



Freelancer Study 2023

Freelancer Report

Financials, Self-employment,
Demographics, Outlook, AI



For many years, the interdependence of technological revolution and cultural implications has not received sufficient attention.

The challenges of the future work environment extend beyond the shortage of skilled professionals or demographic changes; they also encompass a fundamental shift in how people want to work. There is a growing need for flexibility without sacrificing security. We know from observing other countries that more people will venture into self-employment in the future.

At freelancemap, we firmly believe that freelancing, as a cornerstone of the future work landscape, deserves greater societal value.

For this study, we collected data from 3,504 freelancers from February 14, 2023, to May 7, 2023, through various channels of freelancemap – from the website to social media and email.

We warmly thank all participants and hope you enjoy reading the study!

Thomas Maas

CEO / freelancemap GmbH

Agenda

1. Financials

Rates, income, comparison

2. Self-employment

Challenges, freelance work

3. Demographics

Origin, education, industry

4. Outlook

Project market situation, forecasts

5. Artificial Intelligence

Impact of AI on the freelance market



Agenda

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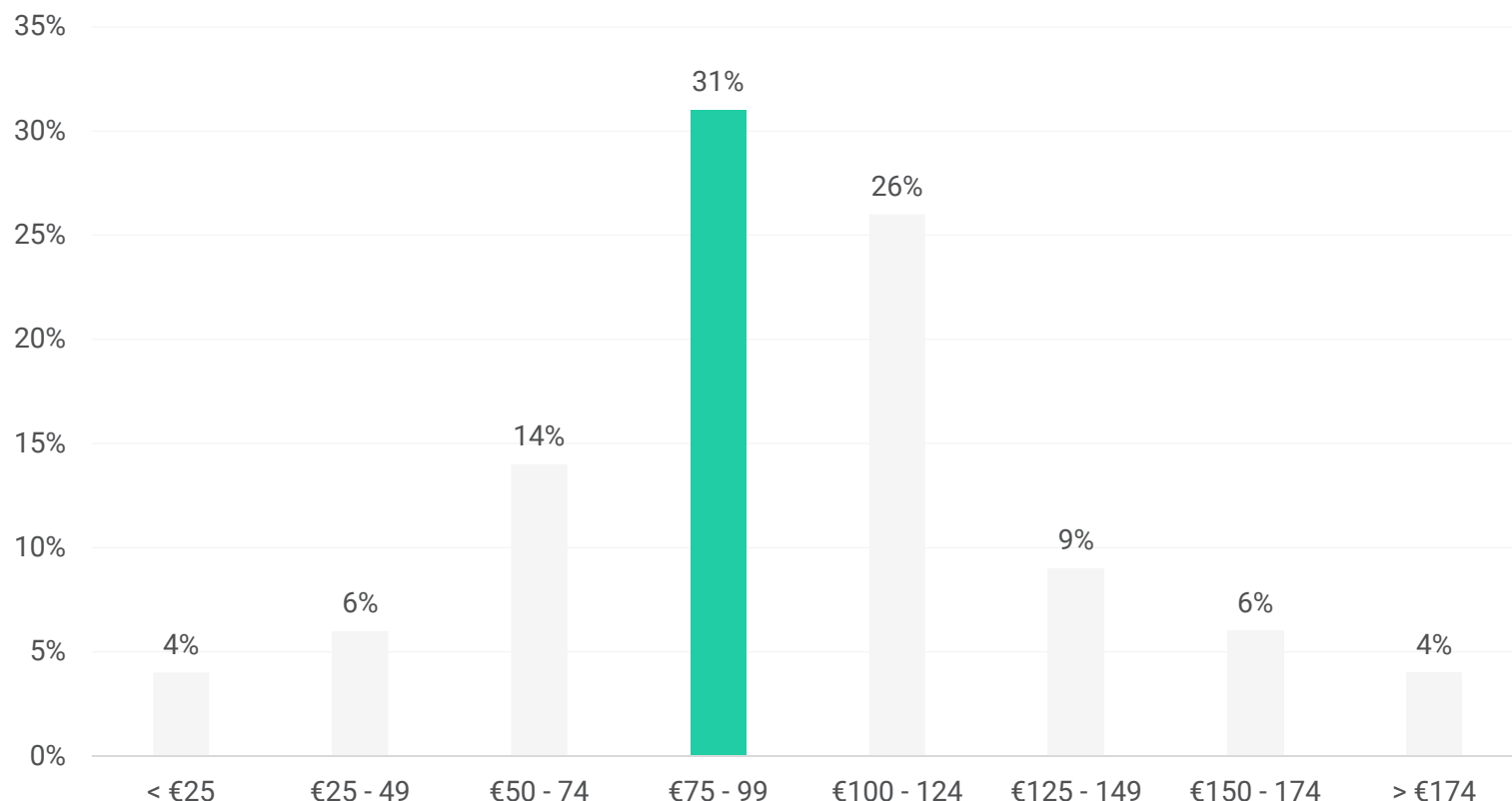
5. Artificial Intelligence

Impact of AI on the freelance market



Average hourly rate 2023

What is your hourly rate? (VAT not included)



Remarkable

€96

is the **average hourly rate** of
freelancers in 2023.

31% charge between
€75 and €99 per hour.

Start capital

Which financial buffer do you recommend before starting freelancing?

€12,000

Start capital

recommended by freelancers before
starting freelancing.

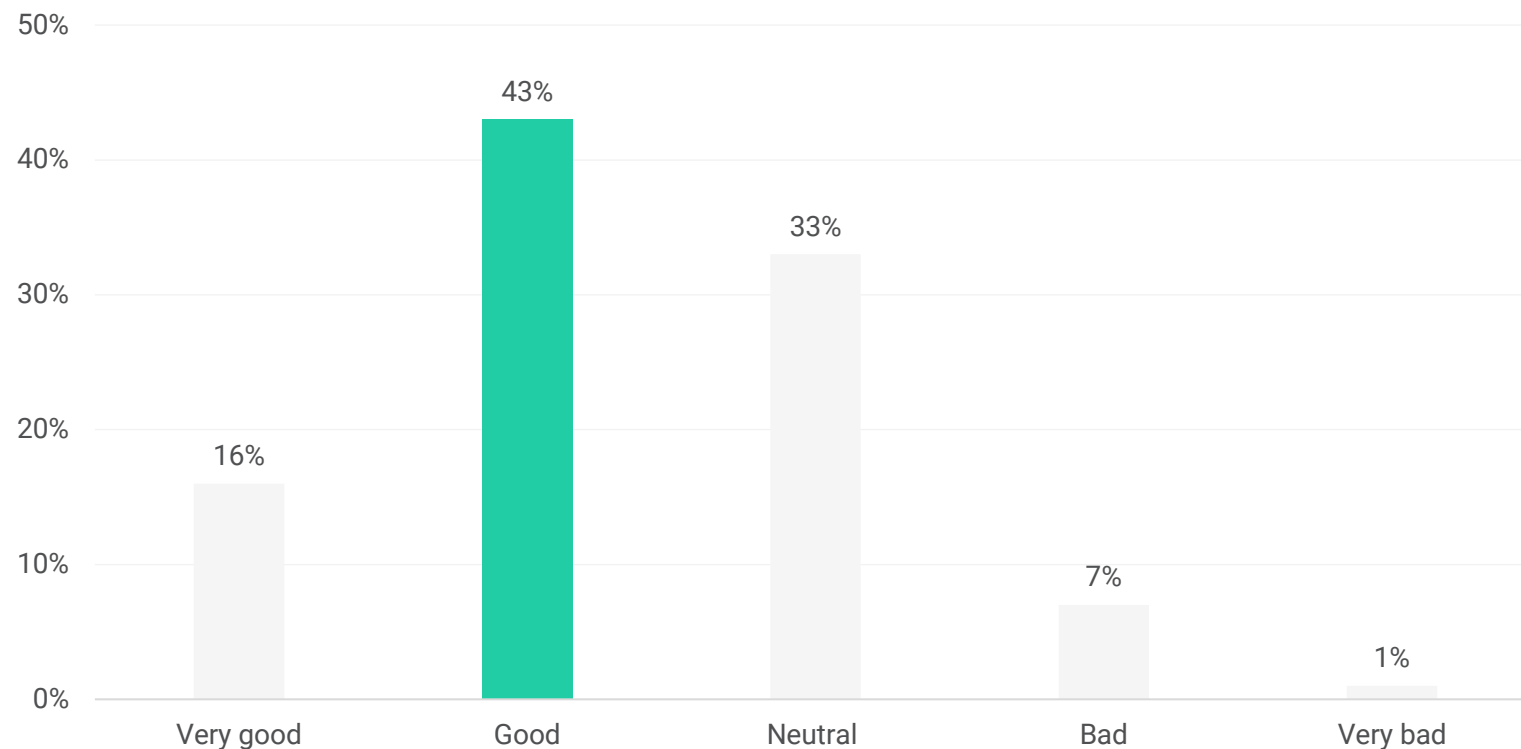
71%

of all freelancers

recommend having at least
€10,000 start capital.

Economic situation

How would you assess your current economic situation?



Remarkable

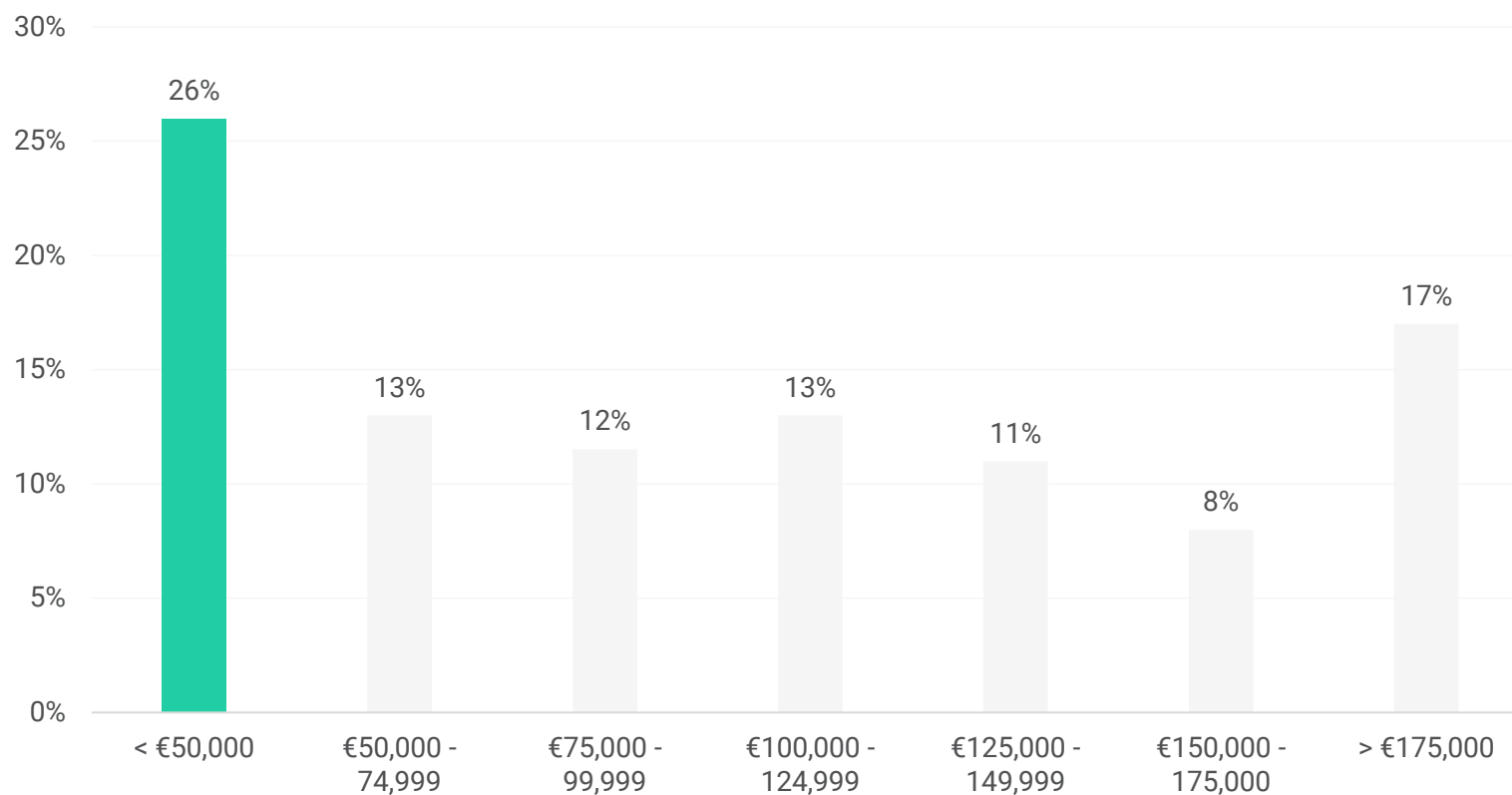
59%

assess their **current** economic situation as **(very) good**.

Only 8% assess it as (very) bad.

Gross revenue

What was your gross revenue in 2022?



