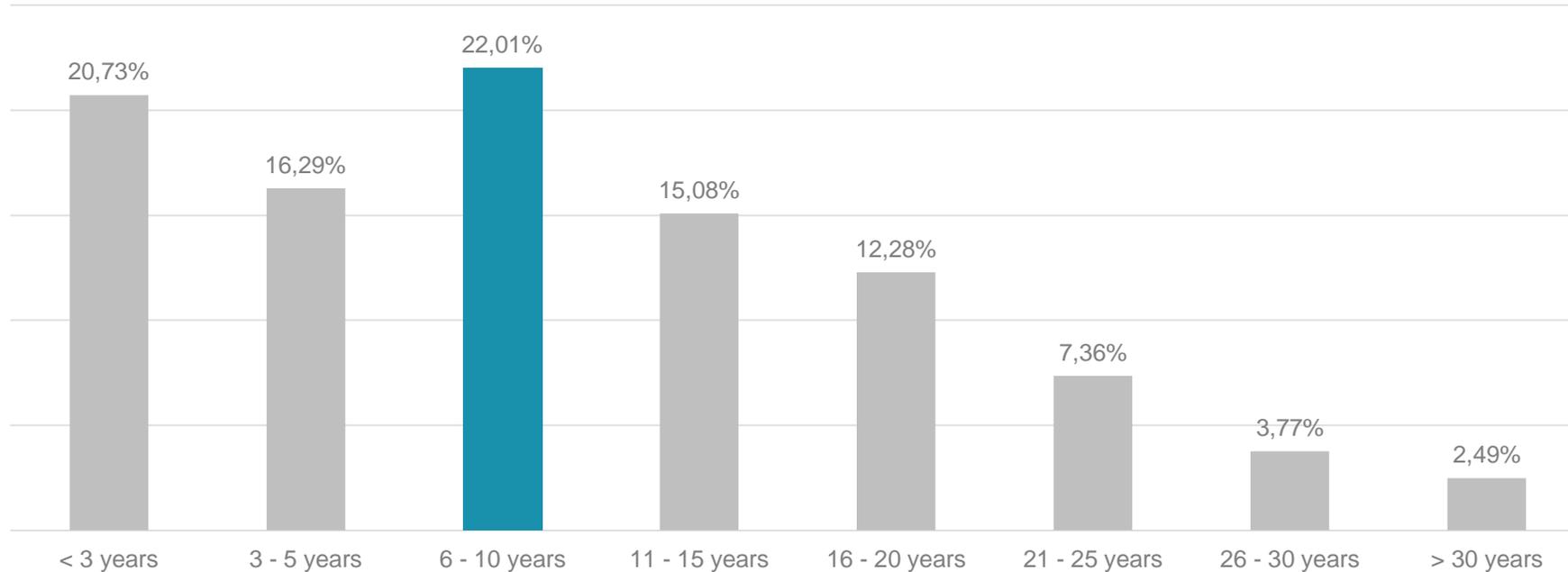
How do you market your freelancing services?

Professional networks (e.g. LinkedIn, Viadeo,…	80,73%
Freelancing platforms (e.g. freelancermap)	71,49%
Personal website	52,46%
Social Media (e.g. Facebook, Instagram,…	23,77%
Interviews	15,14%
Personal blog	7,29%
Speaker	6,93%
Other	6,32%
Guest posts	5,65%

80.73% of freelancers said they use professional networks to market their services.

7 out of 10 surveyed freelancers use freelancing platforms such as freelancermap to offer their services and 1 out of 2 use their own website in their market strategy.

YEARS FREELANCING

How long have you been freelancing?

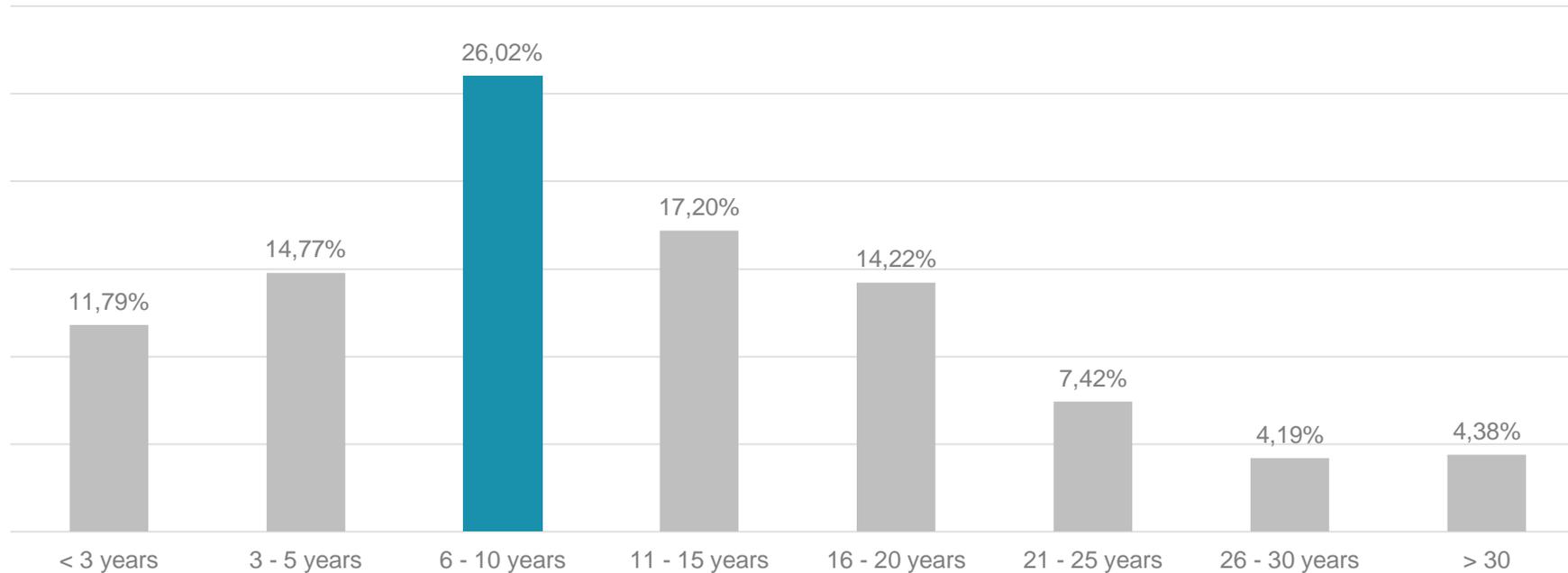| Category	Percentage
< 3 years	20,73%
3 - 5 years	16,29%
6 - 10 years	22,01%
11 - 15 years	15,08%
16 - 20 years	12,28%
21 - 25 years	7,36%
26 - 30 years	3,77%
> 30 years	2,49%

On average, participating freelancers have been freelancing for **10.51 years.**

37.02% of the freelancers have been freelancing for less than 6 years while 62.98% have been running their freelance business for 6 years or more.

WORKING EXPERIENCE

How many years of work experience did you collect before becoming a freelancer?

Category	Percentage
< 3 years	11,79%
3 - 5 years	14,77%
6 - 10 years	26,02%
11 - 15 years	17,20%
16 - 20 years	14,22%
21 - 25 years	7,42%
26 - 30 years	4,19%
> 30	4,38%

The freelancers had, on average, **12.29 years** of experience before making the transition to freelancing.

43.22% confirmed they had between 6 – 15 years of professional experience.

CURRENTLY WORKING

Are you currently working on a project?

73%

27%
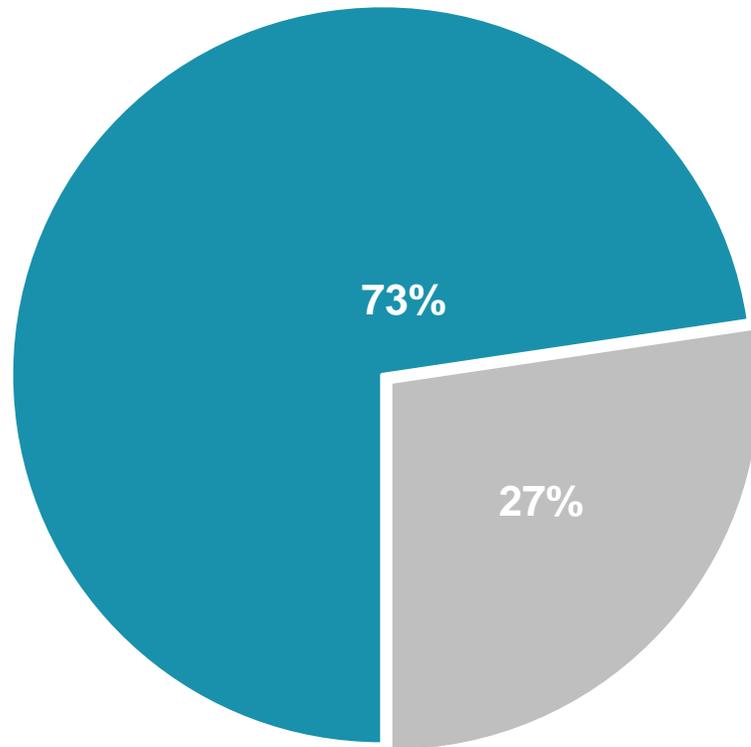
■ On a project ■ Not on a project

YES

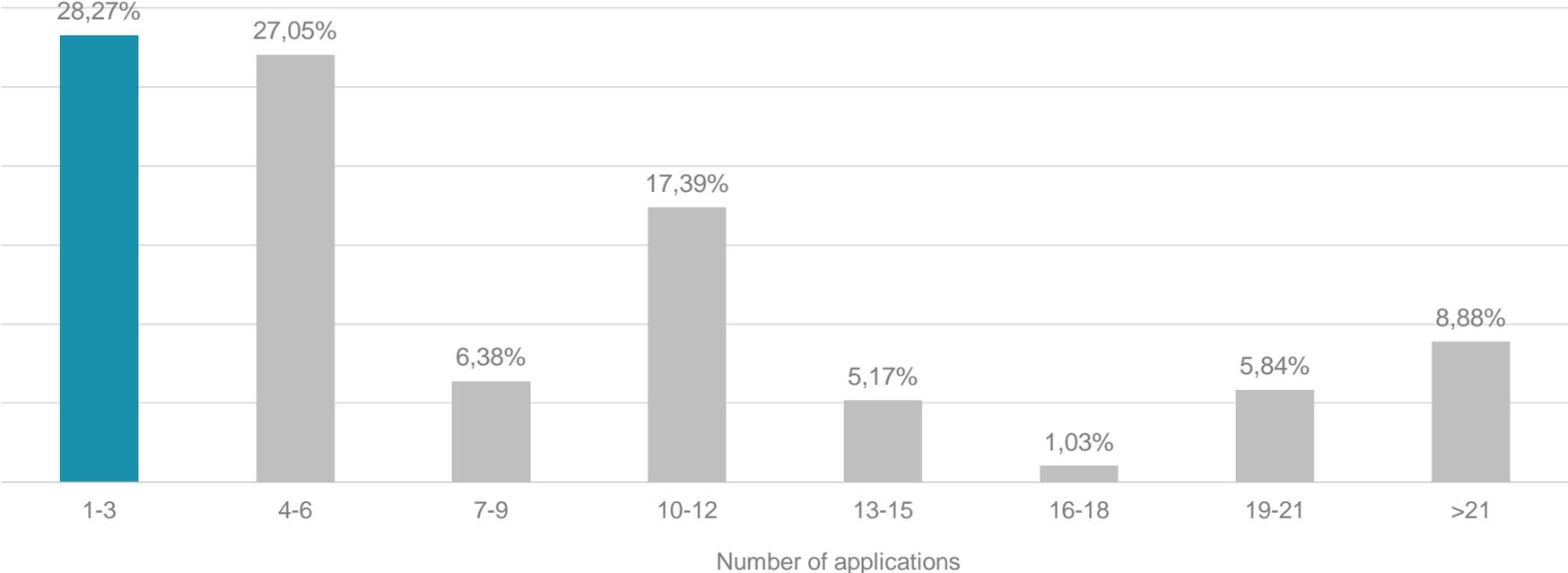73% of freelancers were currently working on a project.

NO

27% confirmed they were not currently working on a project.

Main reasons: No interesting offers and/or they were waiting for the next project to start.

APPLICATIONS & PROPOSALS

On average, how many projects do you apply to before winning a contract?

28,27%   27,05%

17,39%

8,88%

6,38%   5,17%   5,84%

1,03%

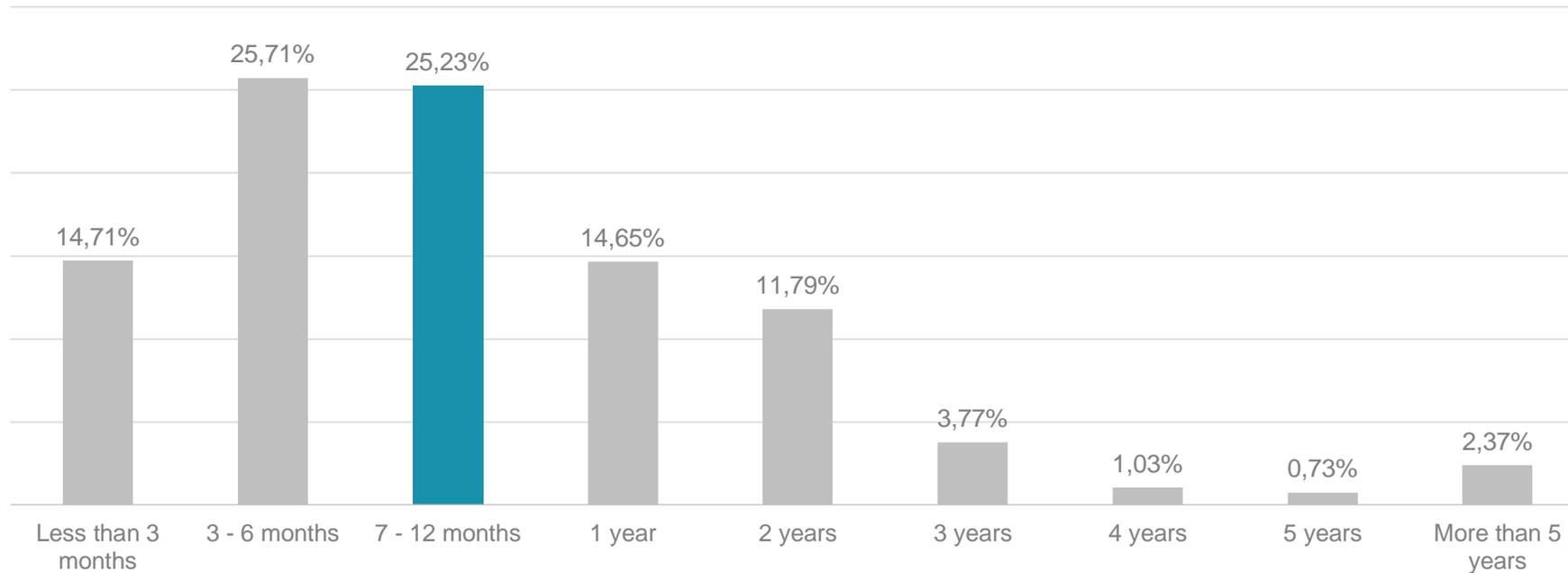| 1-3 | 4-6 | 7-9 | 10-12 | 13-15 | 16-18 | 19-21 | >21 |

Number of applications

Up to 6 proposals are sent by 55.31% of freelancers before they win a contract.