Remarkable

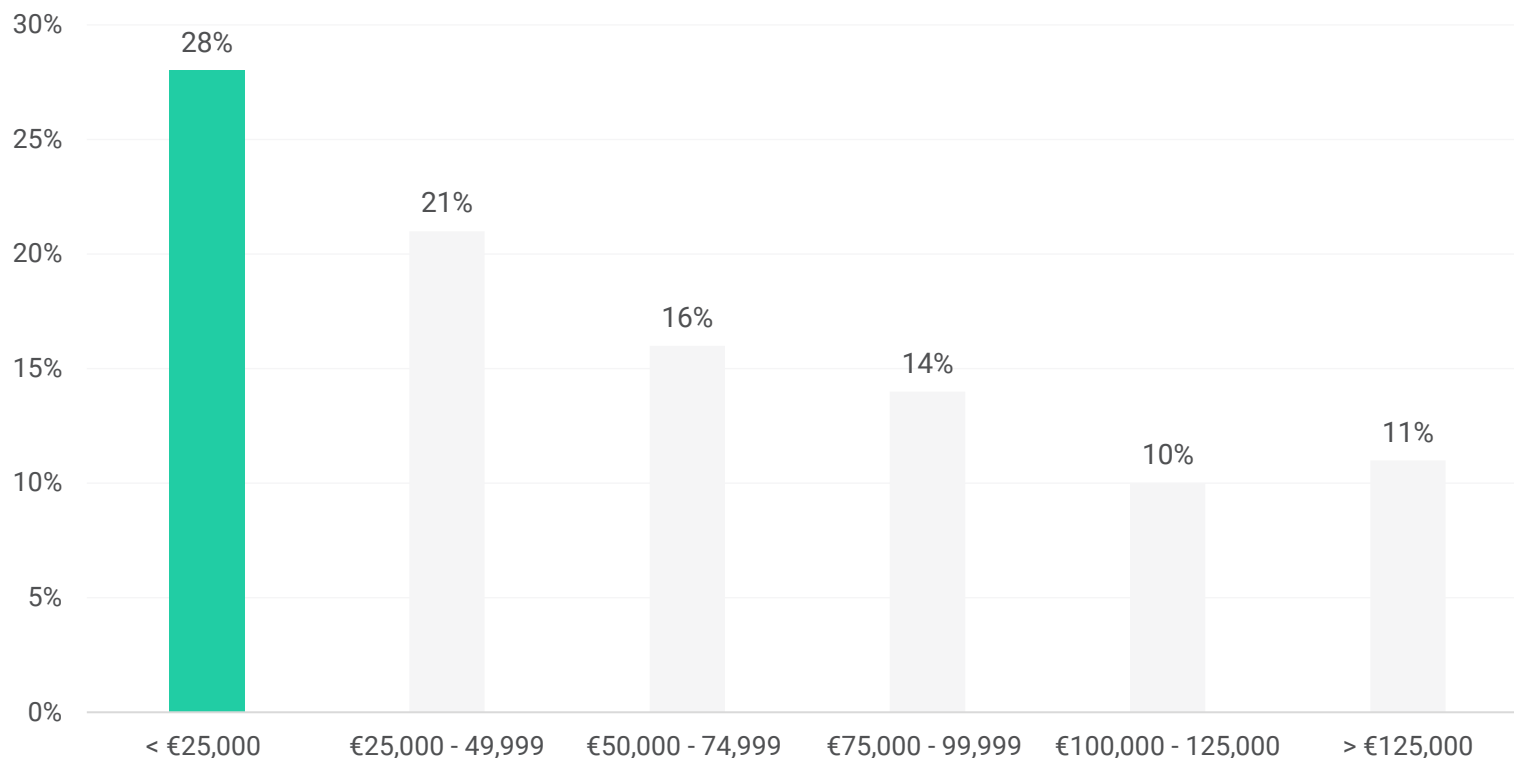
49%

had a gross revenue of
more than €100,000 in 2022.

The distribution of gross revenue among freelancers is becoming increasingly polarized, with some generating significant turnover while others experience minimal revenue.

Gross profit

What was your gross profit in 2022?



Remarkable

51%

had a gross profit of **over €50,000** in 2022.

28% of freelancers had a gross profit of **less than €25,000**.
Rising costs due to inflation may be one reason for this.

Hourly rates by role

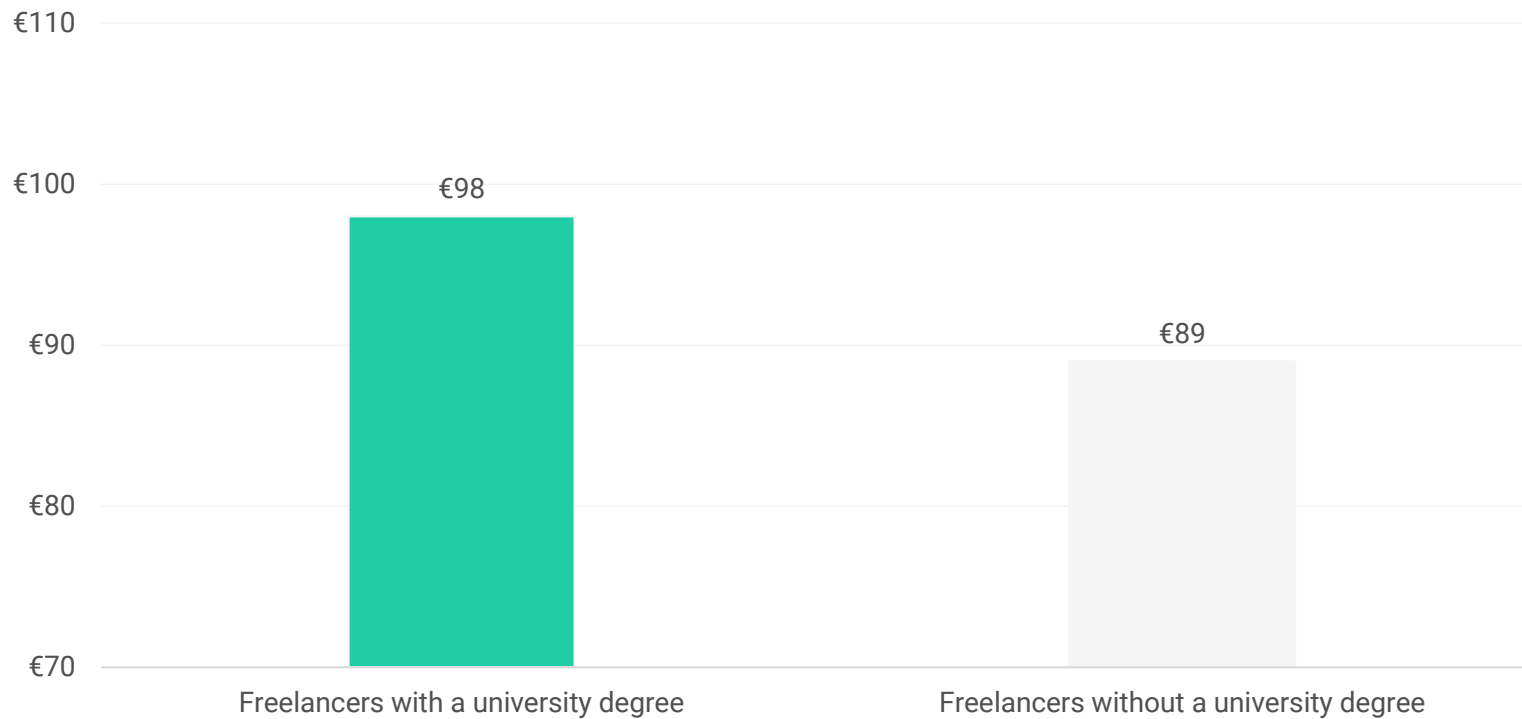


Remarkable

€107

receive **consultants** on average
per hour.

Hourly rates by education level



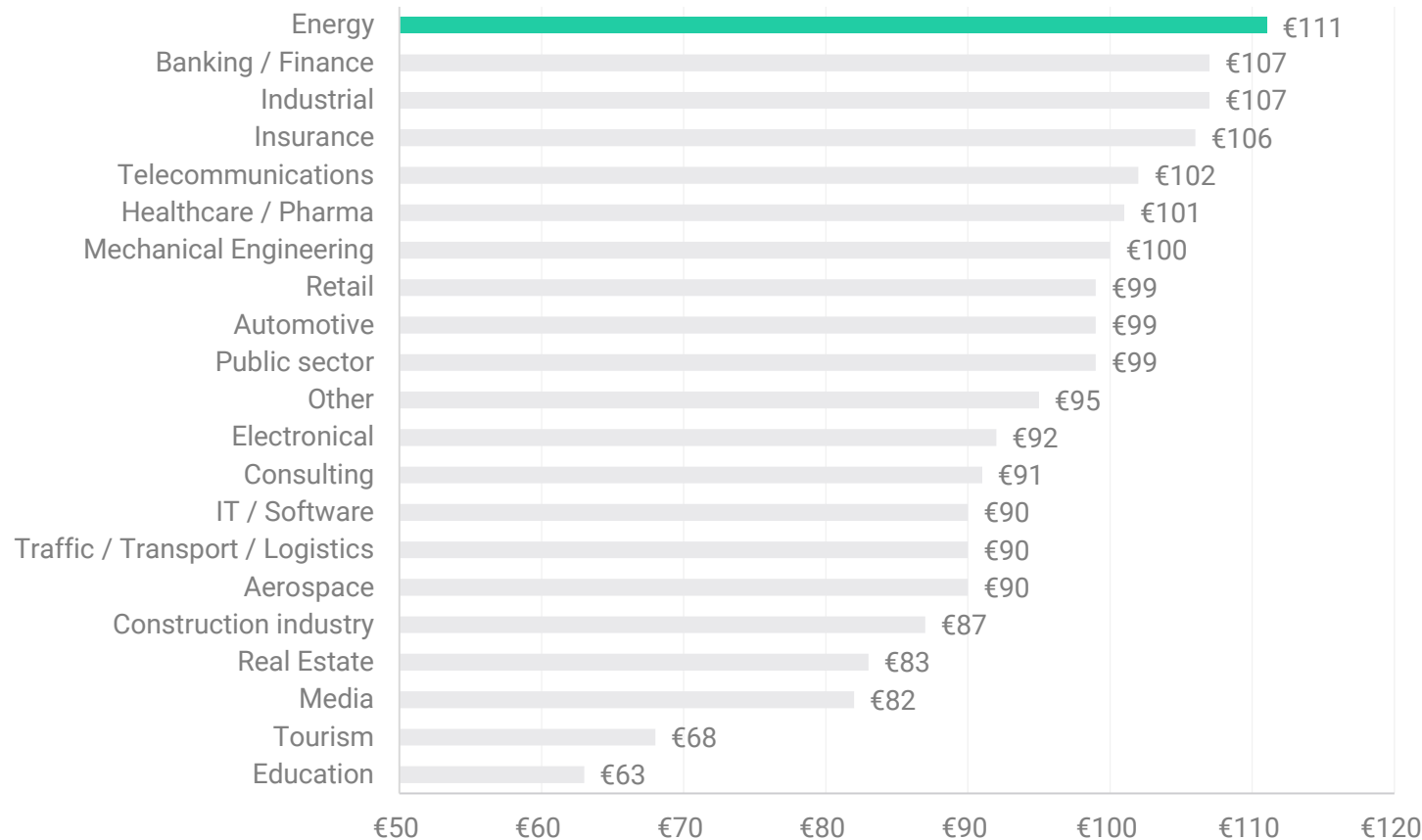
Remarkable

Freelancers with a **university degree**
(or higher) charge on average

10%

more than those without.

Hourly rates by industry



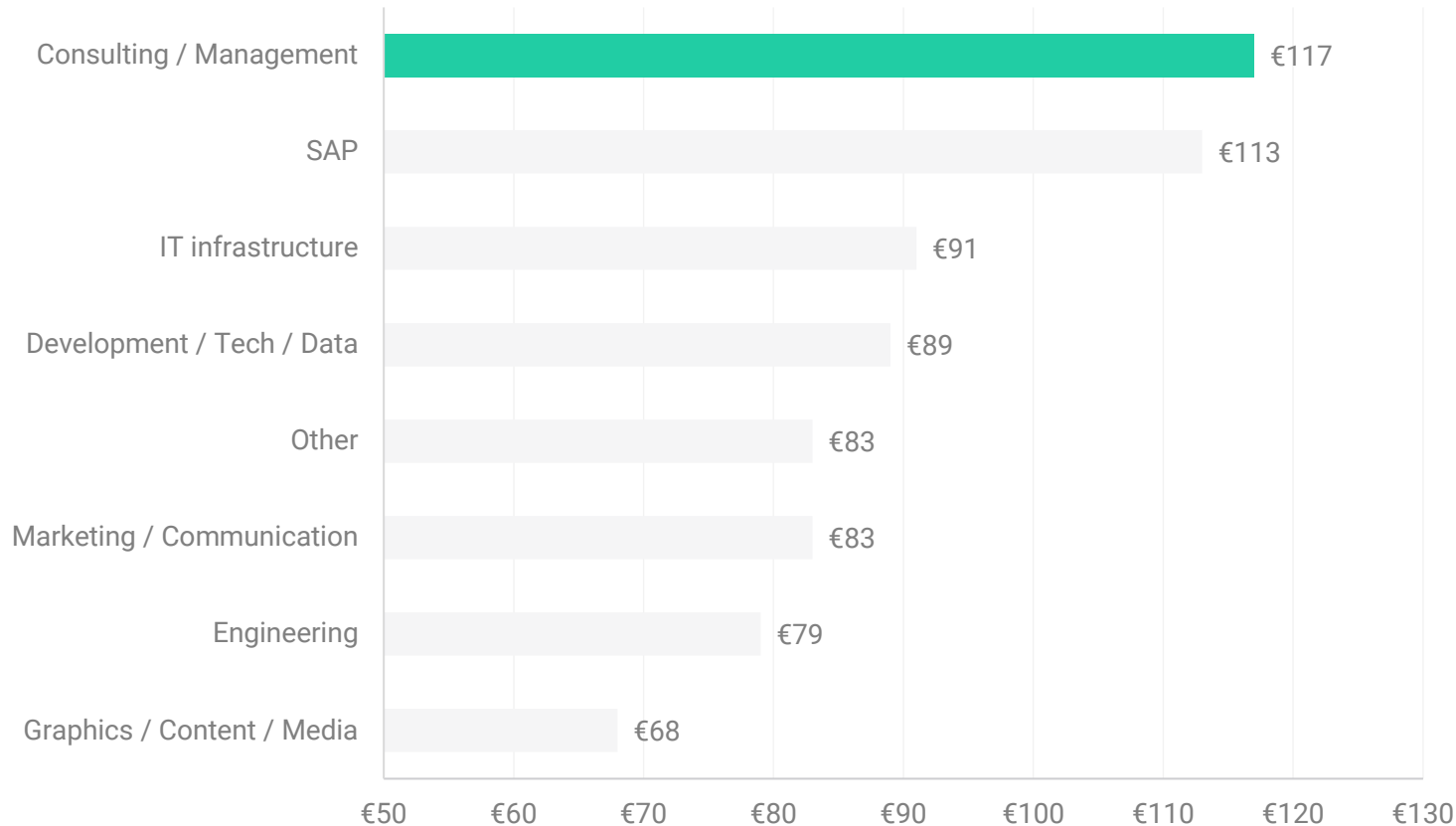
Remarkable

€111

is the average hourly rate of freelancers working in the **energy sector**.

Banking/Finance and Industrial Production rank in 2nd and 3rd place, respectively, while the education industry has the lowest hourly rates.

Hourly rates by area of expertise



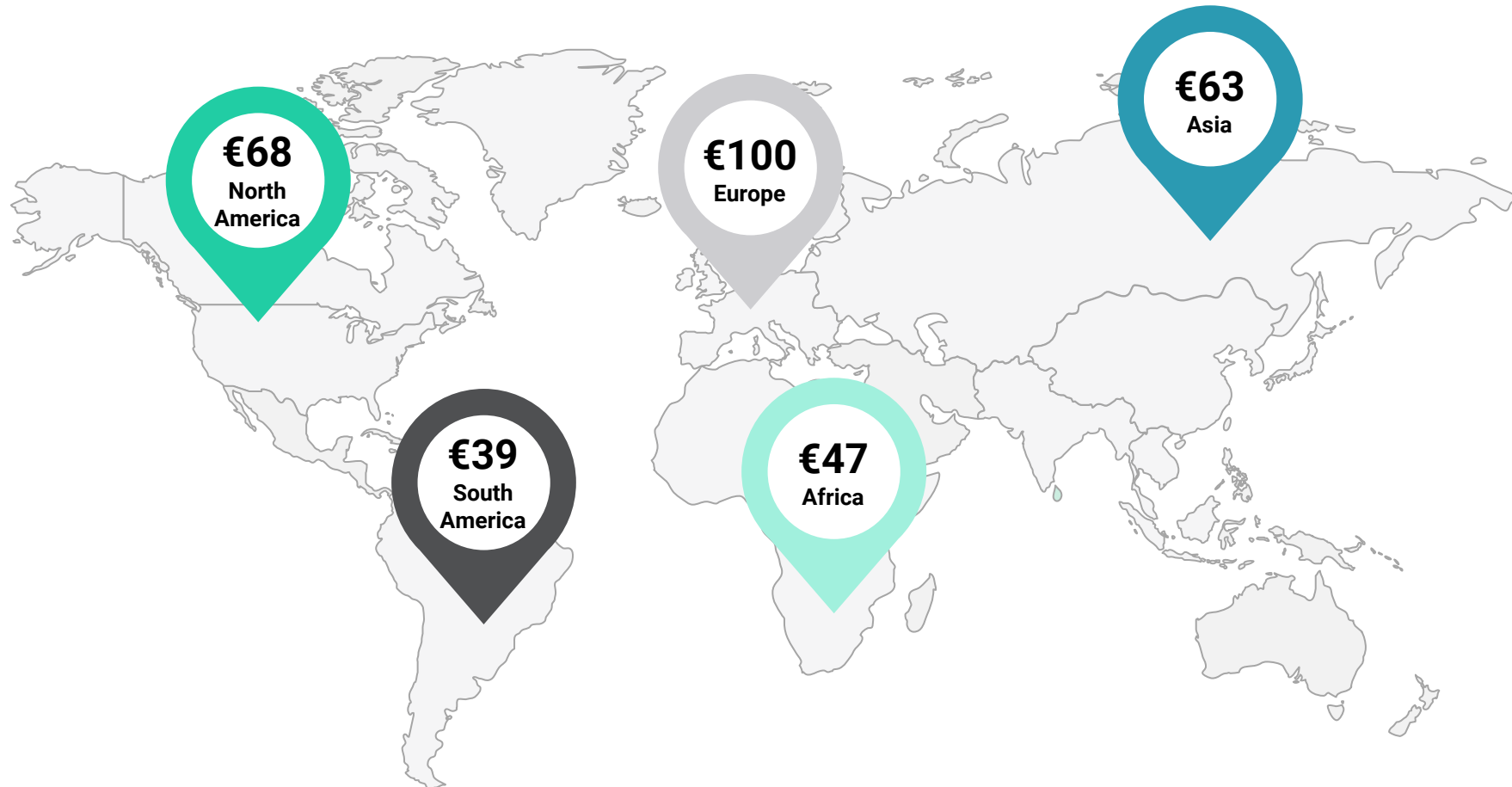
Remarkable

Freelancers working in the **consulting and management** field receive an average hourly rate of

€117

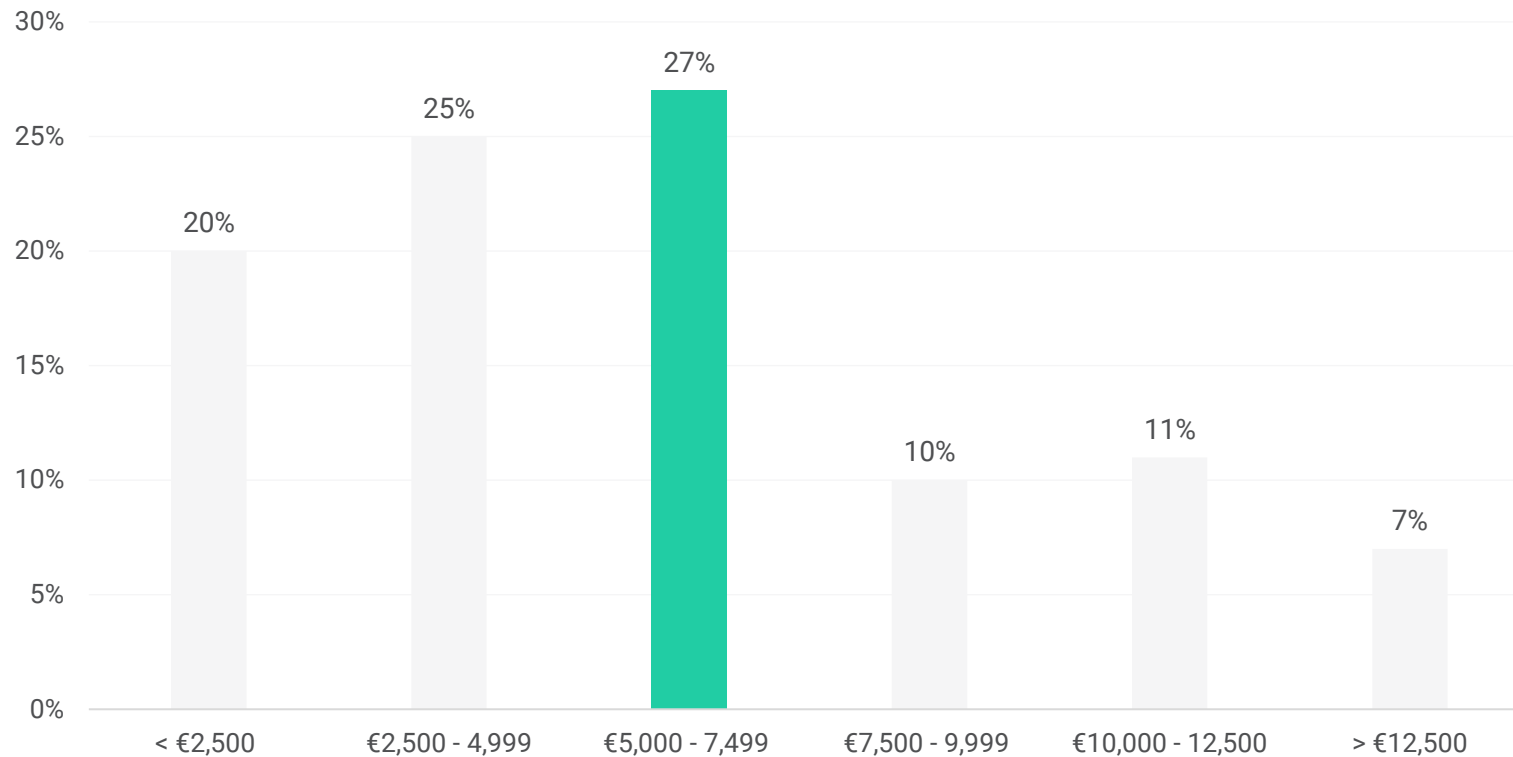
The lowest hourly rates are paid in the Graphics / Content / Media field (€68).

Hourly rate by continent



Monthly net income

On average, what is your monthly net freelance income? (without taxes and expenses)



Remarkable

€6,200

is the average **monthly net income** of freelancers.

27% have an average monthly net income between €5,000 and €7,499.

Hourly rates women vs. men

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

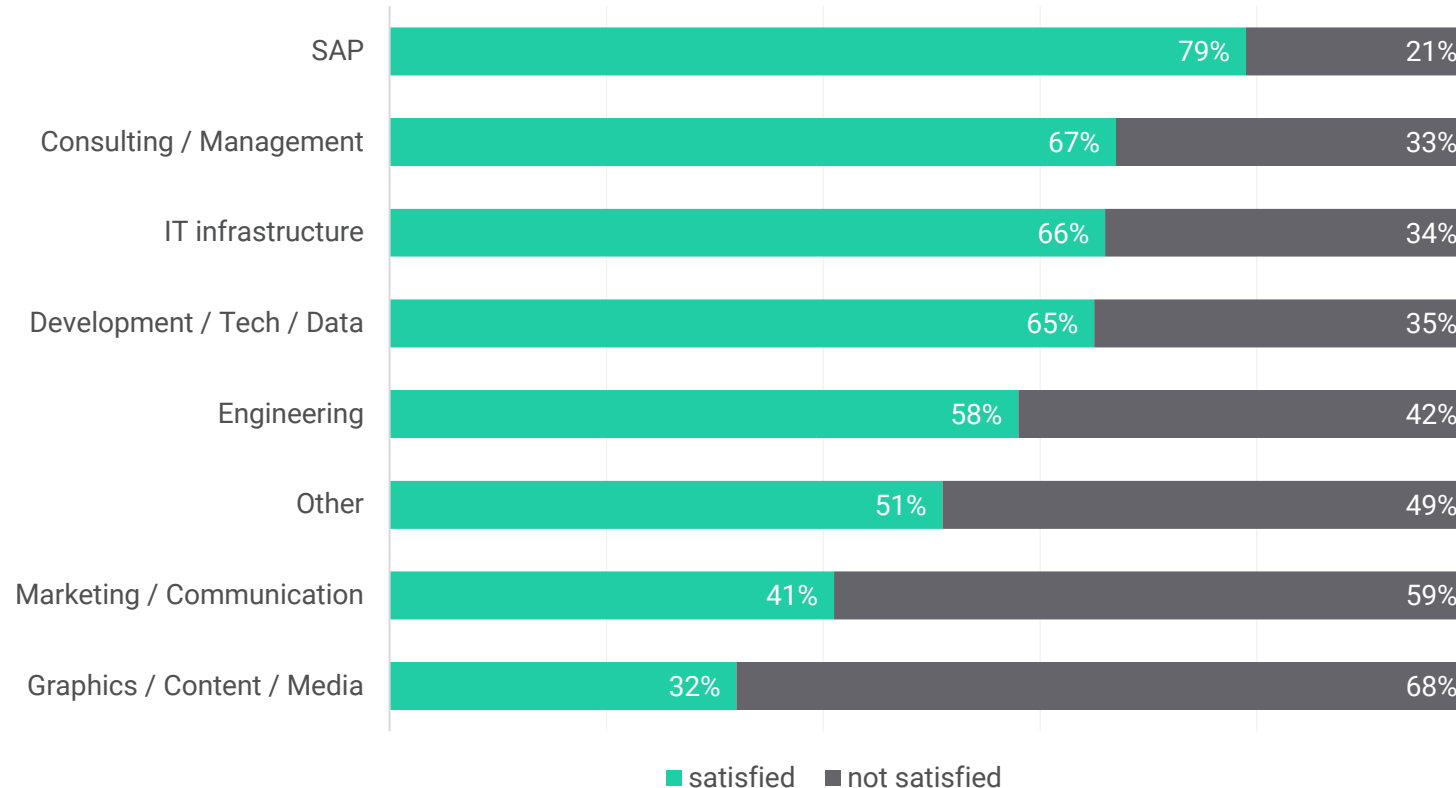


Diverse charge an average of €97 per hour and have a monthly net income of €4,913.

Income satisfaction



Income satisfaction by industry



Remarkable

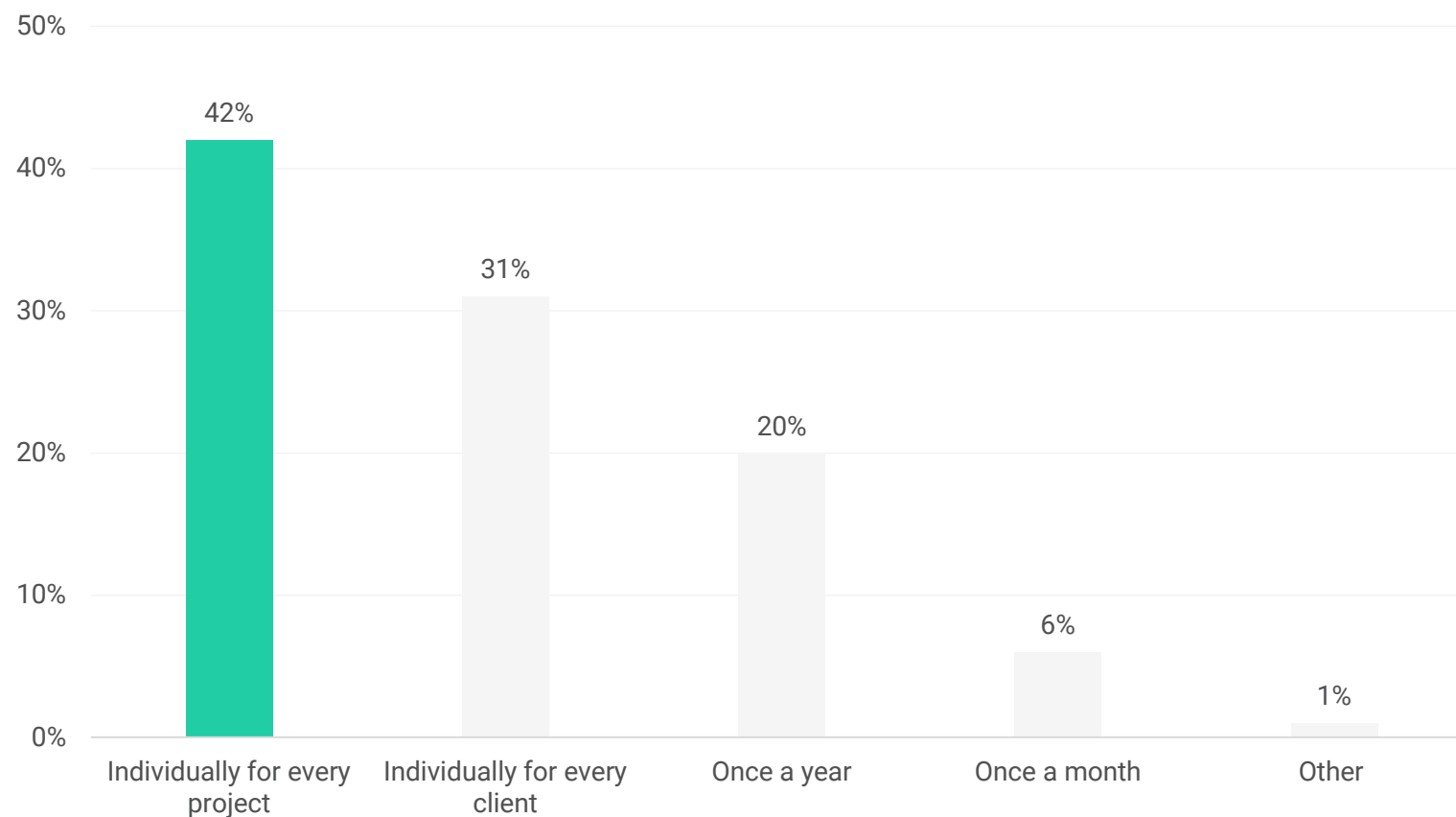
79%

of freelancers working in **SAP** are satisfied with their income.