On average, freelancers send 9.58 applications before they get a project.

TIME ON A PROJECT

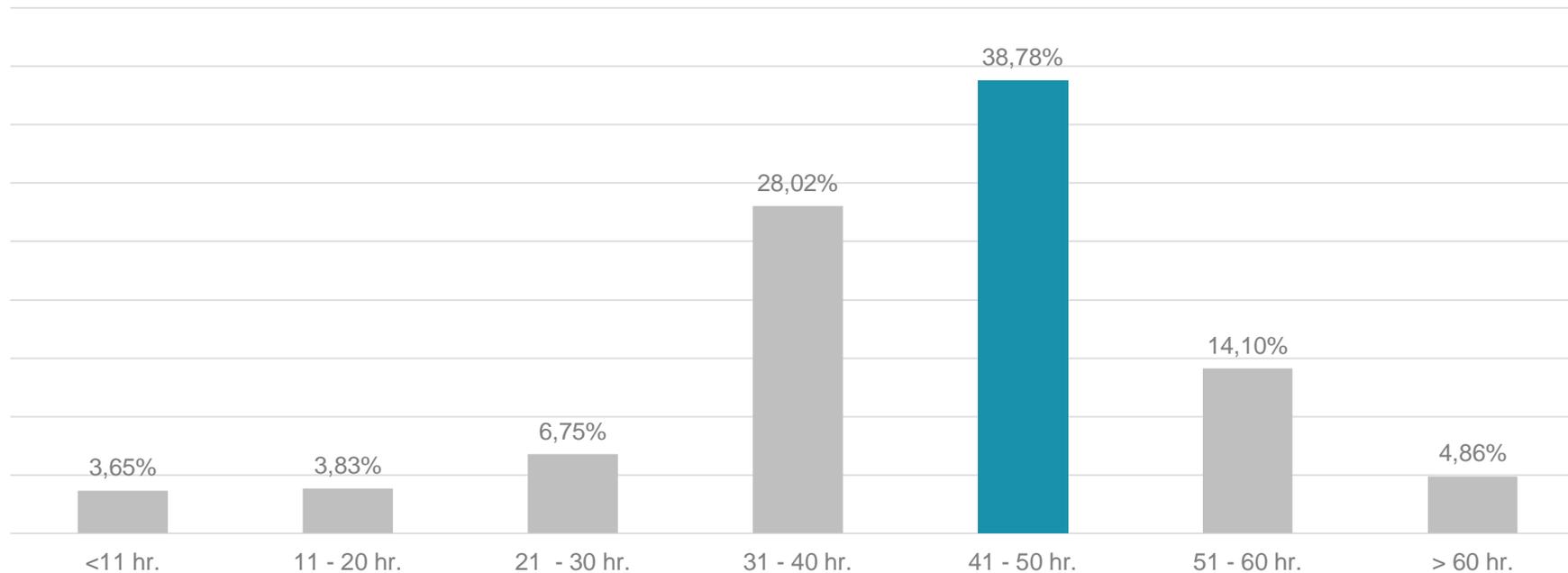On average, how long do you typically spend working on a project?

14,71%
25,71%
25,23%
14,65%
11,79%
3,77%
1,03%
0,73%
2,37%

Less than 3 months | 3 - 6 months | 7 - 12 months | 1 year | 2 years | 3 years | 4 years | 5 years | More than 5 years

65.65% of freelancers tend to work on a project lasting up to 12 months.

Just 2.37% confirmed to working on the same project longer than 5 years.

MONTHLY TIME IN ACTIVITIES

On average, how many days per month do you spend on the following activities

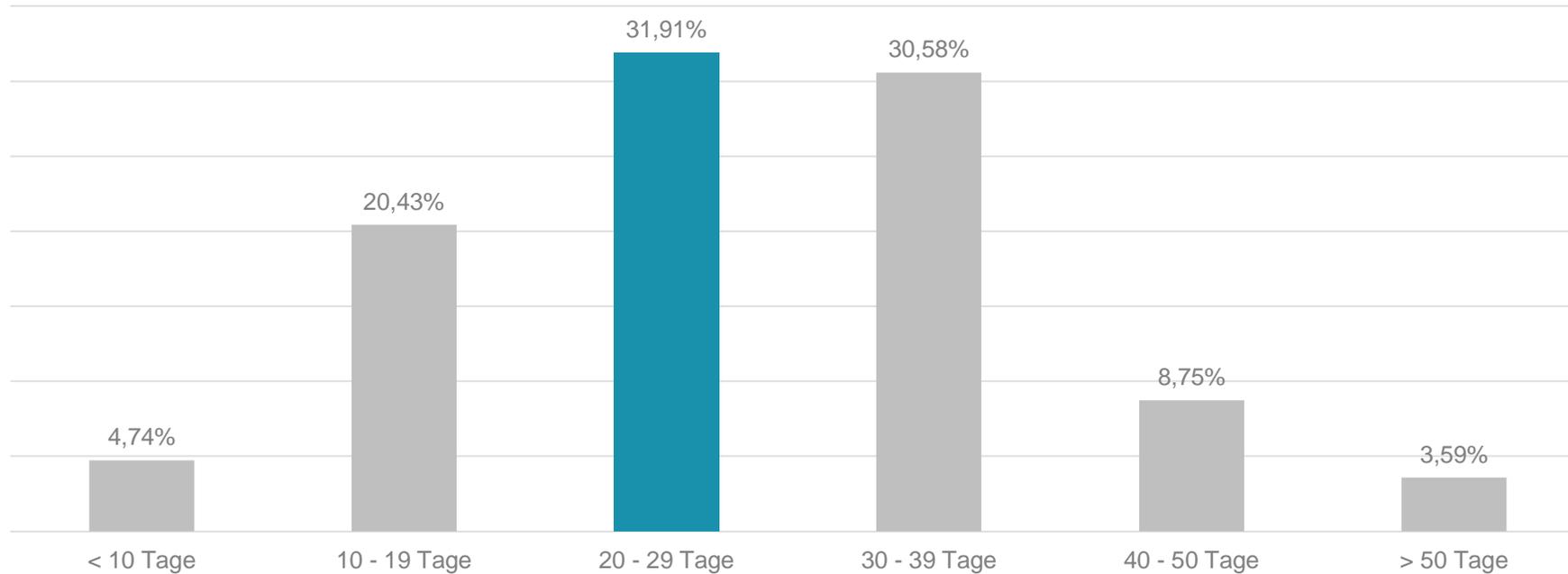| Working on projects	On project acquisition	On further training / education	Others	On accounting
18,09	2,64	2,39	2,31	1,53
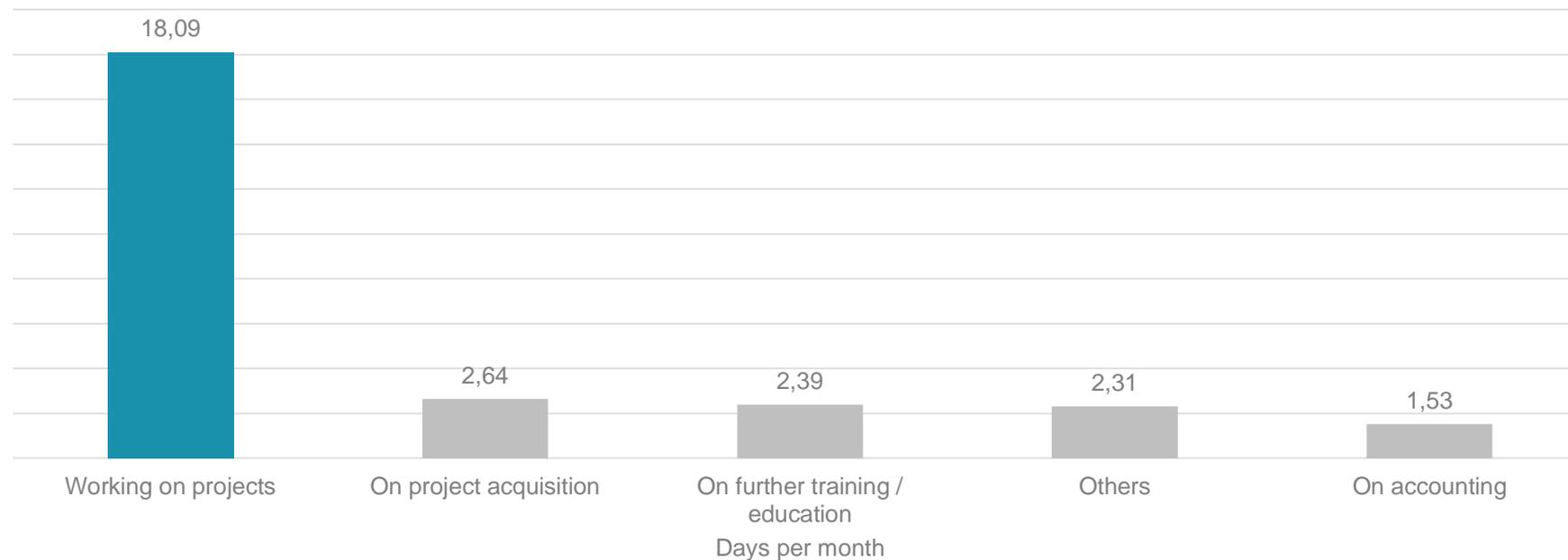
Days per month

Freelancers spend on average of **18 days** per month working on projects.

Almost 3 days are allocated to win new projects. Around 2 days are invested in professional development.

VACATION

How many days of vacation do you take per year?

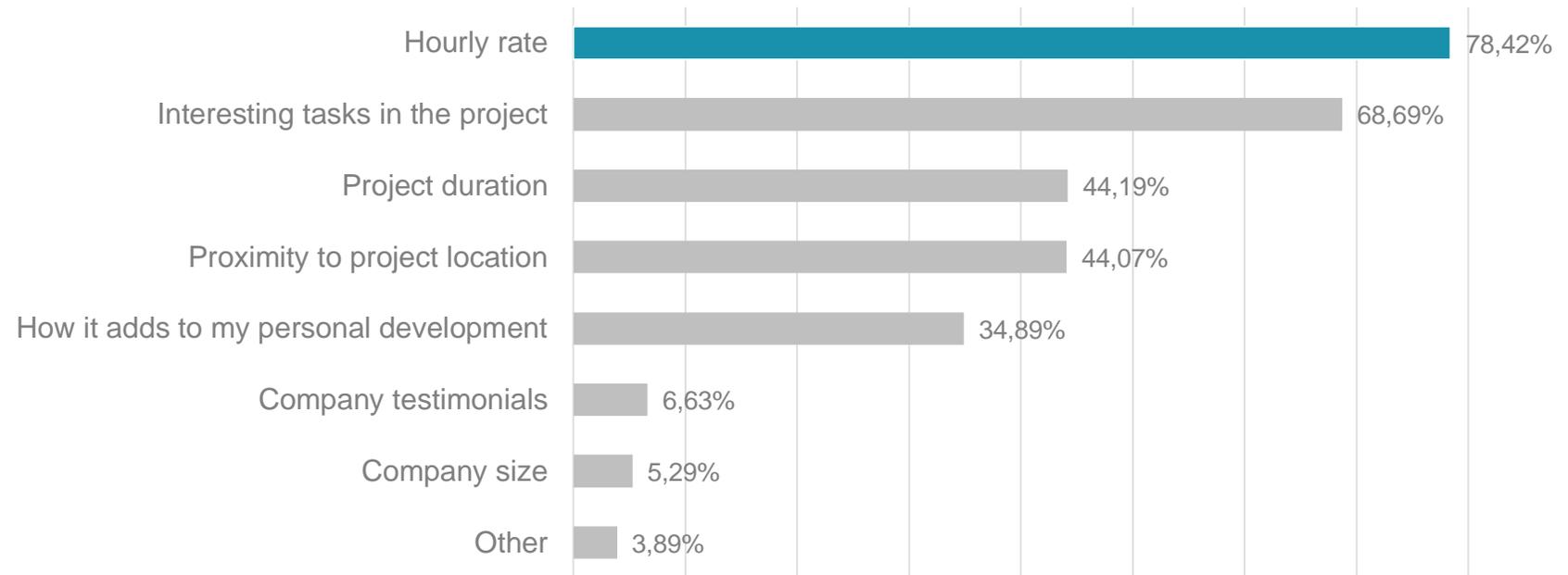|					
4,74%	20,43%	31,91%	30,58%	8,75%	3,59%
< 10 Tage	10 - 19 Tage	20 - 29 Tage	30 - 39 Tage	40 - 50 Tage	> 50 Tage

Freelancers take on average **25.45 days** off per year.