Only 3 out of 10 of freelancers working in the graphics / content / media sector are satisfied with their income.

Rate calculation

How often do you calculate your rates?



Remarkable

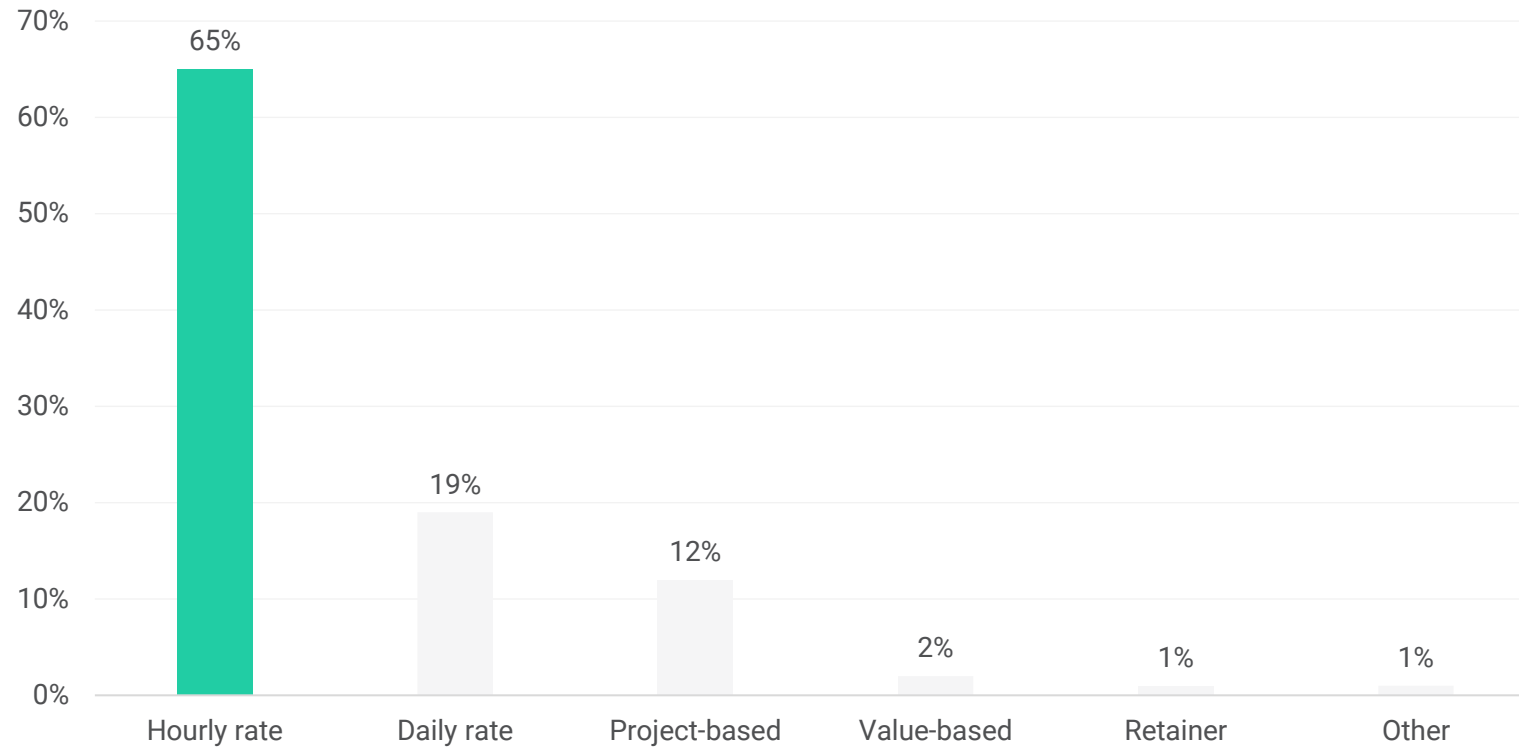
42%

calculate their rates **individually**
for every project.

31% calculate them individually for
every client.

Charging clients

How do you usually charge your clients?



Remarkable

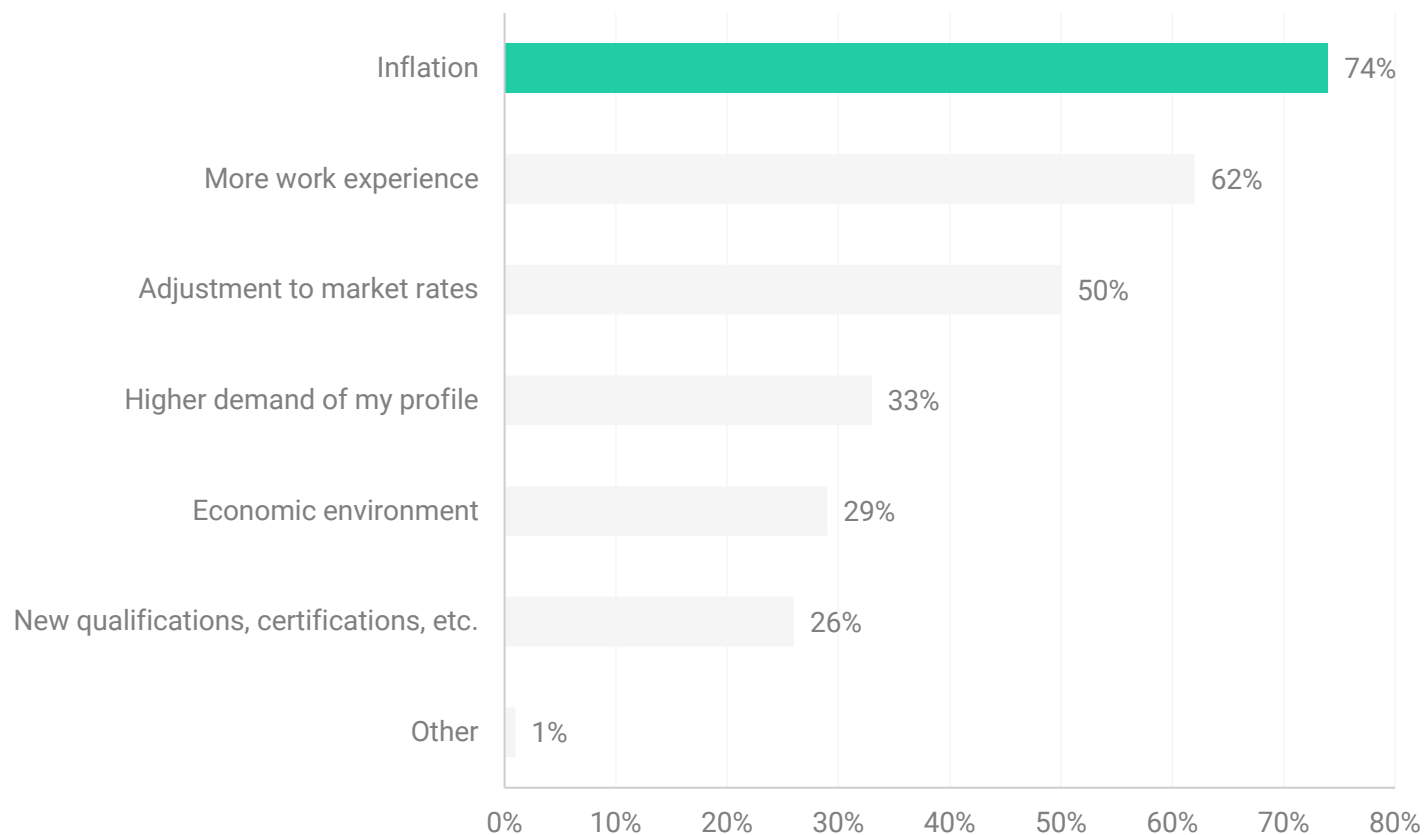
65%

charge their clients
by **hourly rate**.

19% charge by daily rate.

Freelance rates

Why are you going to increase your rates?



Remarkable

74%

are going to increase their rates
due to **inflation**.

62% justify the rate increase based
on the experience gained in the
field.

Finances & Income

Key findings



€12,000

Start capital



€96

Average hourly rate



€6,200

Monthly net income



€87 / €98

Average hourly rate w/m



62%

Income satisfaction

Agenda

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The hourly rate increases to €96.

Monthly net income rises to €6,200.

However, income satisfaction decreases from 66% to 62%.

83% feel (very) satisfied in their role as freelancers.

However, this is 4 percentage points lower than the previous year.

59% rate their economic situation as (very) good.

However, this reflects a 5 percentage points decrease compared to the previous year.

Overall, the sentiment in the freelancer market appears positive. However, there is a slight downward trend compared to the previous year, possibly influenced by factors such as inflation and recession.

Florian Baumann

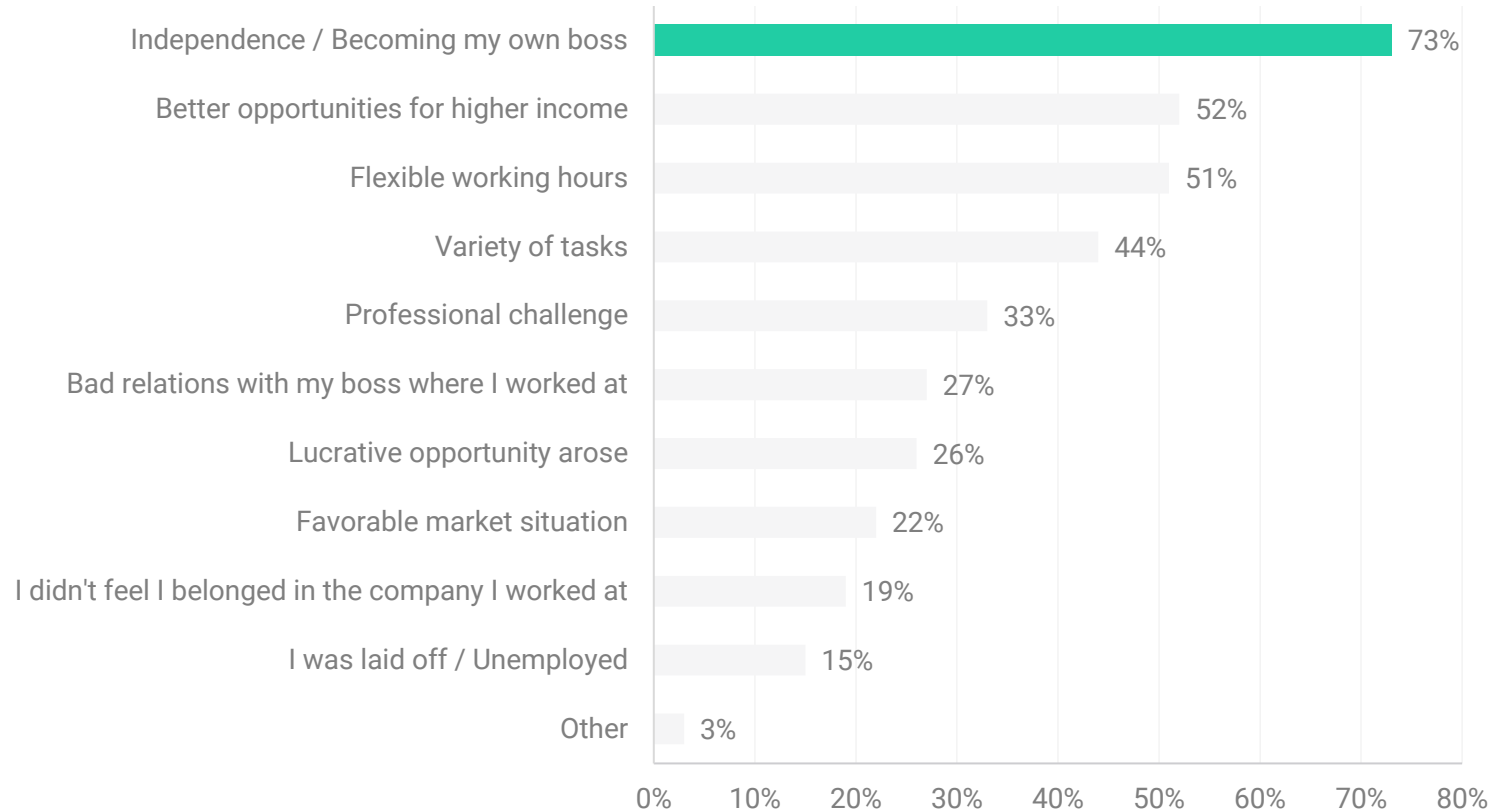
Head of Marketing / freelancemap GmbH

Freelancing on the side



Reasons to go freelance

Why did you become a freelancer?



Remarkable

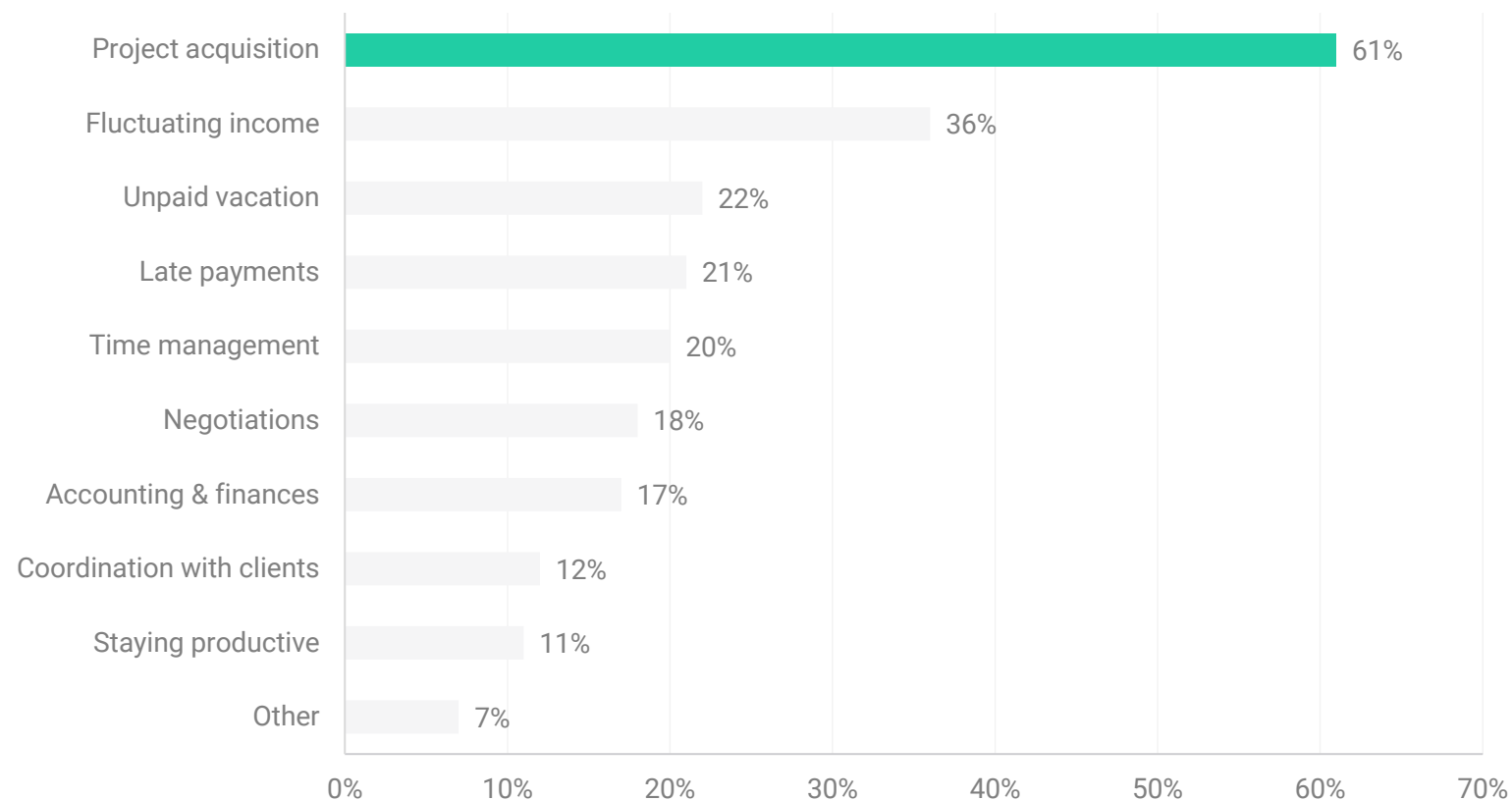
73%

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 52%.

Freelance challenges

What are the major challenges freelancers face?



Remarkable

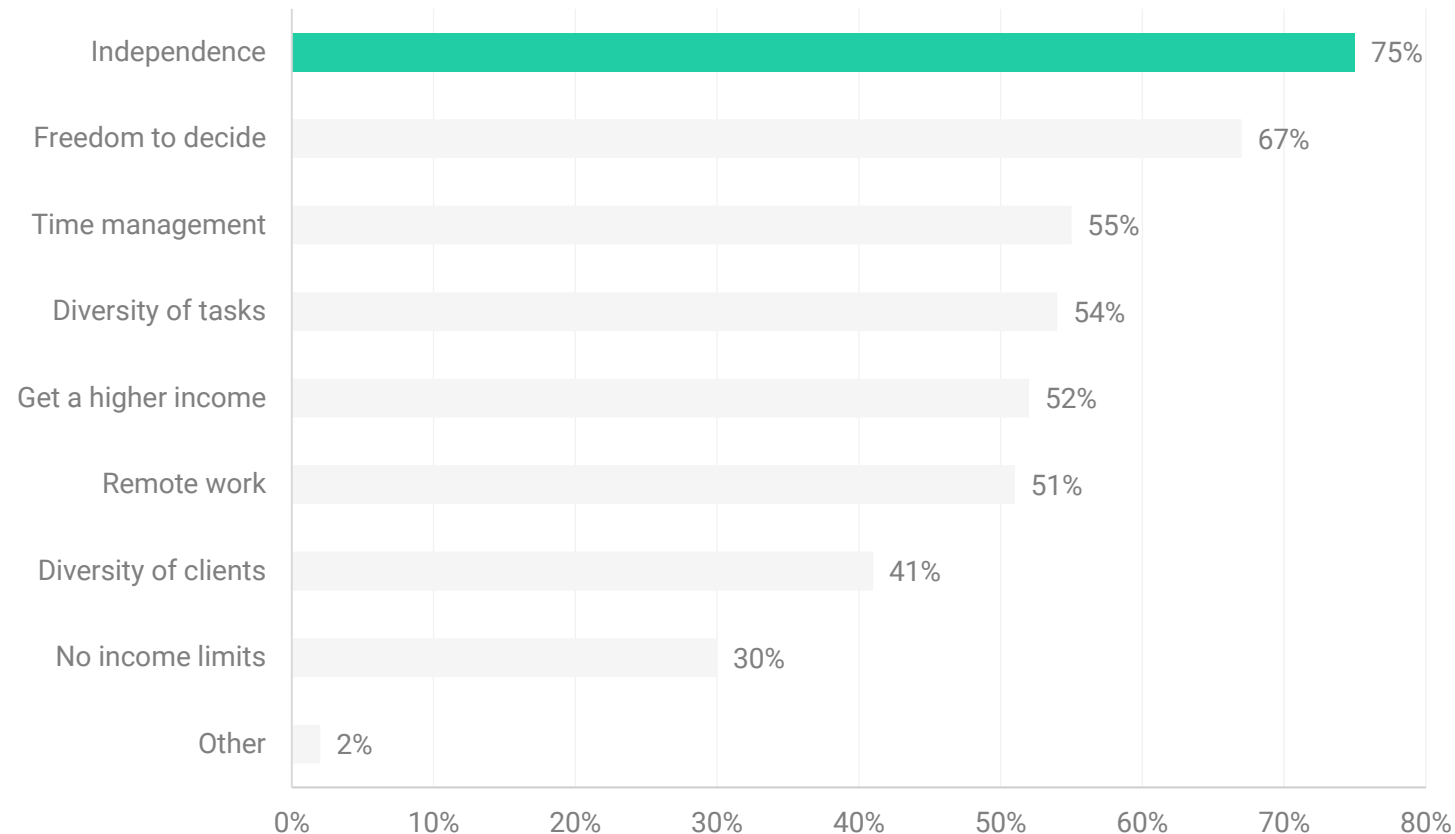
61%

agreed that **finding new projects** is the biggest challenge for freelancers.

Fluctuating income is the second biggest challenge (36%), followed by unpaid vacation (22%).

Benefits of freelancing

What are the main benefits of freelancing?



Remarkable

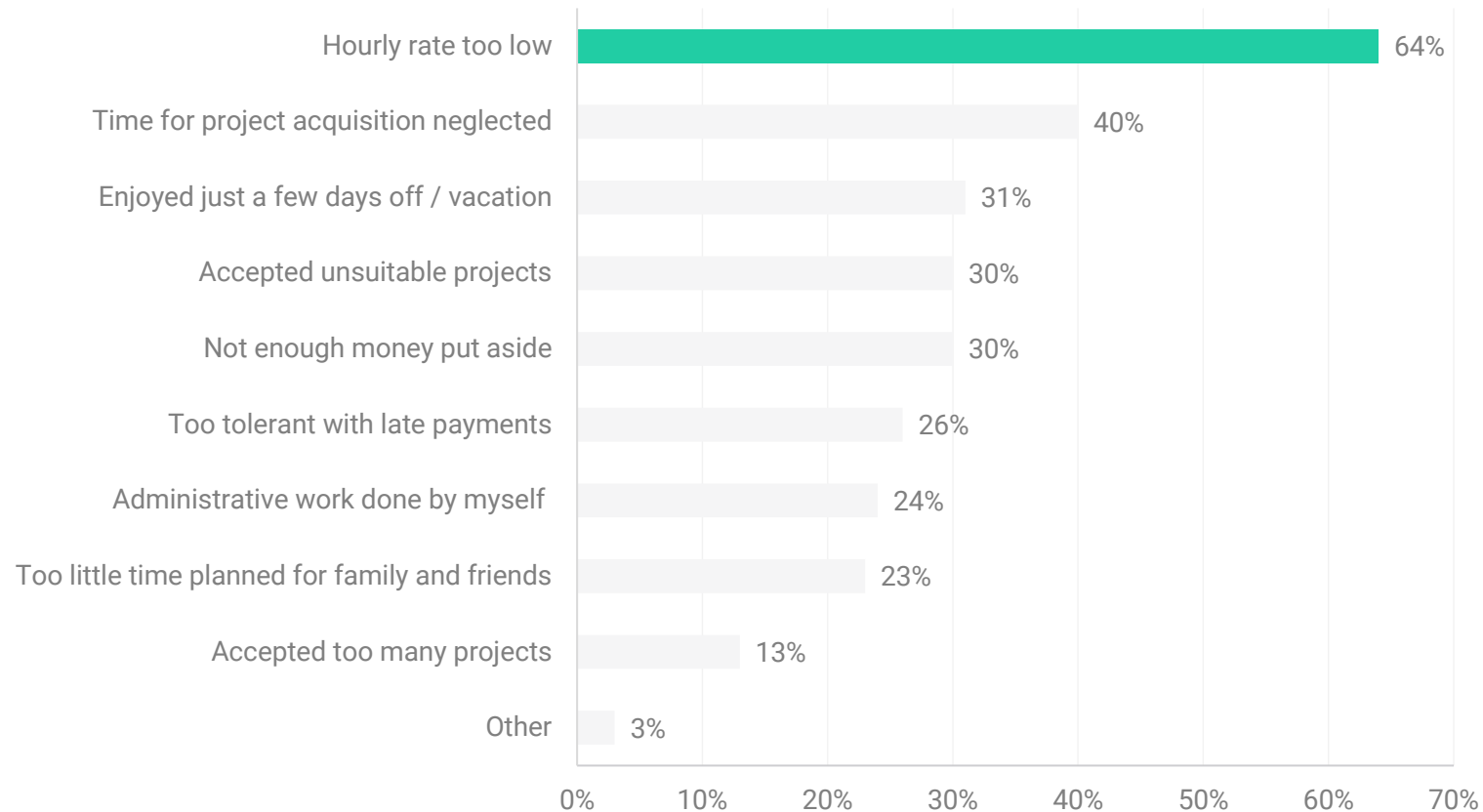
75%

consider **independence** the main benefit of freelancing.

Remote work is important for 5 out of 10 freelancers (11 percentage points more than the previous year).

Beginner mistakes

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



Remarkable

64%

of freelancers cited **charging too low** as their main mistake at the beginning of their career.

Underestimation of **time for project acquisition** is at second place (40%).

Freelancer facts

Working hours and holidays



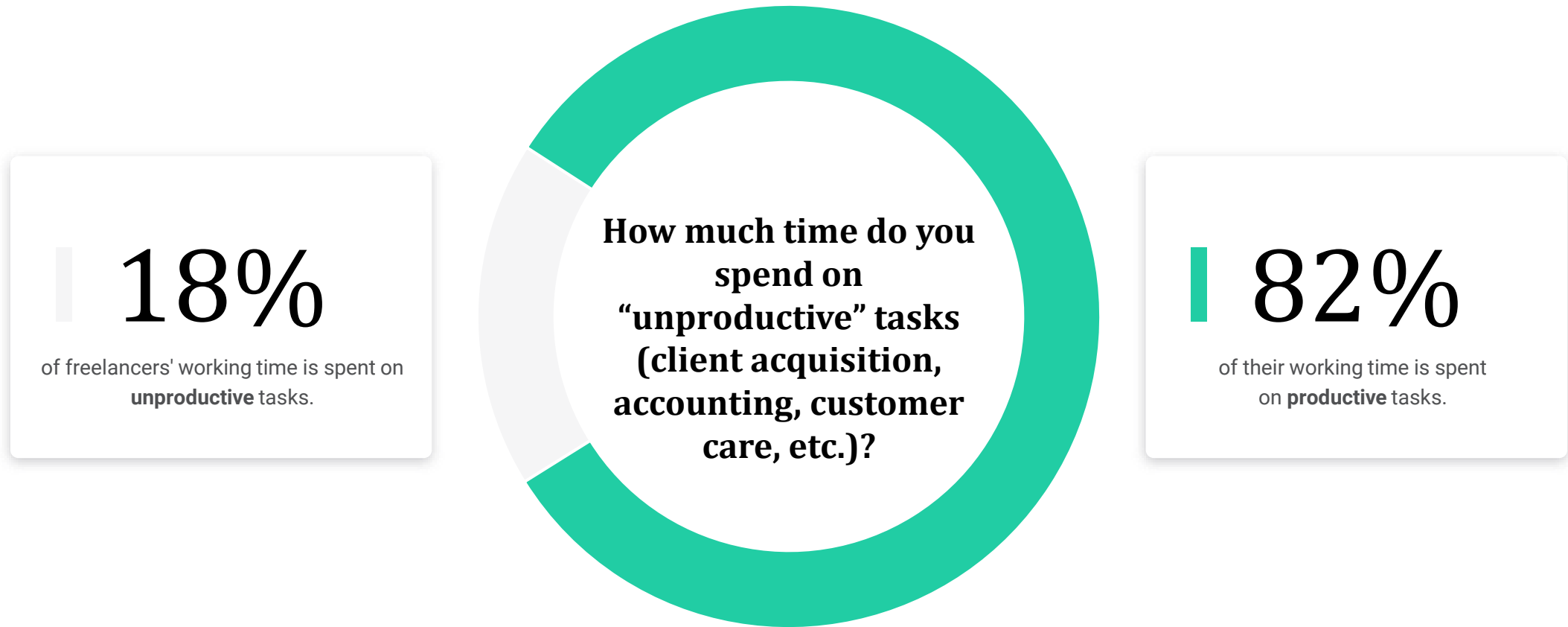
26 days
of vacation do freelancers take
on average per year.