More than half of the freelancers (57.08%) enjoy less than 30 days of vacation per year.

ACCEPTING A PROJECT

What factors are specially important to you when accepting a project?

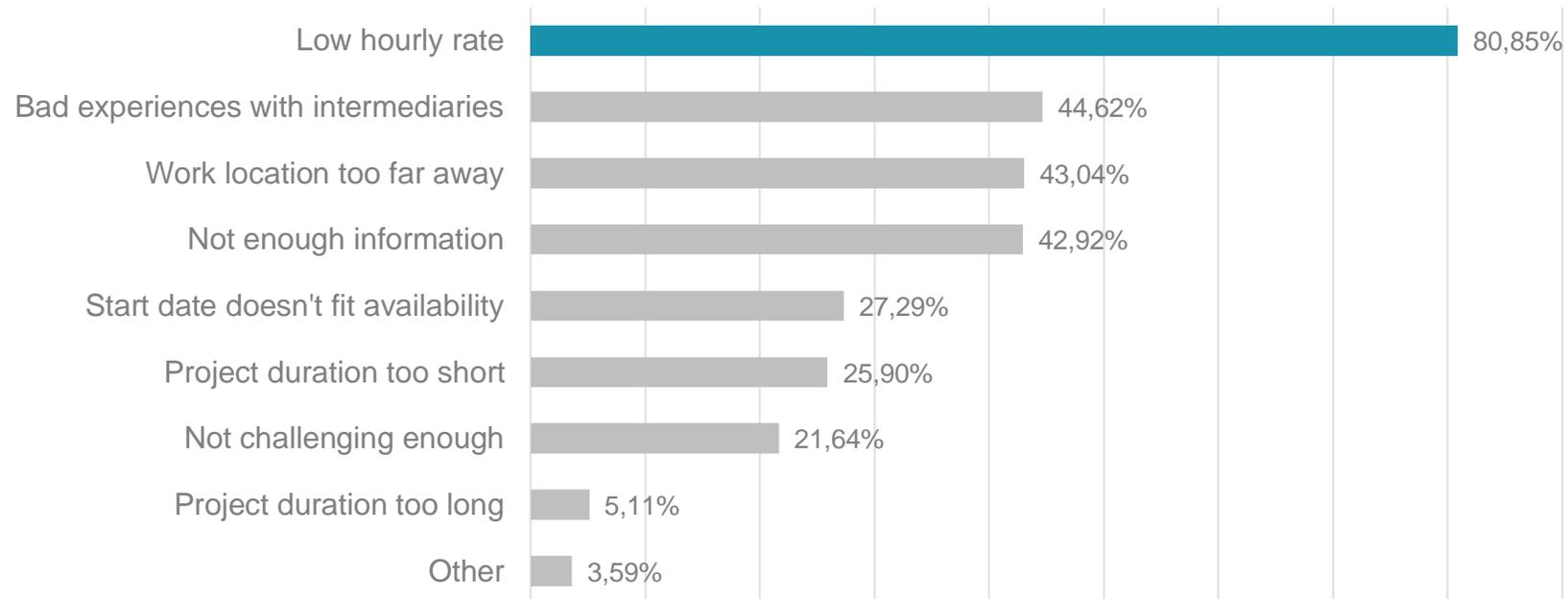| Factor	Percentage
Hourly rate	78,42%
Interesting tasks in the project	68,69%
Project duration	44,19%
Proximity to project location	44,07%
How it adds to my personal development	34,89%
Company testimonials	6,63%
Company size	5,29%
Other	3,89%

78.42% of freelancers decide whether or not to take a project based on the hourly rate offered.

Having interesting tasks to complete on the project was highlighted as an important factor by 68.69%.

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PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS - "NO-GO"

What are your "no-go" signs for project descriptions?

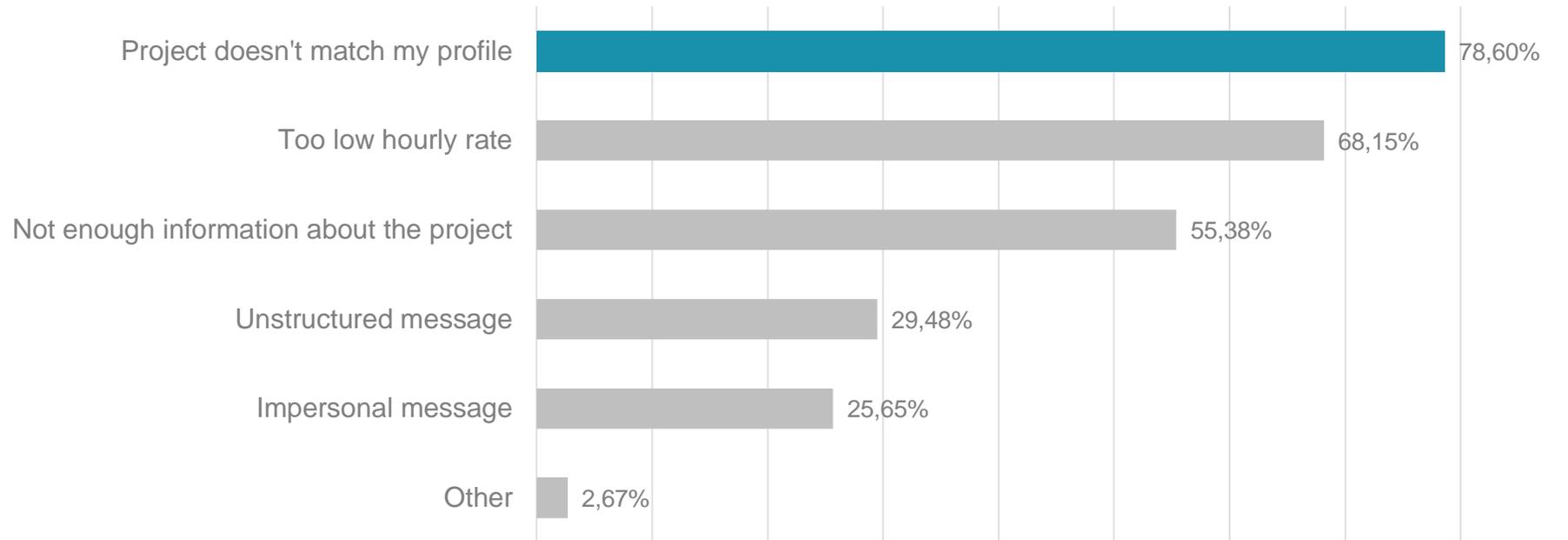|	
Low hourly rate	80,85%
Bad experiences with intermediaries	44,62%
Work location too far away	43,04%
Not enough information	42,92%
Start date doesn't fit availability	27,29%
Project duration too short	25,90%
Not challenging enough	21,64%
Project duration too long	5,11%
Other	3,59%

80.85% of freelancers don't consider projects offering low hourly rates.

44.62% shy away from a project if they have had bad experiences with the person / company hiring or if the working location is too far away (43.04%).

CONTACT REQUESTS - "NO-GO"

What are your "no-go" signs for project requests?

Project doesn't match my profile	78,60%
Too low hourly rate	68,15%
Not enough information about the project	55,38%
Unstructured message	29,48%
Impersonal message	25,65%
Other	2,67%

78.60% of freelancers wouldn't consider a contact request offering a project that doesn't match their profile.

"Too low hourly rate" (68.15%) and "receiving not enough information about the project" (55.38%) landed in the second and third place.

Source: freelancermap.com/market-study

FREELANCING vs. EMPLOYMENT

Do you earn more than your colleagues working a full time job?
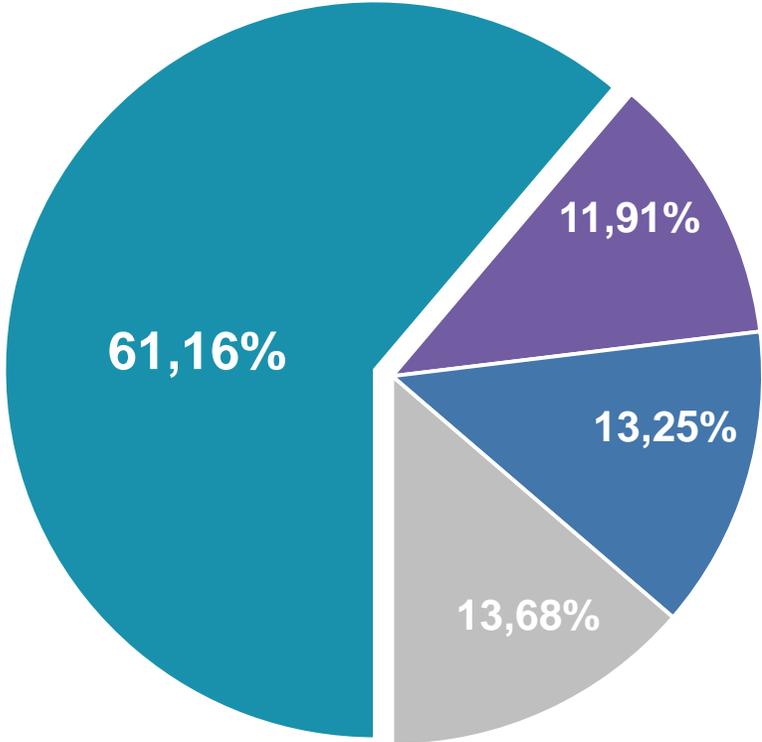
61,16%

11,91%

13,25%

13,68%

- Yes - No - The same - I don't know

YES
61.16% of freelancers said to be earning more than their counterparts working full time.

NO
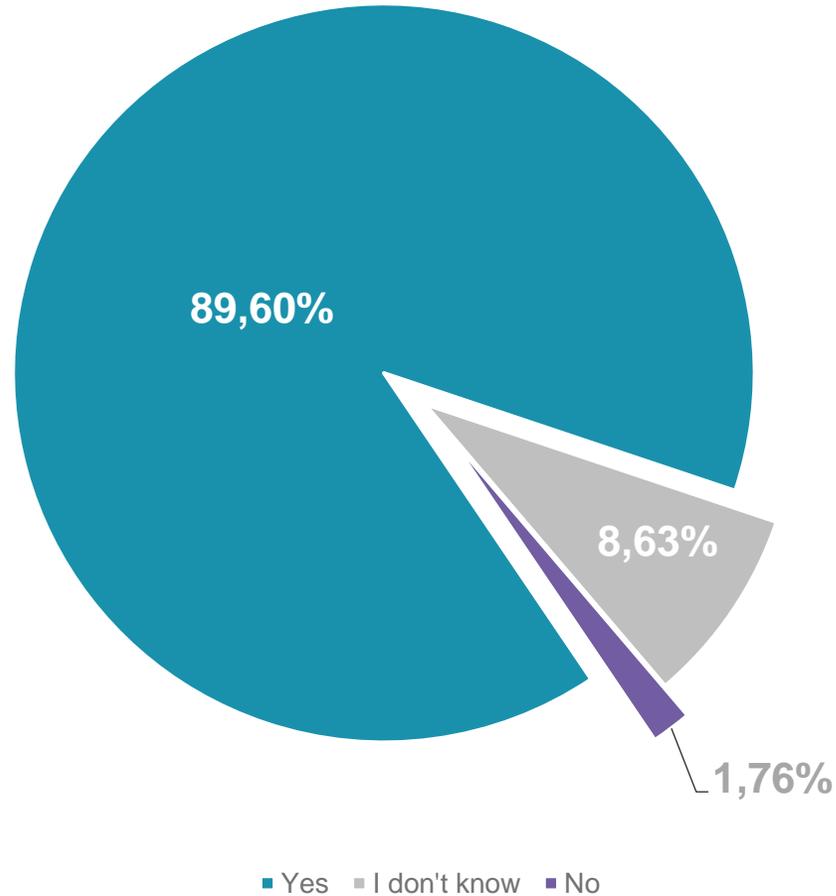11.91% think they are earning less.

THE SAME
13.25% consider they're earing probably the same.

NOT SURE
13.68% don't know if they get more or less than other full-time employees.

FREELANCER AGAIN?

If you could start over, would you still choose to be a freelancer?

89,60%

8,63%

1,76%

■ Yes   ■ I don't know   ■ No

YES

89.60% of freelancers would start their freelance business again.
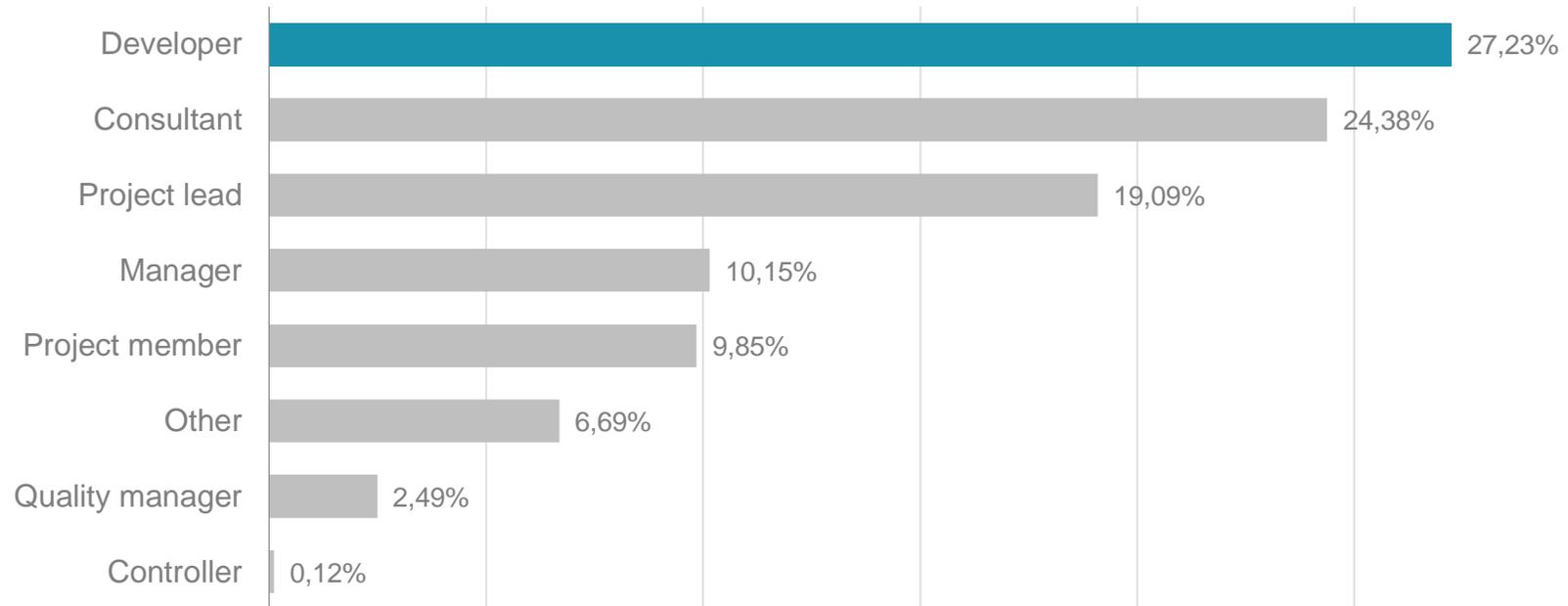
DON'T KNOW

8.63% weren't sure if they would choose to be a freelancer if they would start over..

NO

Just 1.76% of freelancers were sure they would not choose to become a freelancer if they could start over.

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ROLE ON PROJECTS

What was your position in the last (or current) project?

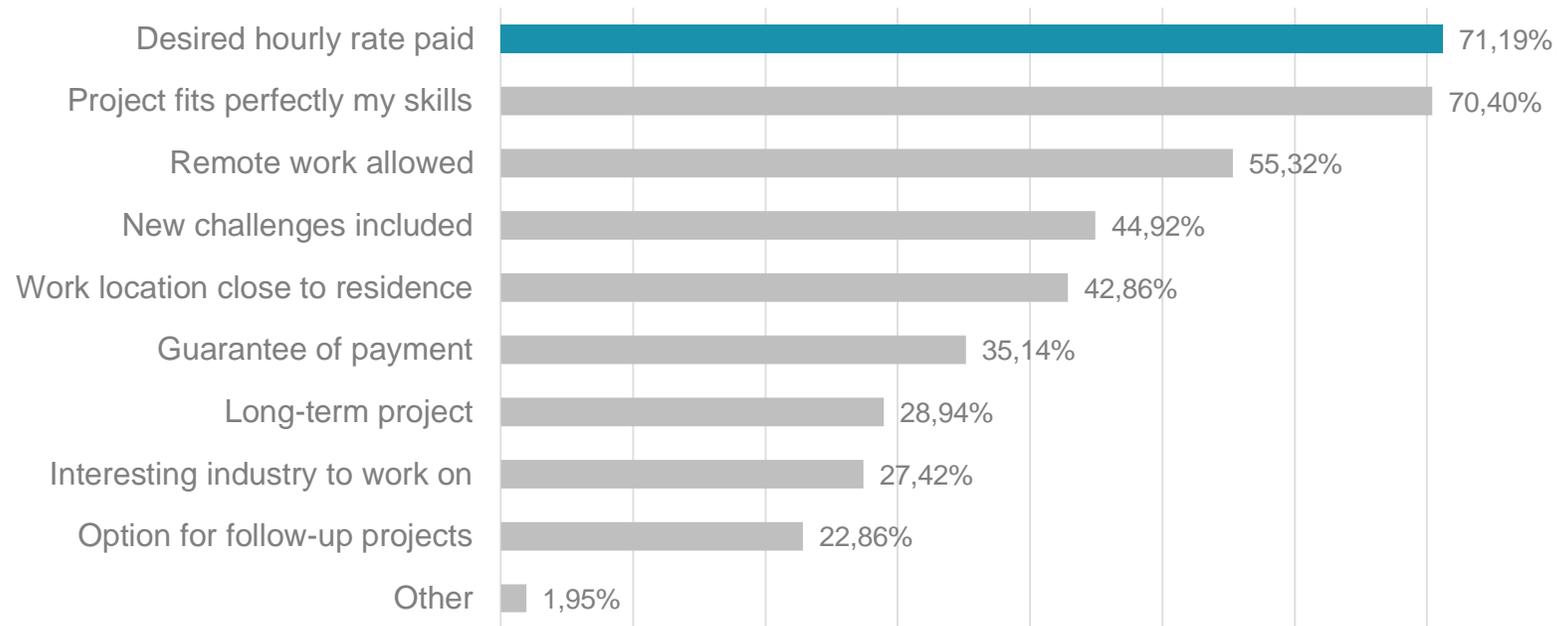| Role	Percentage
Developer	27,23%
Consultant	24,38%
Project lead	19,09%
Manager	10,15%
Project member	9,85%
Other	6,69%
Quality manager	2,49%
Controller	0,12%

51.61% of the surveyed freelancers work as "Developers or Consultants".

19.09% work as project lead and 10.15% as managers.

THE PERFECT PROJECT

What makes a project "the perfect project"?

Category	Percentage
Desired hourly rate paid	71,19%
Project fits perfectly my skills	70,40%
Remote work allowed	55,32%
New challenges included	44,92%
Work location close to residence	42,86%
Guarantee of payment	35,14%
Long-term project	28,94%
Interesting industry to work on	27,42%
Option for follow-up projects	22,86%
Other	1,95%

71.19% of freelancers said that getting their desired hourly rate makes a project perfect.

For 70.40% of participants working on a project that match their skills is what make a project perfect. Also, having the option to work remotely is important for 55.32% of freelancers.

DELEGATING TASKS

Do you outsource or delegate any tasks?

62,98%

37,02%

■ Yes ■ No
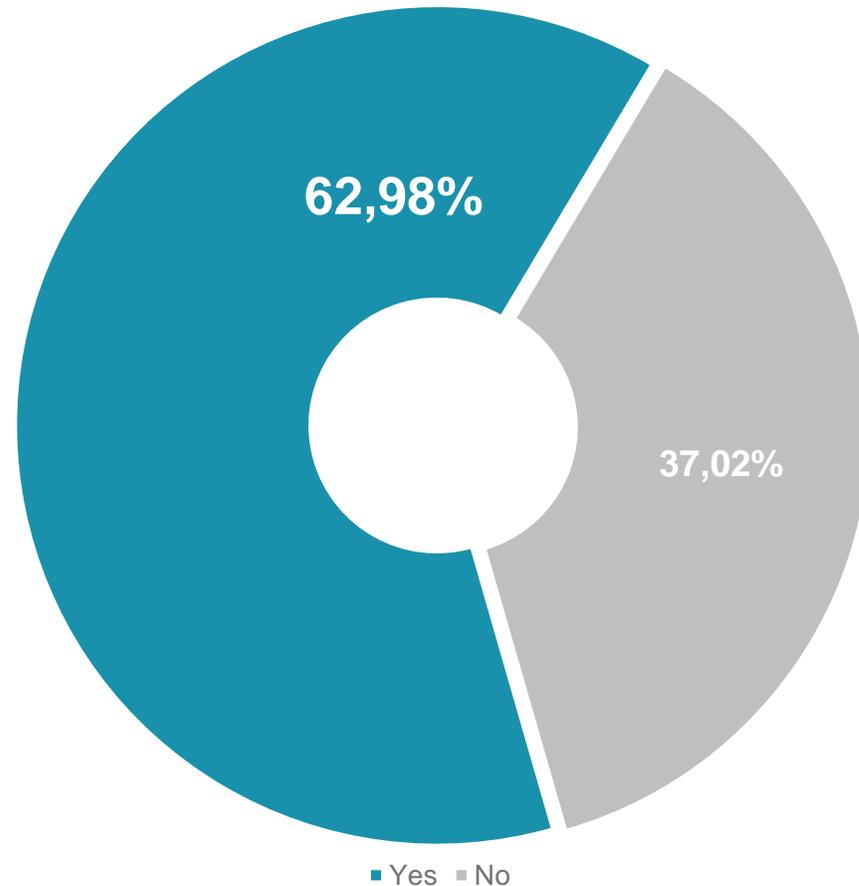
YES
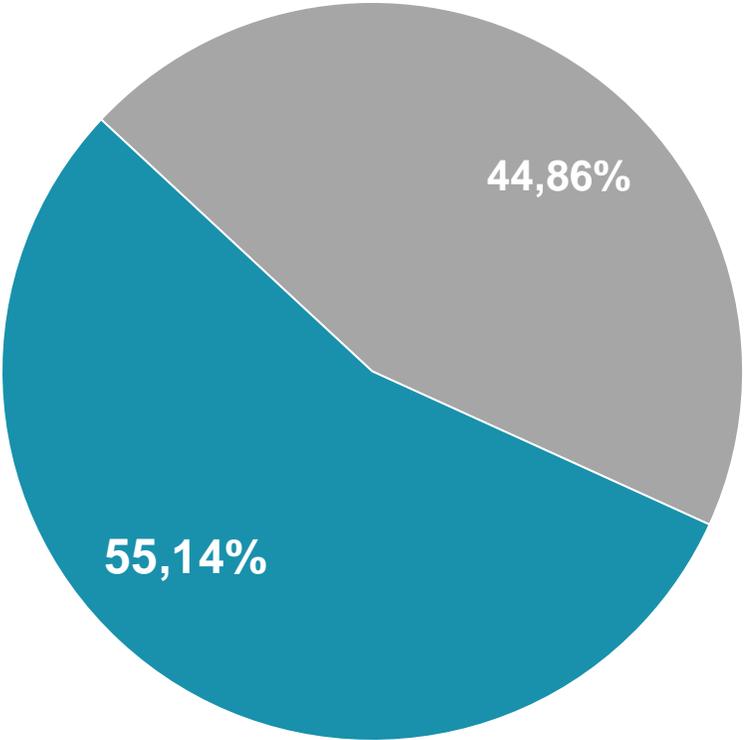
62.98 % outsource at least one task.

Which ones? **Taxes** (91%), **accounting** (73%), **legal advice** (59%) or **other tasks** (5%)

NO

37.02% do everything on their own..

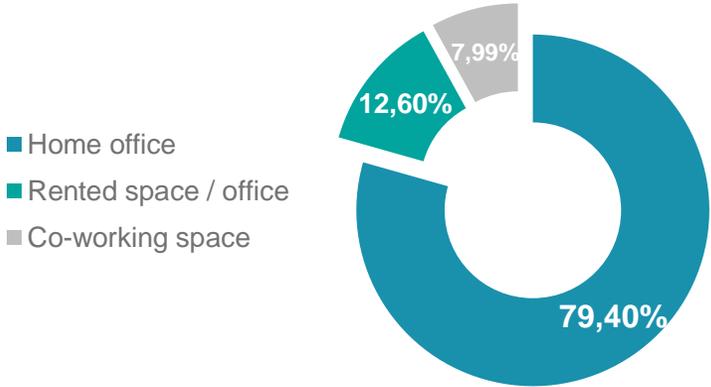# WORKPLACE

Where will you be typically working in 2019?

44,86%

55,14%

■ Remote ■ On-site

ON-SITE

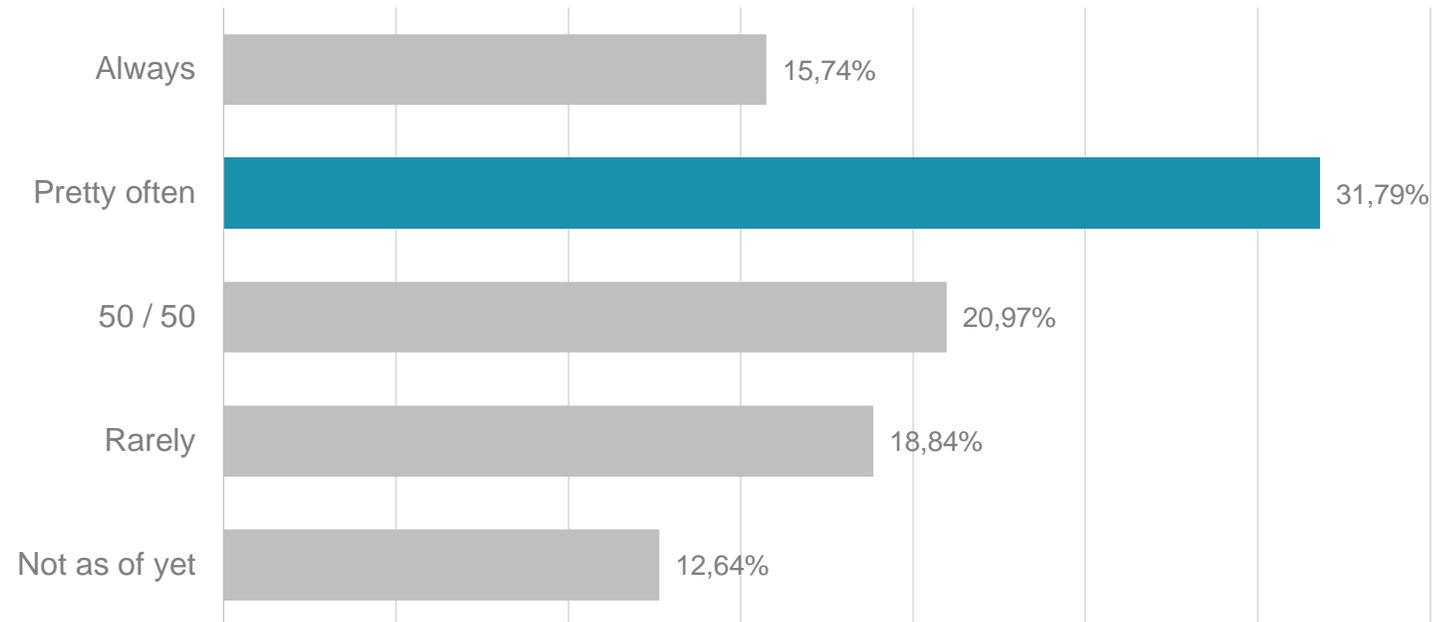55.14% said that they will be working at the client's office.

REMOTE

44.86 % will be working remotely but where exactly?