40 hours
are freelancers working on
average every week.

9 projects
are completed by freelancers on
average every year.

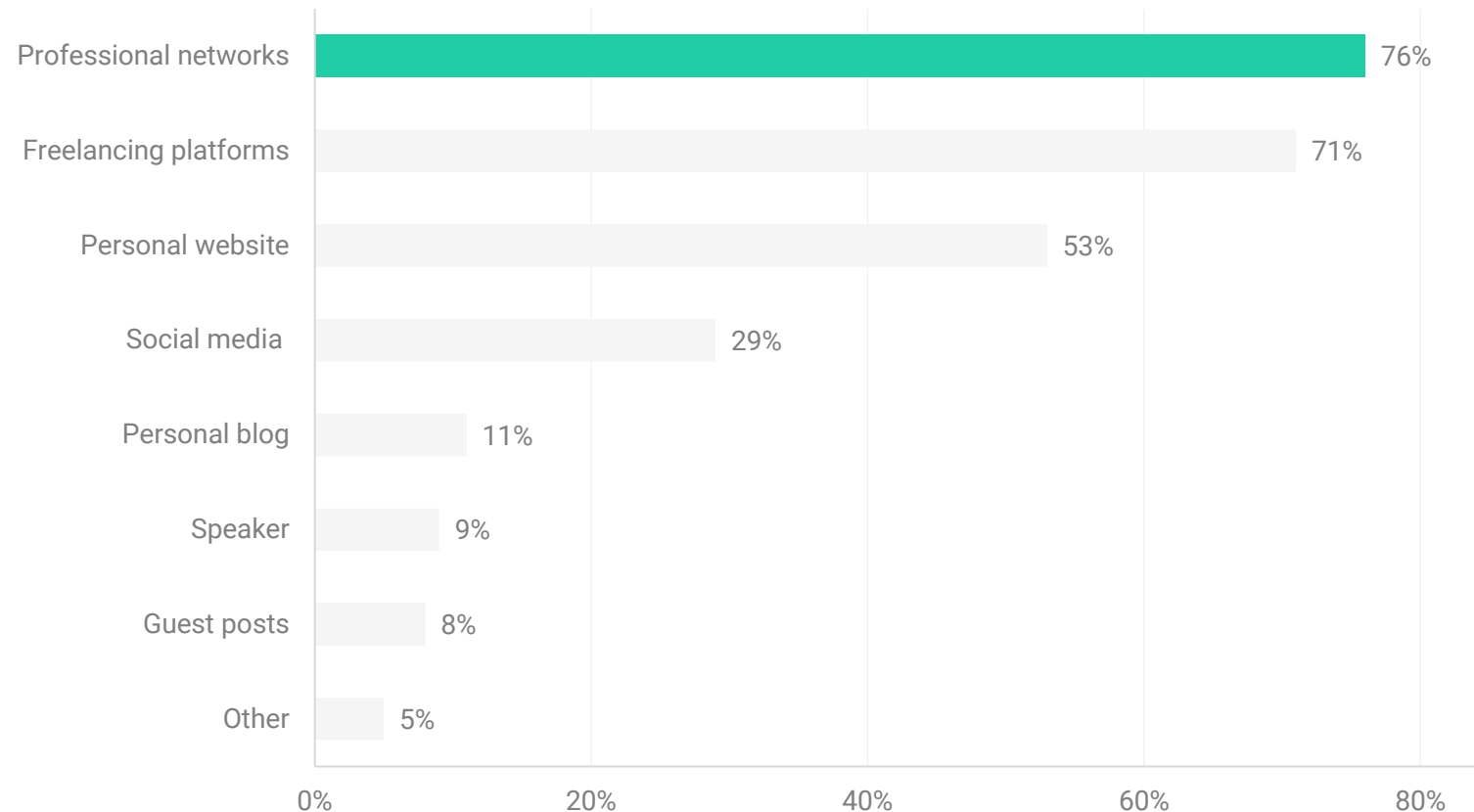


Productivity



Self-marketing

How do you market your freelance services?



Remarkable

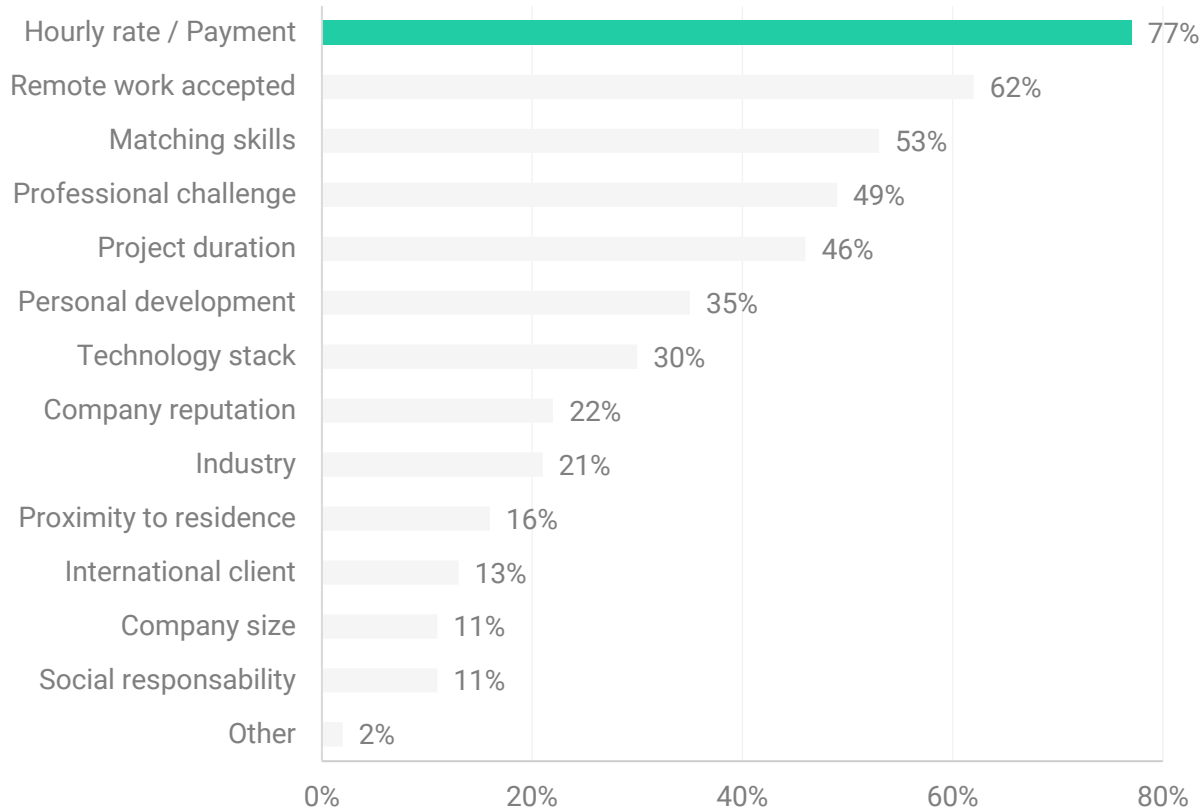
76%

of freelancers say they use **professional networks** like LinkedIn to market their services.

7 out of 10 surveyed freelancers use platforms such as freelancermapping for their self-marketing.

Accepting a project

Which factors influence your decision of accepting a project?



Remarkable

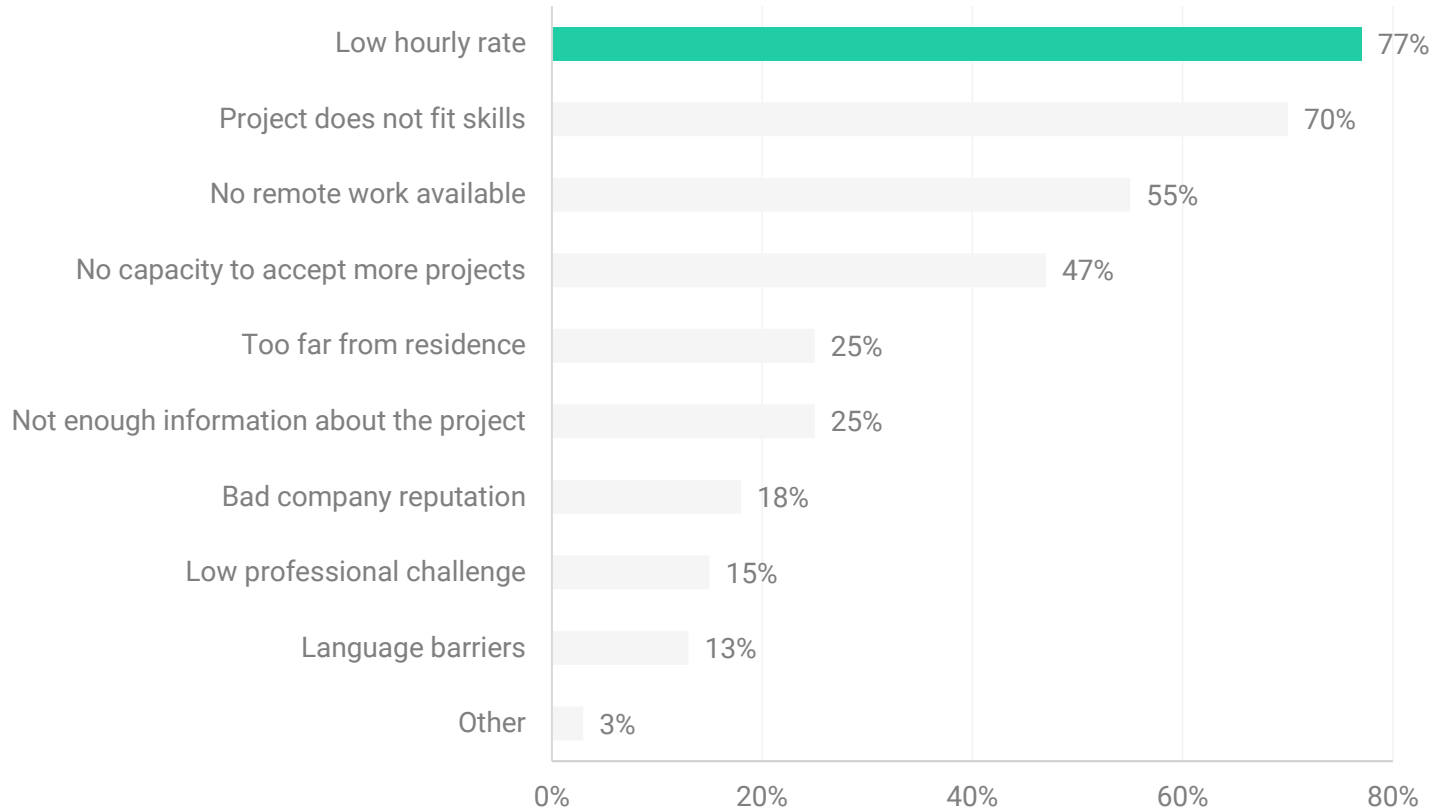
77%

of freelancers decide whether or not
to accept a project based on
the **hourly rate**.

For 62% is important to be able
to work remotely.

Rejecting a project

Why do you reject projects?



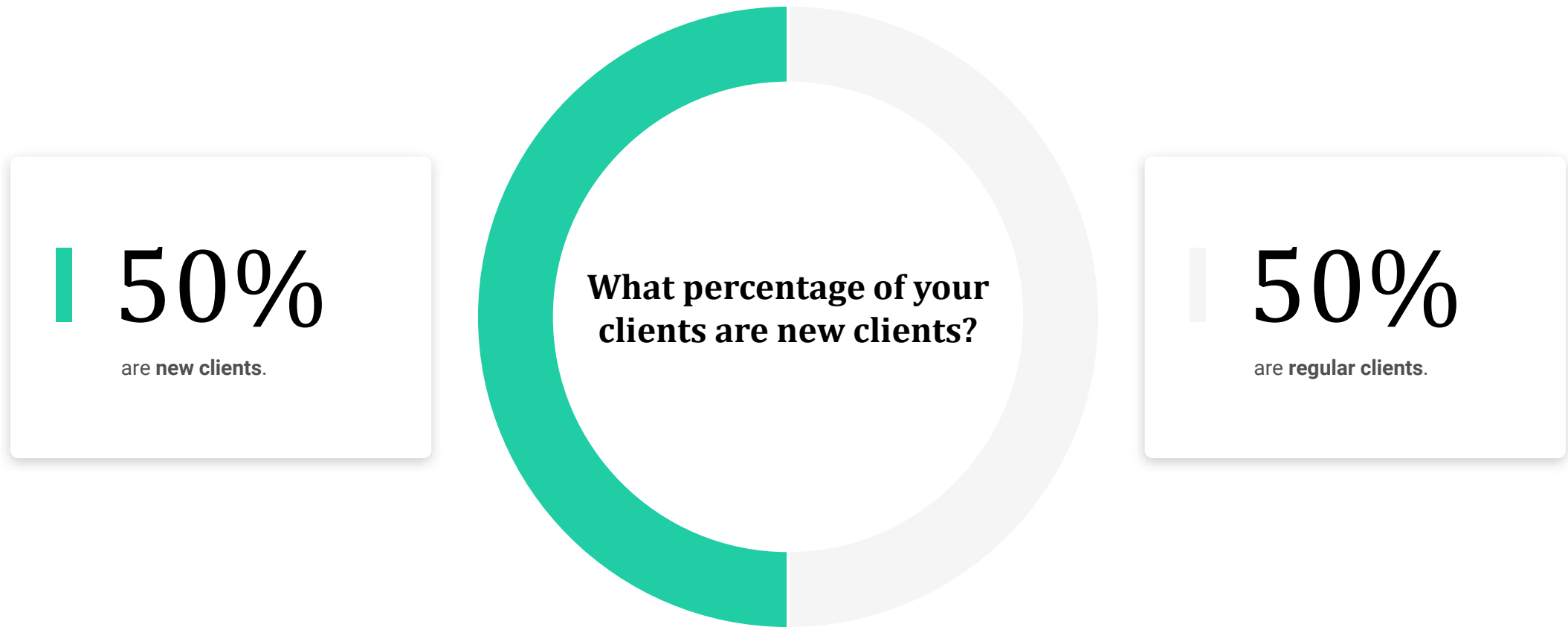
Remarkable

77%

reject projects because the
hourly rate is too low.