7,99%

12,60%

■ Home office
■ Rented space / office
■ Co-working space

79,40%

RECRUITERS

Do you work with recruiters or agencies?

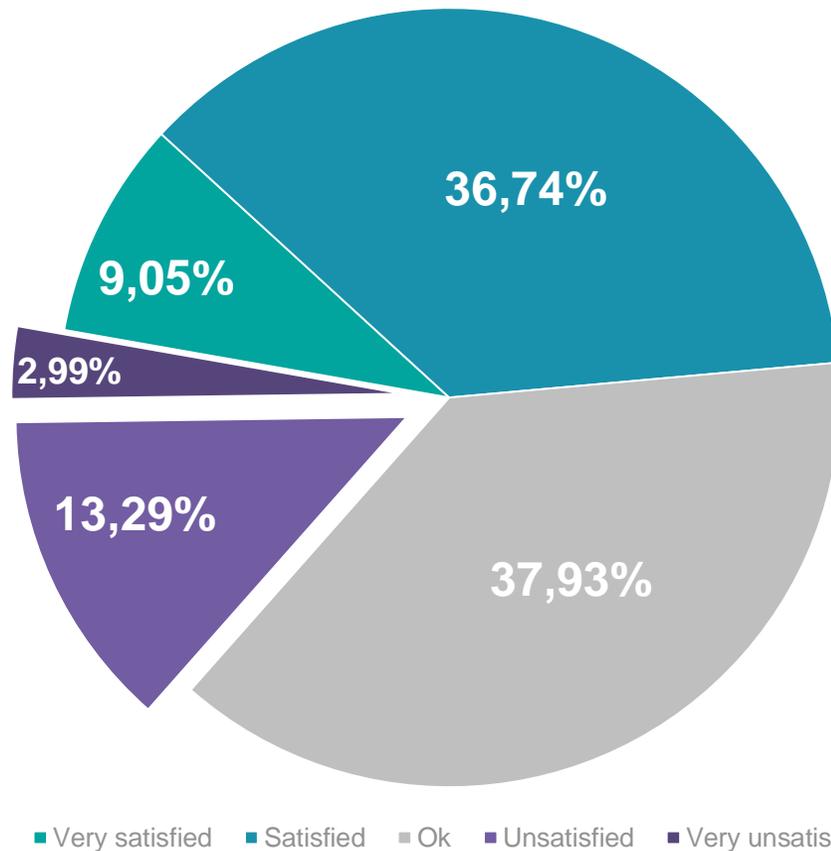| Category	Percentage
Always	15,74%
Pretty often	31,79%
50 / 50	20,97%
Rarely	18,84%
Not as of yet	12,64%

87.36% of freelancers work with recruiters or agencies together.

Just 12.64% said that they have never worked through an agency or recruitment firm.

SATISFIED WITH RECRUITERS

Are you satisfied working with recruiters?

36,74%

9,05%

2,99%

13,29%

37,93%

83.72 %

evaluate the cooperation with recruiters positively or neutrally. But 16.28 % of the participants were unsatisfied (or very unsatisfied).

■ Very satisfied   ■ Satisfied   ■ Ok   ■ Unsatisfied   ■ Very unsatisfied

INDEPENDENCE

Key Findings

WORKING HOURS
43.28 hr.

YEARS OF EXPERIENCE BEFORE FREELANCING
12.29 years

CONTINUE AS A FREELANCER
76.23%

YEARS FREELANCING
10.51 years

VACATION
25.45 days

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FIND EXPERTS AND PROJECTS

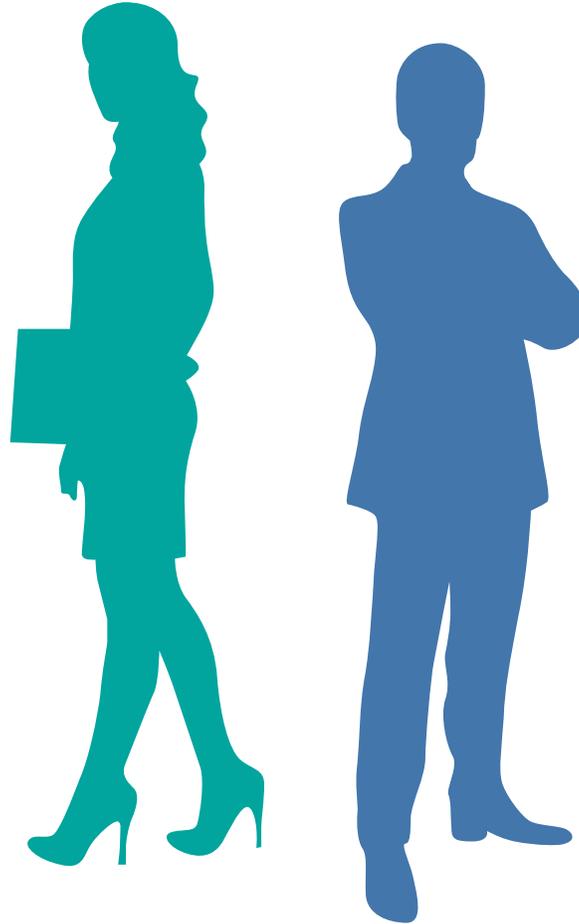Source: freelancermap.com/market-study

DEMOGRAPHICS

GENDER DISTRIBUTION

What is the relationship between female and male freelancers?

WOMEN

11.56%

The proportion of women among the surveyed freelancers were 11.56%.
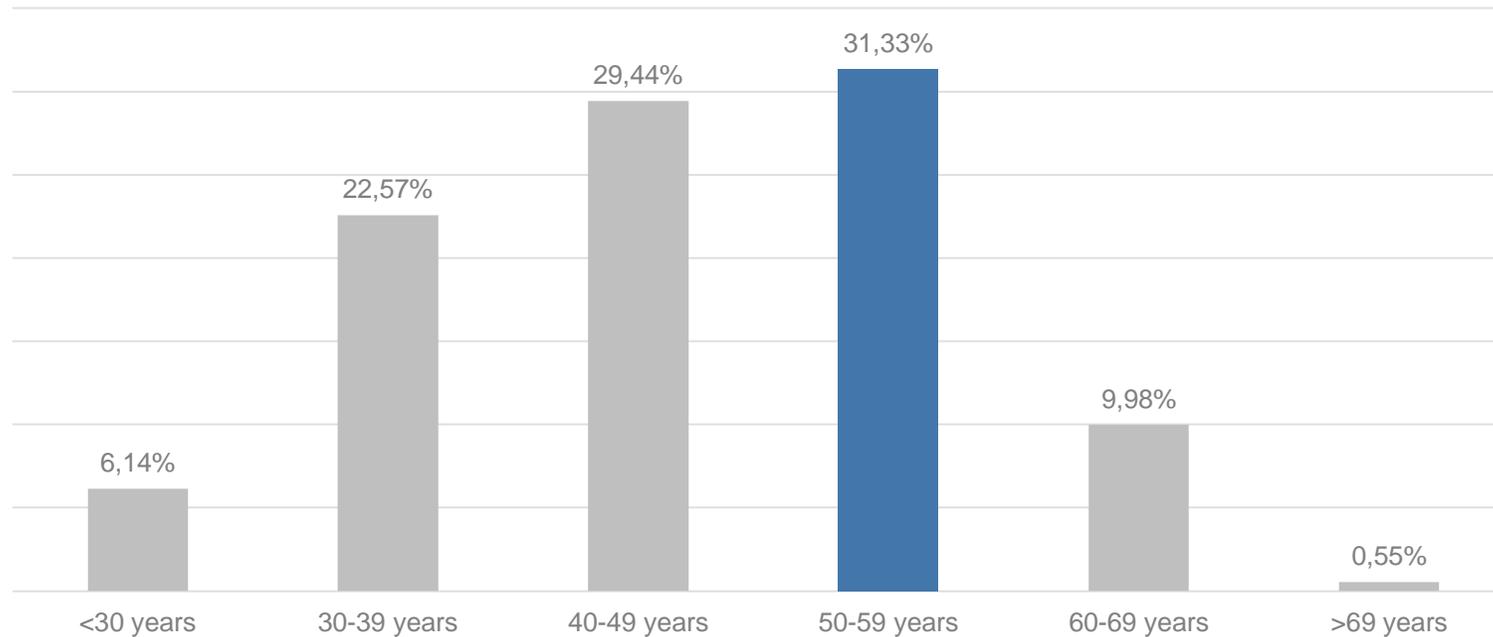
MEN

88.44%

Slightly less than 9 out of 10 freelancers were men

Source: freelancermap.com/market-study

FREELANCERS LOCATION

Where do freelancers live and work from?
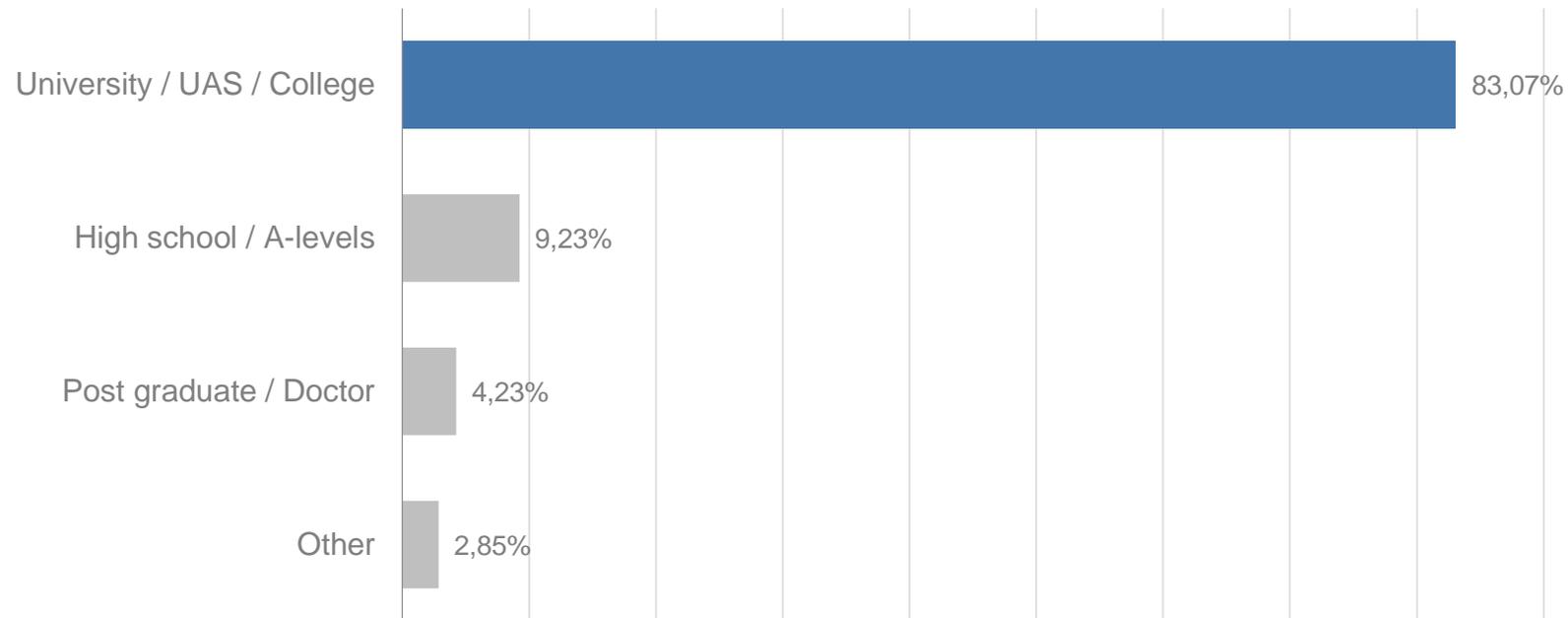
74 countries

+

Digital nomads

Responses were provided by freelancers spanned around the world. Among the most participative countries: **Germany, Switzerland, India, Spain, Italy, Portugal** and **LATAM countries (Argentina, Brazil, Venezuela).**

EDUCATION

What's your highest educational level?

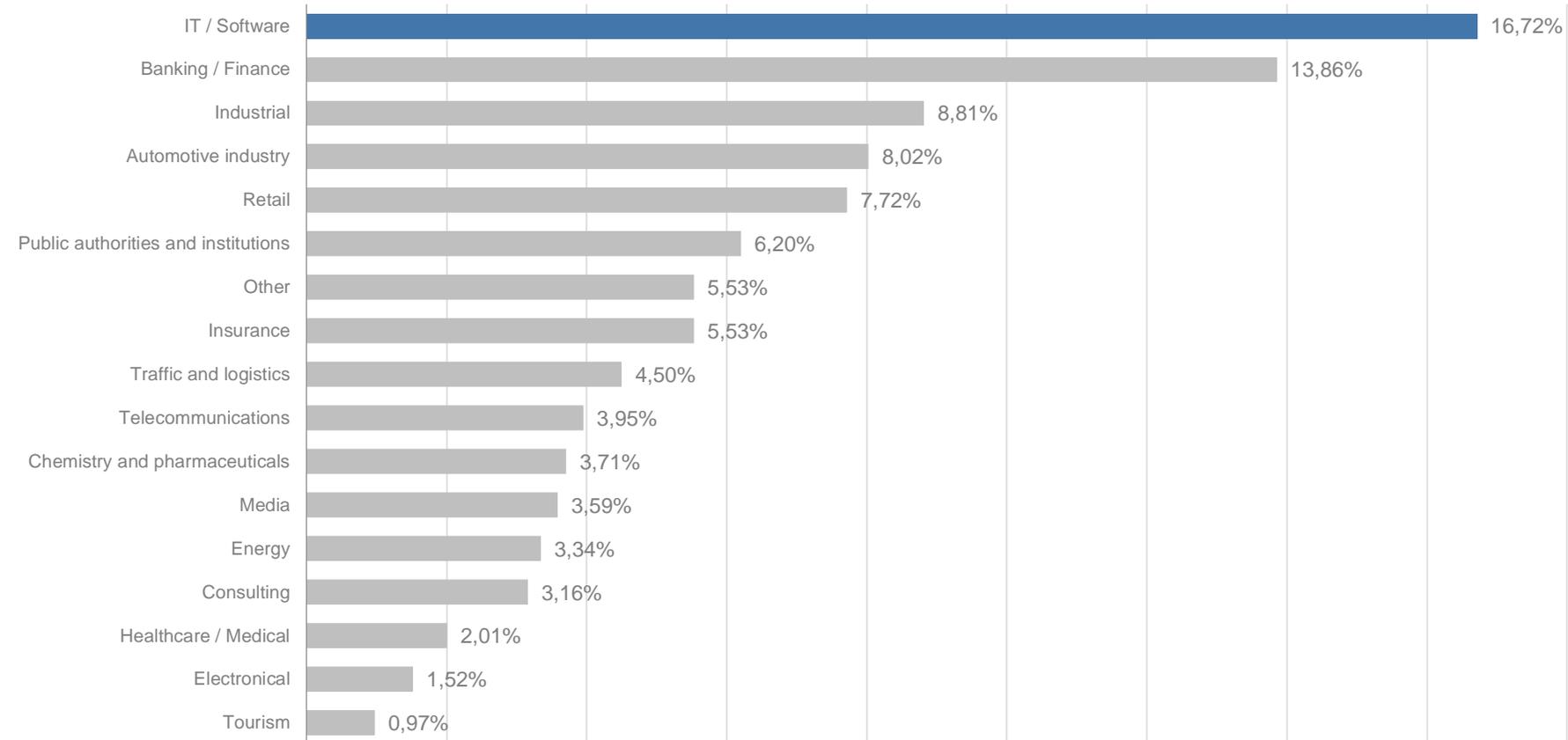|	
University / UAS / College	83,07%
High school / A-levels	9,23%
Post graduate / Doctor	4,23%
Other	2,85%

83.07% of freelancers completed a college degree or attended a university of applied sciences. .