70% decline project offers because the
requirements don't fit the freelancer's
skills.

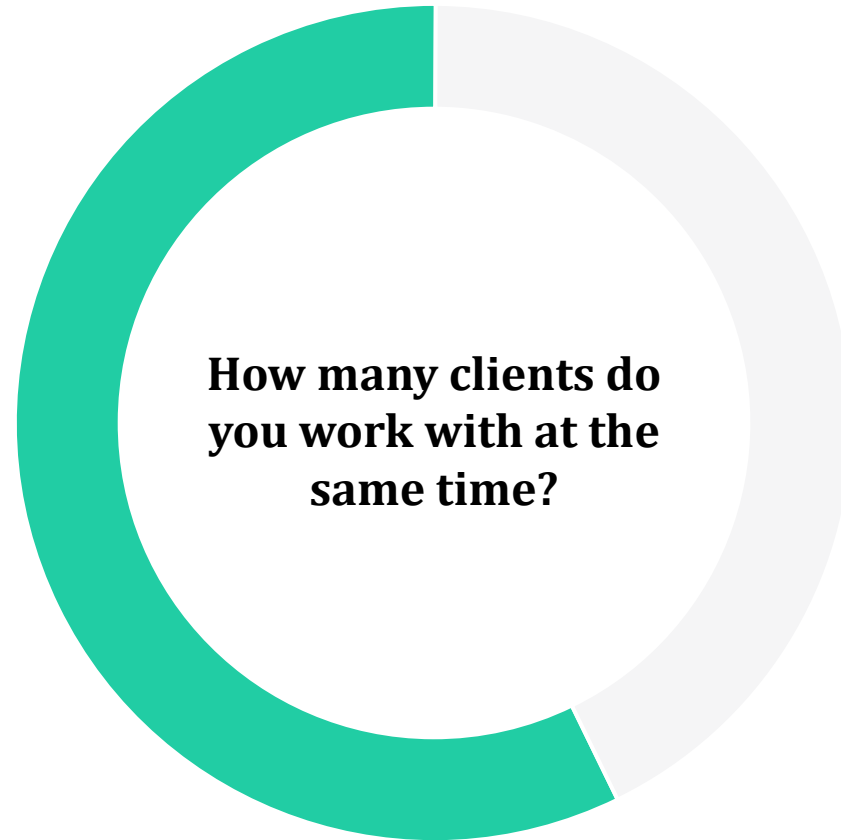
New vs. regular clients



Managing clients

 **57%**

of freelancers work with **multiple**
clients at the same time.



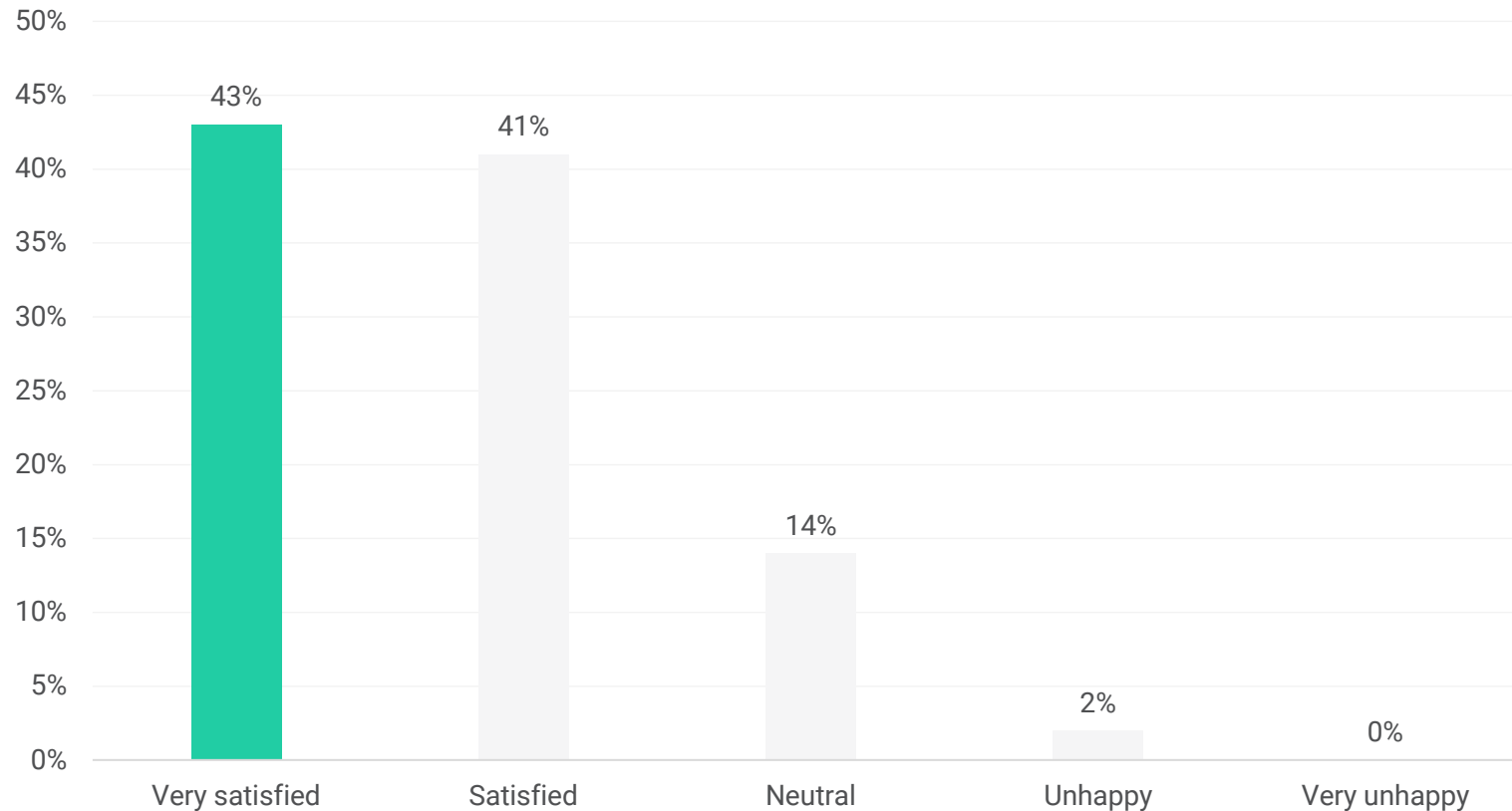
**How many clients do
you work with at the
same time?**

 **43%**

work with **only one client** at a time.

Personal fulfillment

How do you feel in your role as a freelancer?



Remarkable

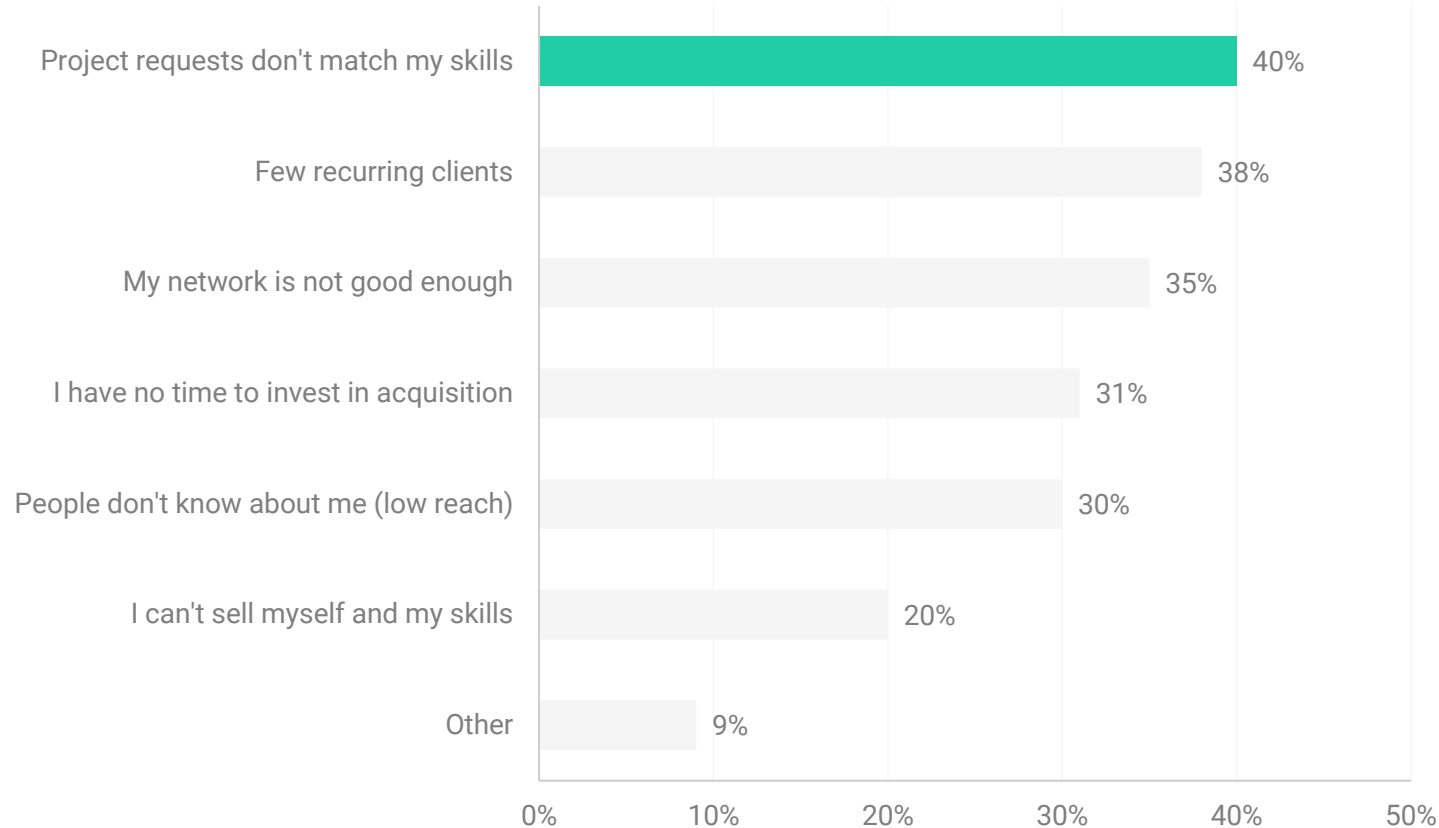
84%

of freelancers feel fulfilled and are **(very) satisfied** working as freelancers.

Only 2% of all surveyed freelancers said to be unhappy.

Project acquisition

Why is project acquisition so challenging?



Remarkable

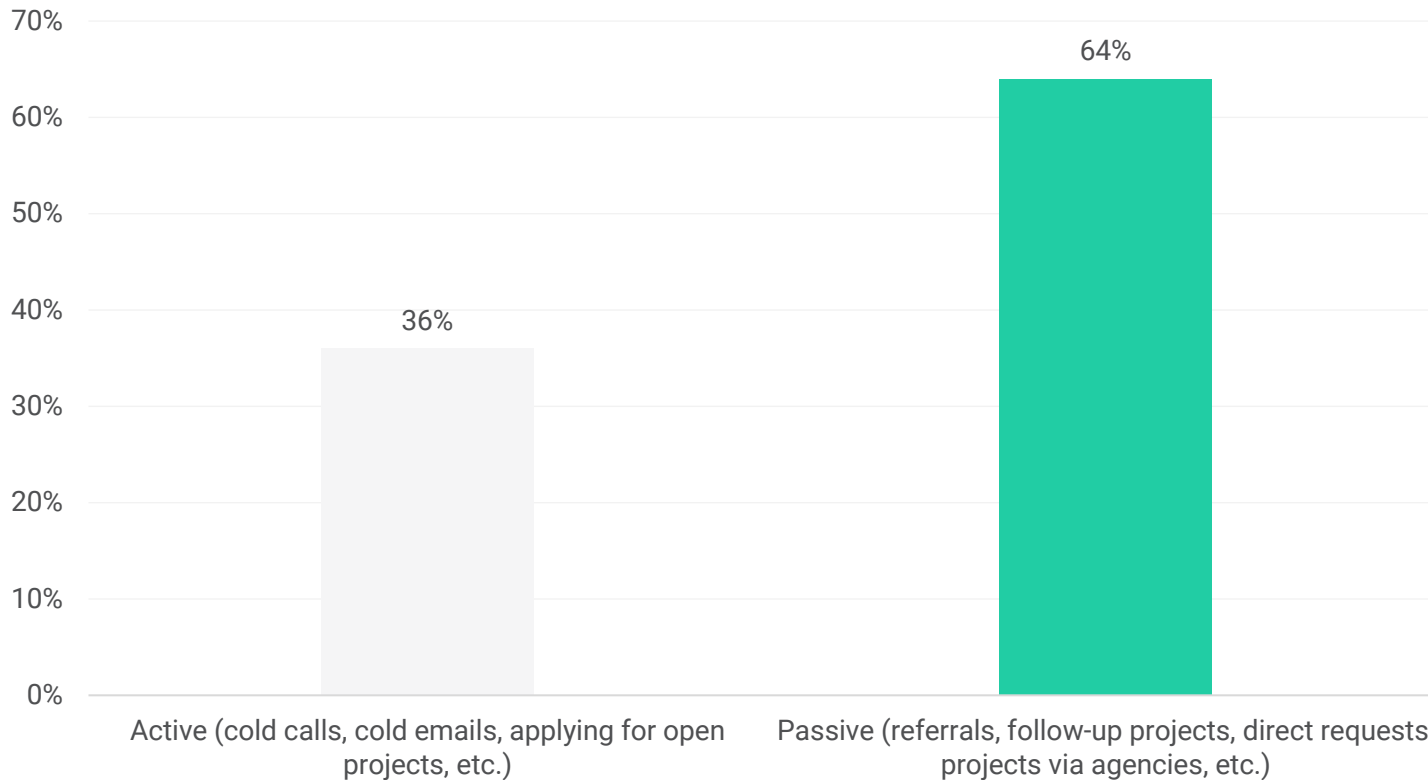
40%

consider **unsuitable project inquiries** as a challenge in client acquisition.

38% find having too few regular clients problematic.

Getting new clients

How do you usually get your projects?