1.13% said that were self-taught and learned through online training (e.g. Udemy or Lynda).
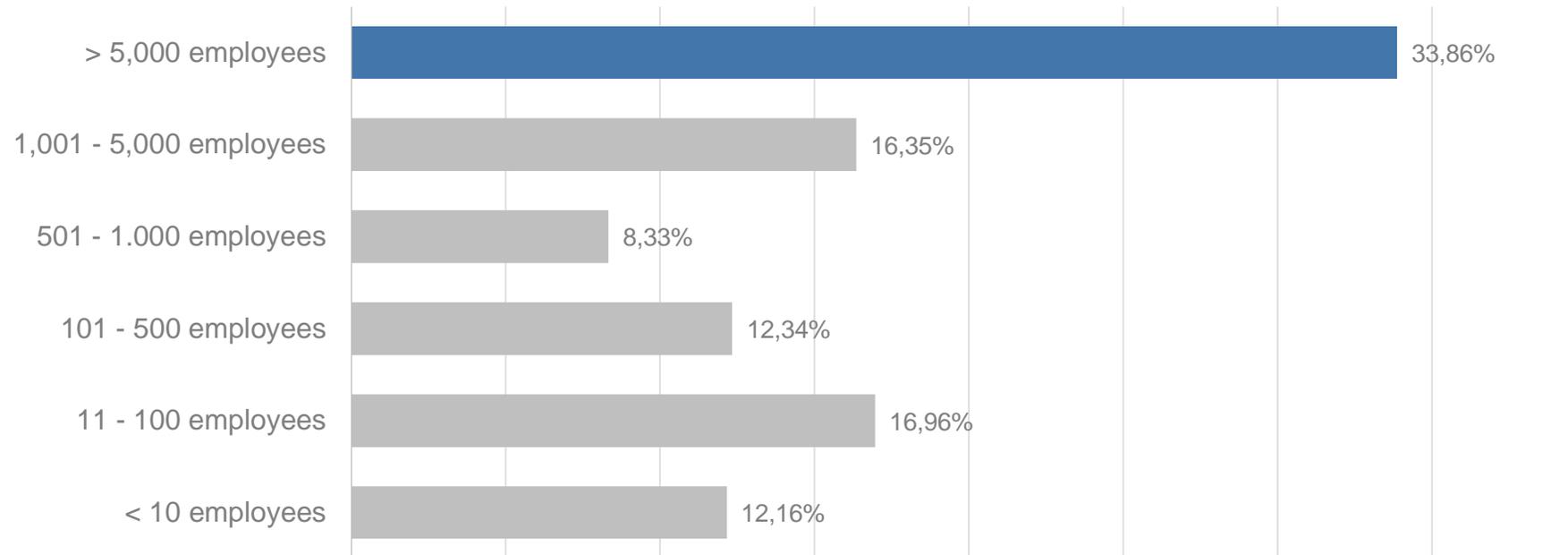
INDUSTRIES

In which field was your last (or current) project?

Industry	Percentage
IT / Software	16,72%
Banking / Finance	13,86%
Industrial	8,81%
Automotive industry	8,02%
Retail	7,72%
Public authorities and institutions	6,20%
Other	5,53%
Insurance	5,53%
Traffic and logistics	4,50%
Telecommunications	3,95%
Chemistry and pharmaceuticals	3,71%
Media	3,59%
Energy	3,34%
Consulting	3,16%
Healthcare / Medical	2,01%
Electronical	1,52%
Tourism	0,97%

COMPANY SIZE

What was the company size on your last (or current) project?

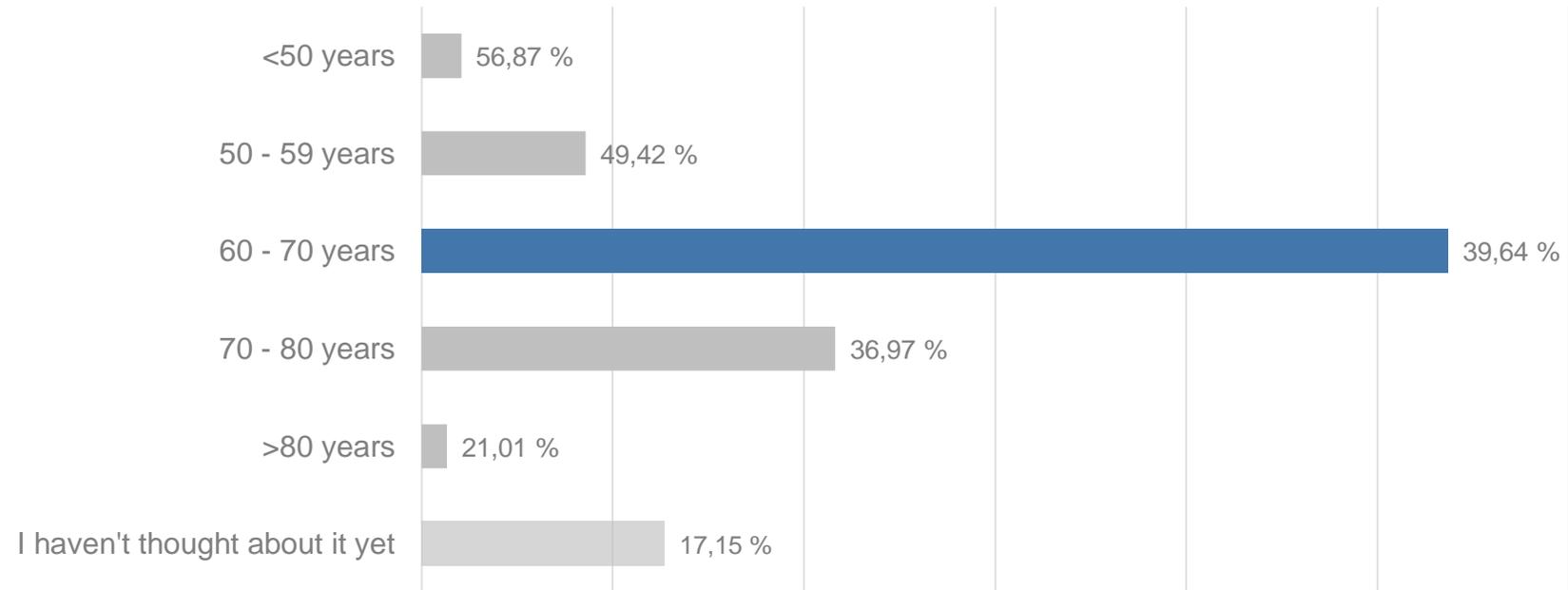| Company Size	Percentage
> 5,000 employees	33,86%
1,001 - 5,000 employees	16,35%
501 - 1.000 employees	8,33%
101 - 500 employees	12,34%
11 - 100 employees	16,96%
< 10 employees	12,16%

58.53% of all surveyed freelancers work in large companies with **over 500 employees**.

The majority of freelancers (33.86%) work in very large companies with over 5,000 employees. Only 12.16% said that their last project was completed for an SMB with less than 10 employees.
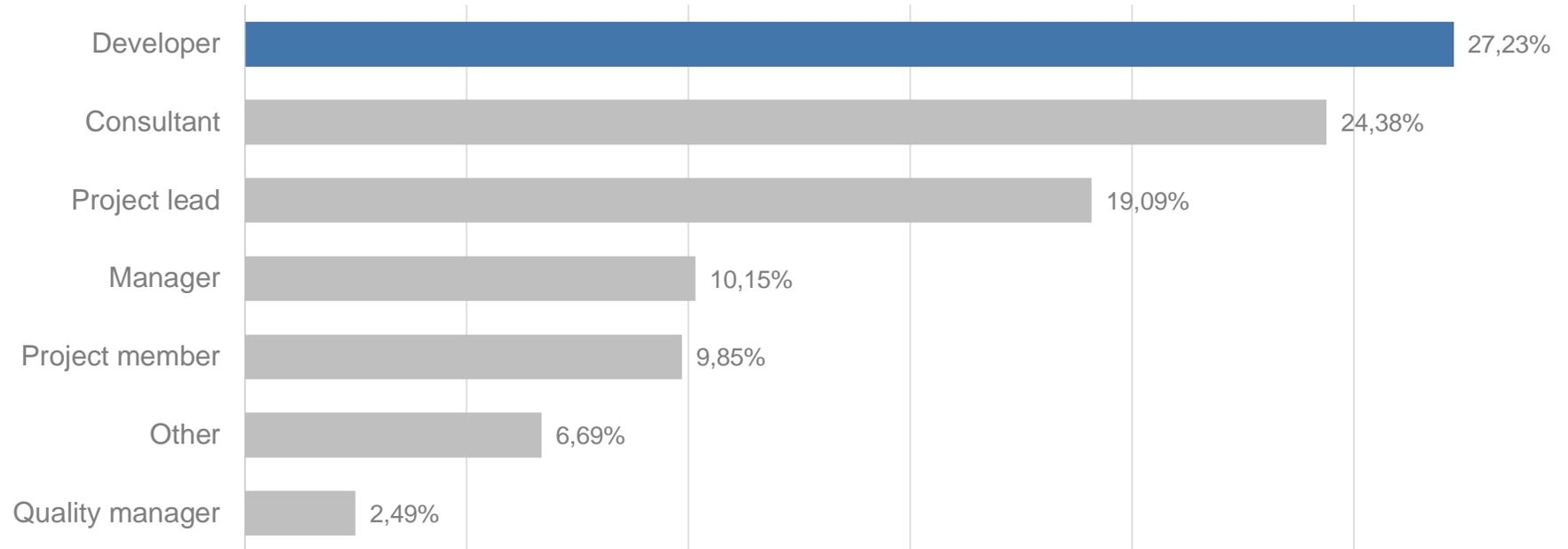
RETIREMENT

At what age do you plan to retire?

Age	Percentage
<50 years	56,87 %
50 - 59 years	49,42 %
60 - 70 years	39,64 %
70 - 80 years	36,97 %
>80 years	21,01 %
I haven't thought about it yet	17,15 %

RETIREMENT AGE: **64.73 years**

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Source: freelancermap.com/market-study

ROLE ON THE PROJECT

What was your position in the last (or current) project?

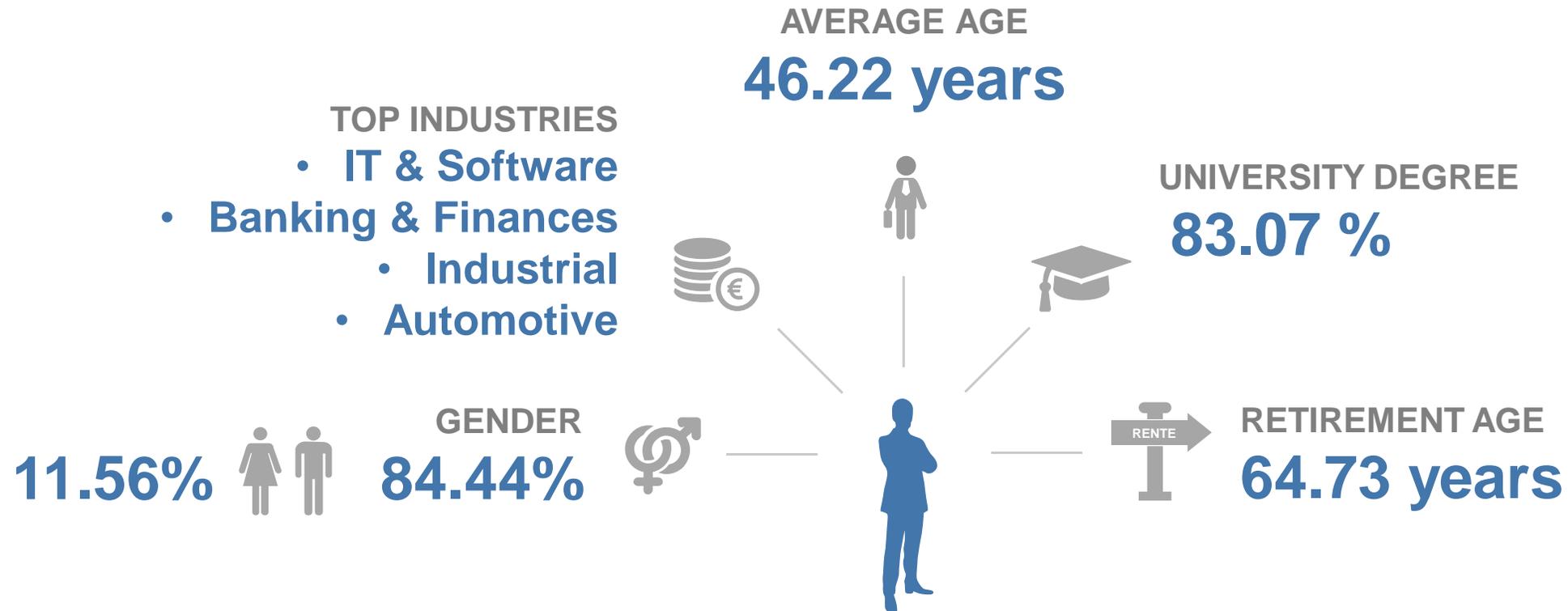| Role	Percentage
Developer	27,23%
Consultant	24,38%
Project lead	19,09%
Manager	10,15%
Project member	9,85%
Other	6,69%
Quality manager	2,49%

27.23% of all participants work as developers while 24.38% as consultants.

19.09% said that they currently work or have worked on their last project as project lead.
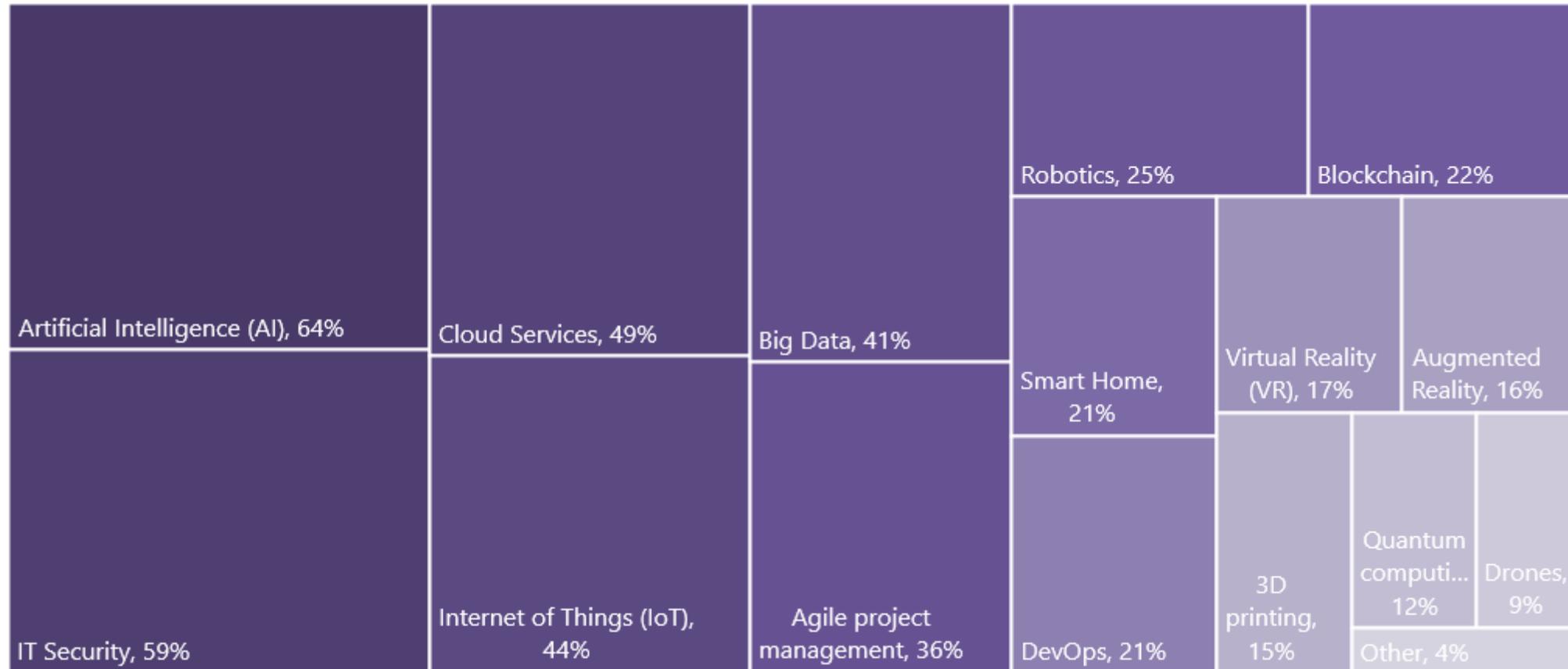
freelancermap
FIND EXPERTS AND PROJECTS

DEMOGRAPHICS

Key Findings

AVERAGE AGE
46.22 years

TOP INDUSTRIES
- **IT & Software**
- **Banking & Finances**
- **Industrial**
- **Automotive**

UNIVERSITY DEGREE
83.07 %

GENDER
11.56% **84.44%**

RETIREMENT AGE
64.73 years

RENTE

PLANS AND DEVELOPMENT

RELEVANT INDUSTRIES

Which industries will see a marked rise in the future?

Artificial Intelligence (AI), 64%

IT Security, 59%

Cloud Services, 49%

Internet of Things (IoT), 44%

Big Data, 41%

Agile project management, 36%

Robotics, 25%

Smart Home, 21%

DevOps, 21%

Blockchain, 22%

Virtual Reality (VR), 17%

Augmented Reality, 16%

3D printing, 15%
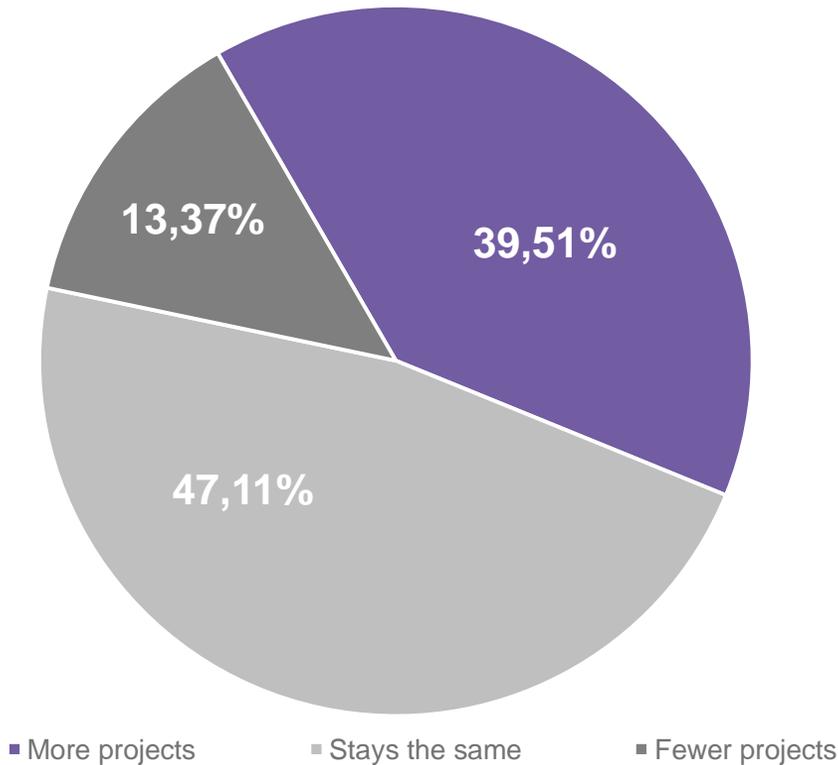
Quantum computi... 12%

Drones, 9%

Other, 4%

Source: freelancermap.com/market-study

PROGRAMMING LANGUAGES

In your opinion, which programming languages will become more important in the future?

Language	Percentage
JavaScript	53,83%
Java	37,94%
Python	35,70%
C#	27,48%
SQL	23,36%
PHP	20,19%
Go	15,51%
C++	14,02%
Swift	10,09%
R	9,53%
C	6,54%
Kotlin	5,05%
.NET	4,67%
Visual Basic	4,49%
Ruby	3,36%
Groovy	3,36%
Delphi / Object Pascal	2,80%
Objective-C	2,62%
Dart	2,62%
MATLAB	2,43%
Assembly Language	1,87%
Perl	1,68%
Scala	0,93%
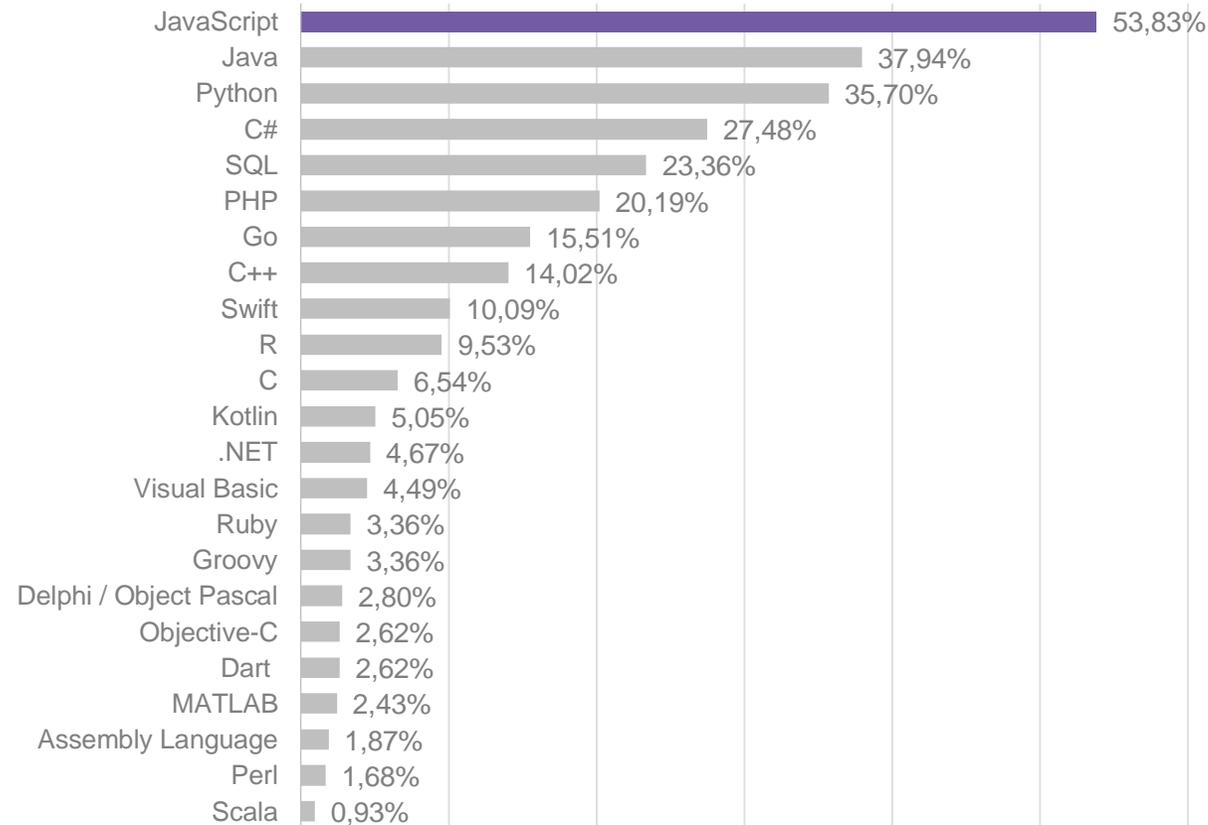
WORKLOAD

What do you expect your workload to be like in 2019?

- More projects
- Stays the same
- Fewer projects

13,37%

39,51%

47,11%

MORE PROJECTS

39.51% confirmed that they are expecting to end the year with more projects completed than last year.
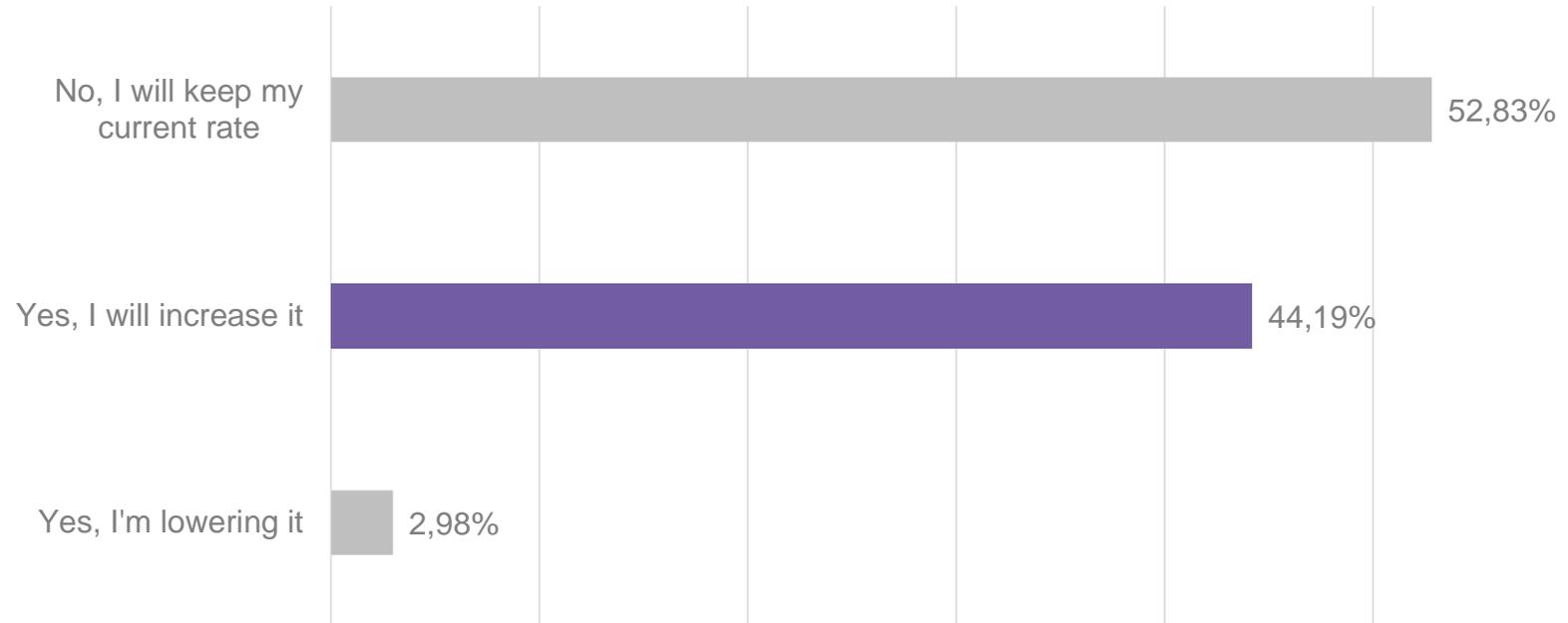
SAME AMOUNT OF PROJECTS

47.11% expect to end the year with a similar situation as in 2018.

FEWER PROJECTS

13.37% are prepared to close the year with a worse project scenario.

HOURLY RATE DEVELOPMENT

Are you going to change/adjust your hourly rate in the following 12 months?

No, I will keep my current rate	52,83%
Yes, I will increase it	44,19%
Yes, I'm lowering it	2,98%

44.19% of freelancers are planning to increase their hourly rate in the following months.

The majority of freelancers (52.83%) are going to keep their current rates and less than 3% plan to lower them.

ECONOMIC SITUATION

How would you classify your economic situation?

Very good	20,67%
Good	46,99%
Neutral	26,08%
Bad	5,11%
Really bad	1,16%
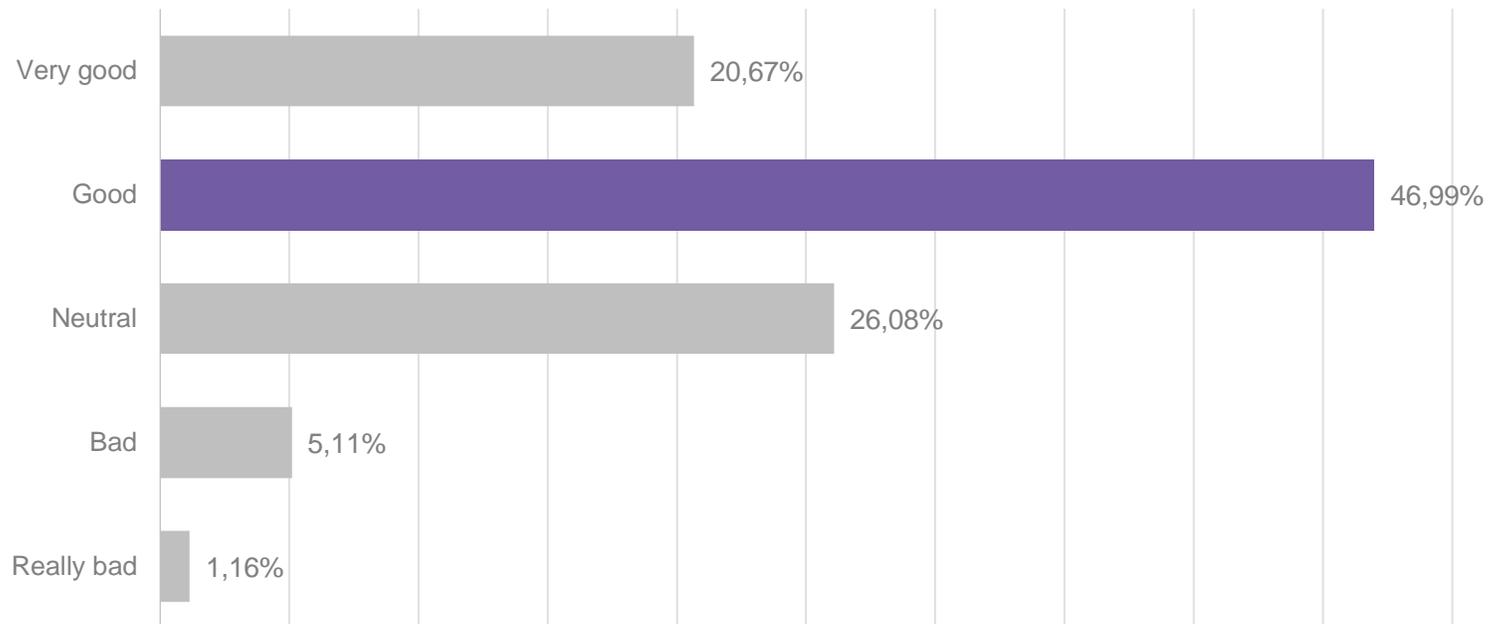
67.66% of freelancers consider their economic situation as "very good" or "good".

Only 6.27% feel like their situation is bad or even really bad.

FREELANCING IN THE FUTURE

Do you want to continue working as a freelancer?

76,23%

22,31%

1,46%
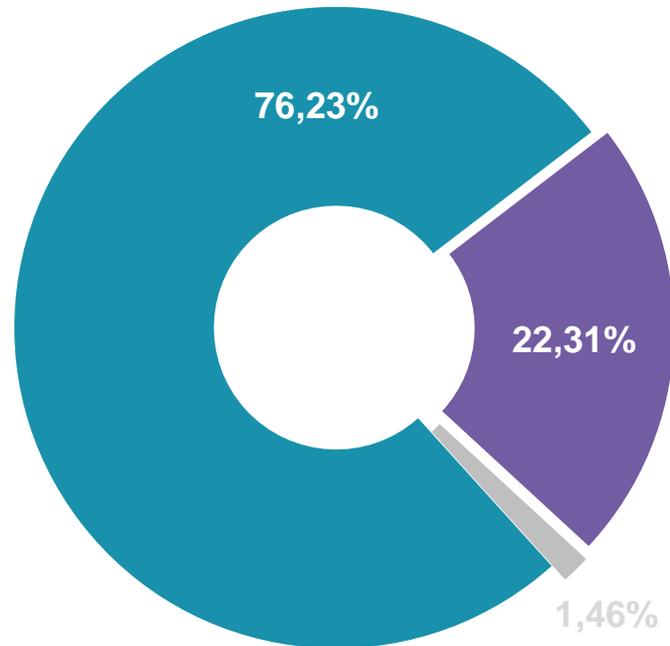
■ Yes

■ Yes, but I would switch to full-time employment with an appropriate salary

■ No, I would like to be an employee

YES

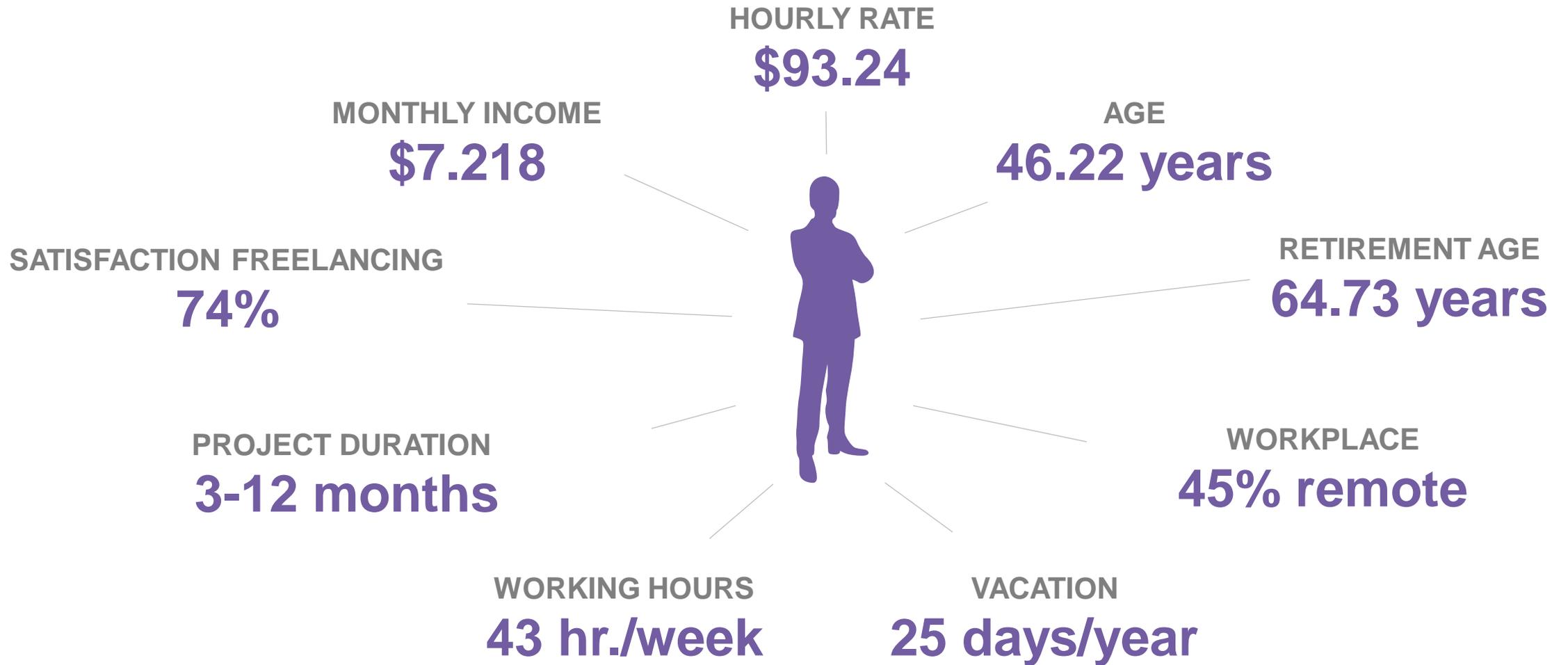**The vast majority (76.23 %)** want to keep working on a freelance basis.

YES, BUT…

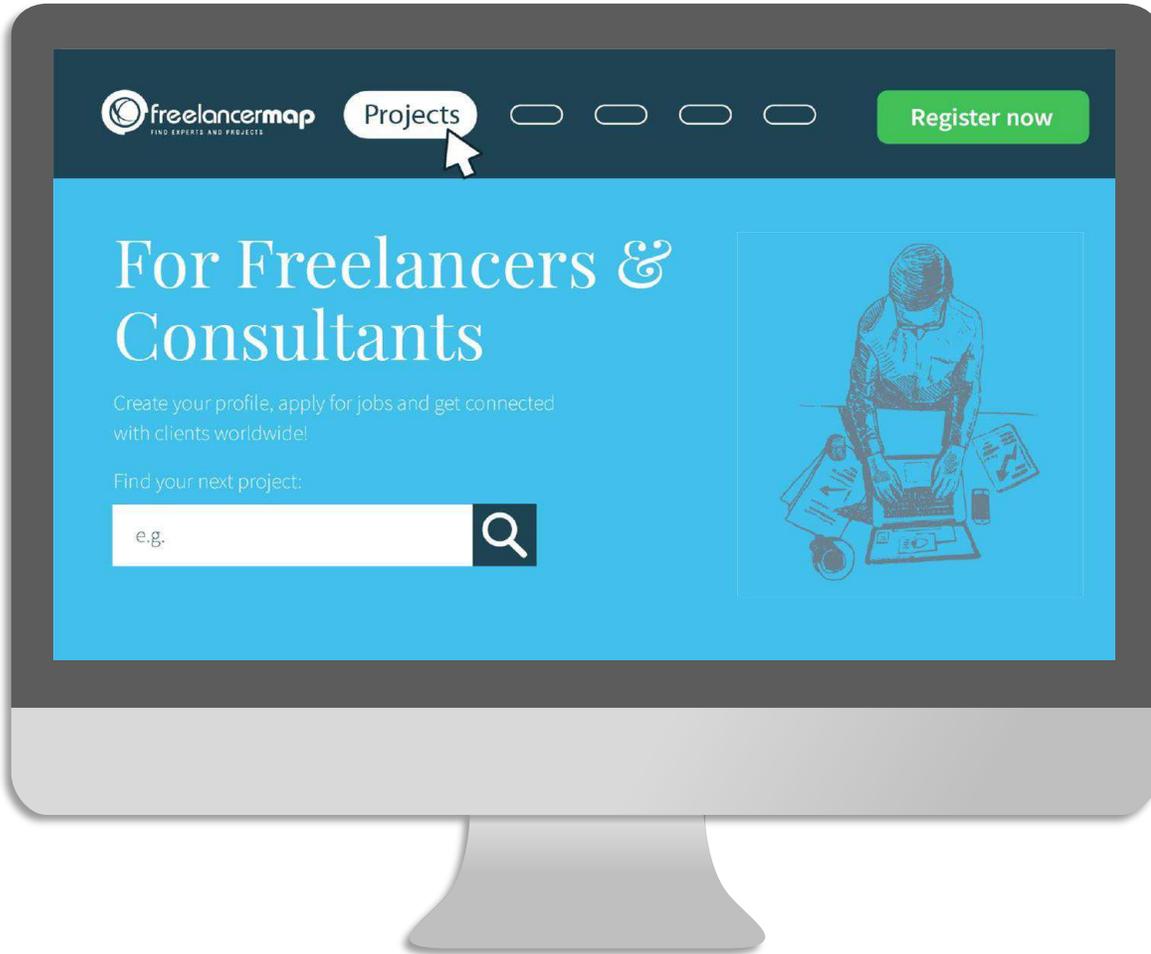**22.31 % would consider switching to full-time employment** if they receive an appropriate salary.

NO

Only **1.46 %** would like to be an **employee again.**

FREELANCER MARKET 2019

HOURLY RATE
$93.24

MONTHLY INCOME
$7.218

AGE
46.22 years

SATISFACTION FREELANCING
74%

RETIREMENT AGE
64.73 years

PROJECT DURATION
3-12 months

WORKPLACE
45% remote

WORKING HOURS
43 hr./week

VACATION
25 days/year

FREELANCERMAP

Connecting freelancers with clients in the IT industry at zero commission fees

WHO ARE WE

freelancermap launched in Germany in 2005 as an open marketplace for experienced professionals and experts within the IT field.

Since 2012 we've been connecting freelancers and companies outside of Germany too. We make sure experts and clients find each other without commission fees.

Visit www.freelancermap.com

FREELANCERMAP

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