Remarkable

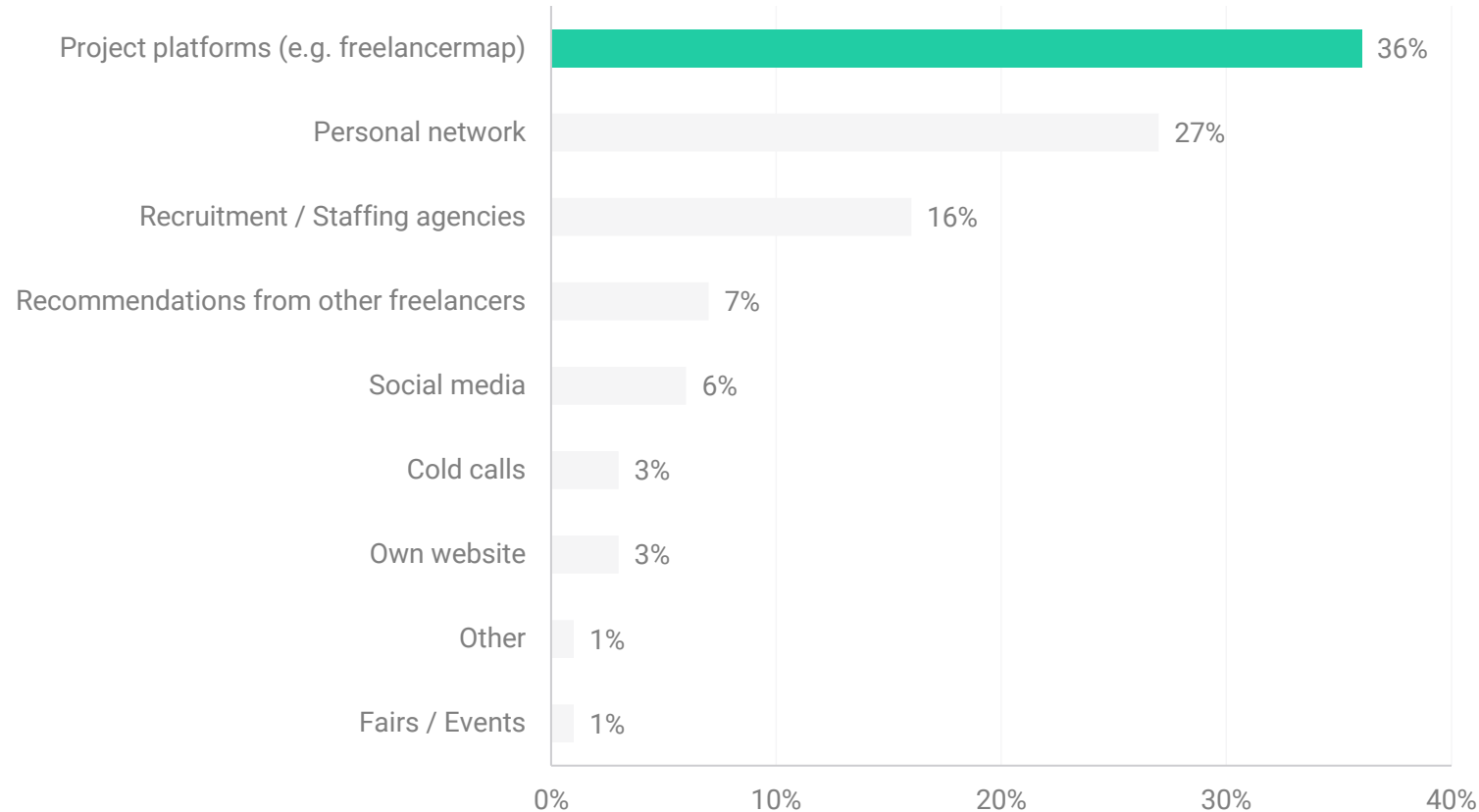
64%

of freelancers rely on **passive methods** to acquire new projects.

Only 36% actively engage in project acquisition.

Acquisition channels

Which channel is working best for you for project acquisition?



Remarkable

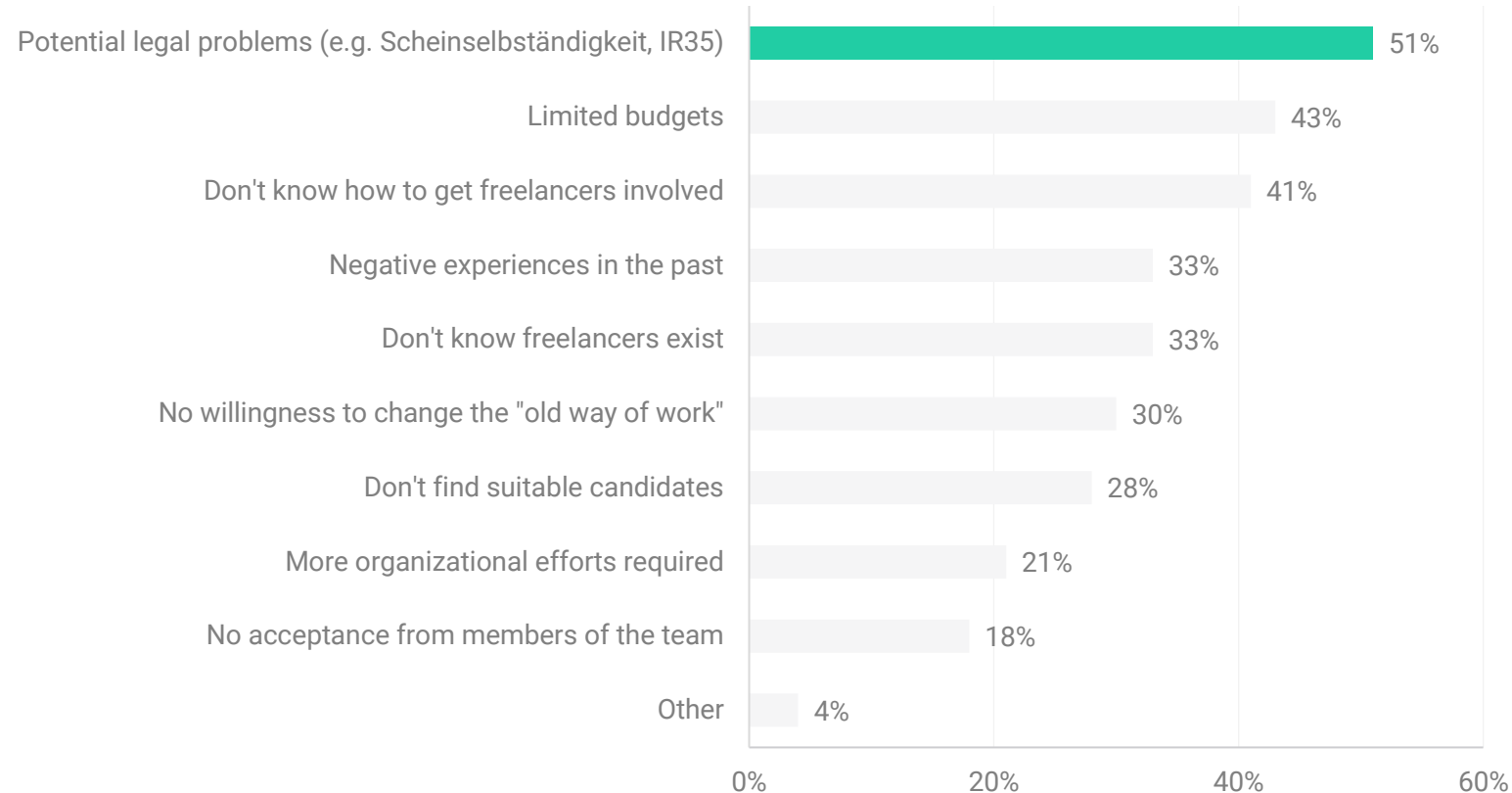
36%

use **freelancing platforms** as their primary acquisition channel.

27% of freelancers primarily receive project recommendations through their **personal network**.

Hiring freelancers

What do you think is preventing companies from hiring freelancers?



Remarkable

51%

assess that **potential legal problems** could prevent companies from hiring freelancers.

Limited budgets and missing onboarding processes for freelancers are further obstacles.

Working life

Key findings



7 years

Work experience



10 years

Freelancing



40 hours

Work per week



9 projects

Per year



26 days

Vacation

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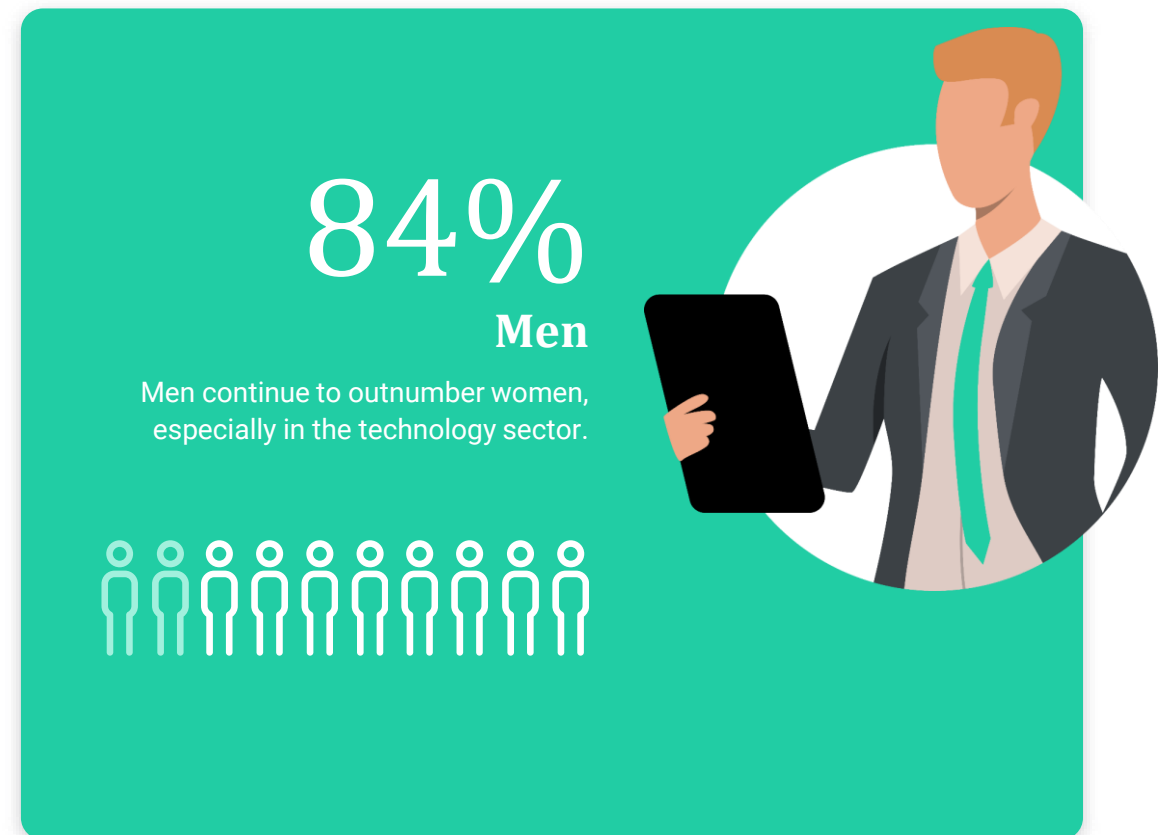
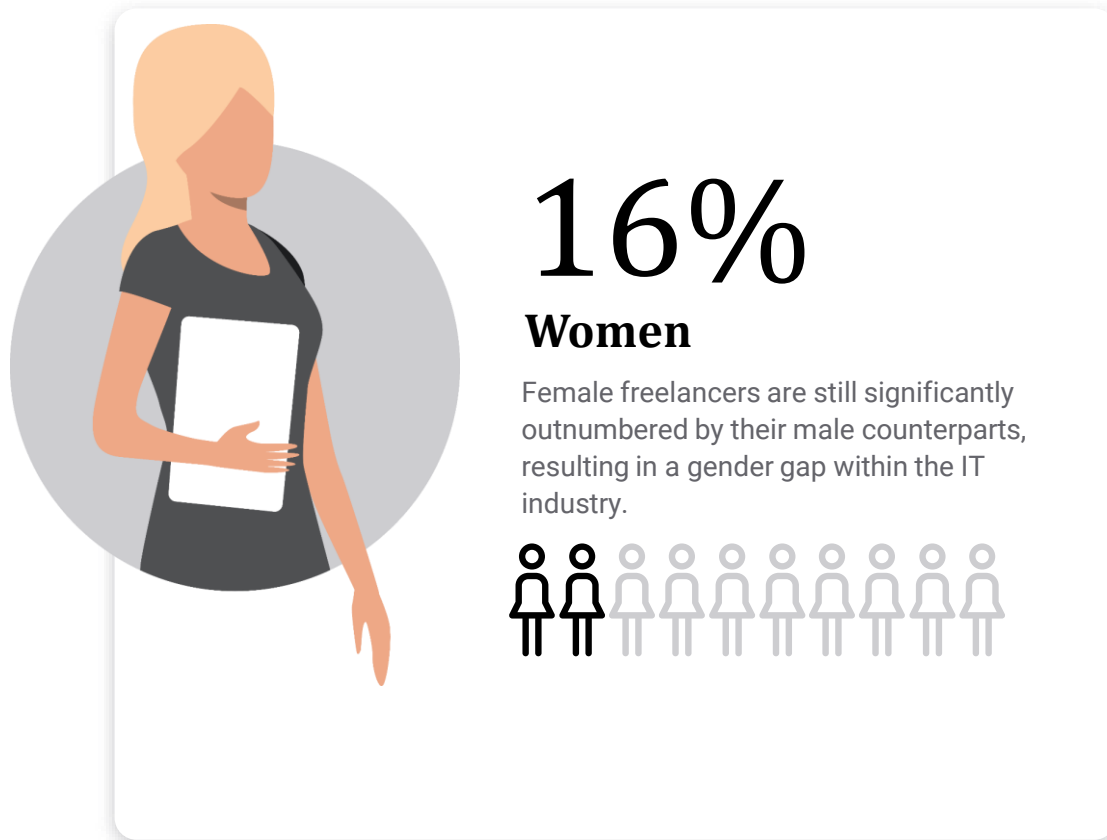
Project market situation, forecasts

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Impact of AI on the freelance market



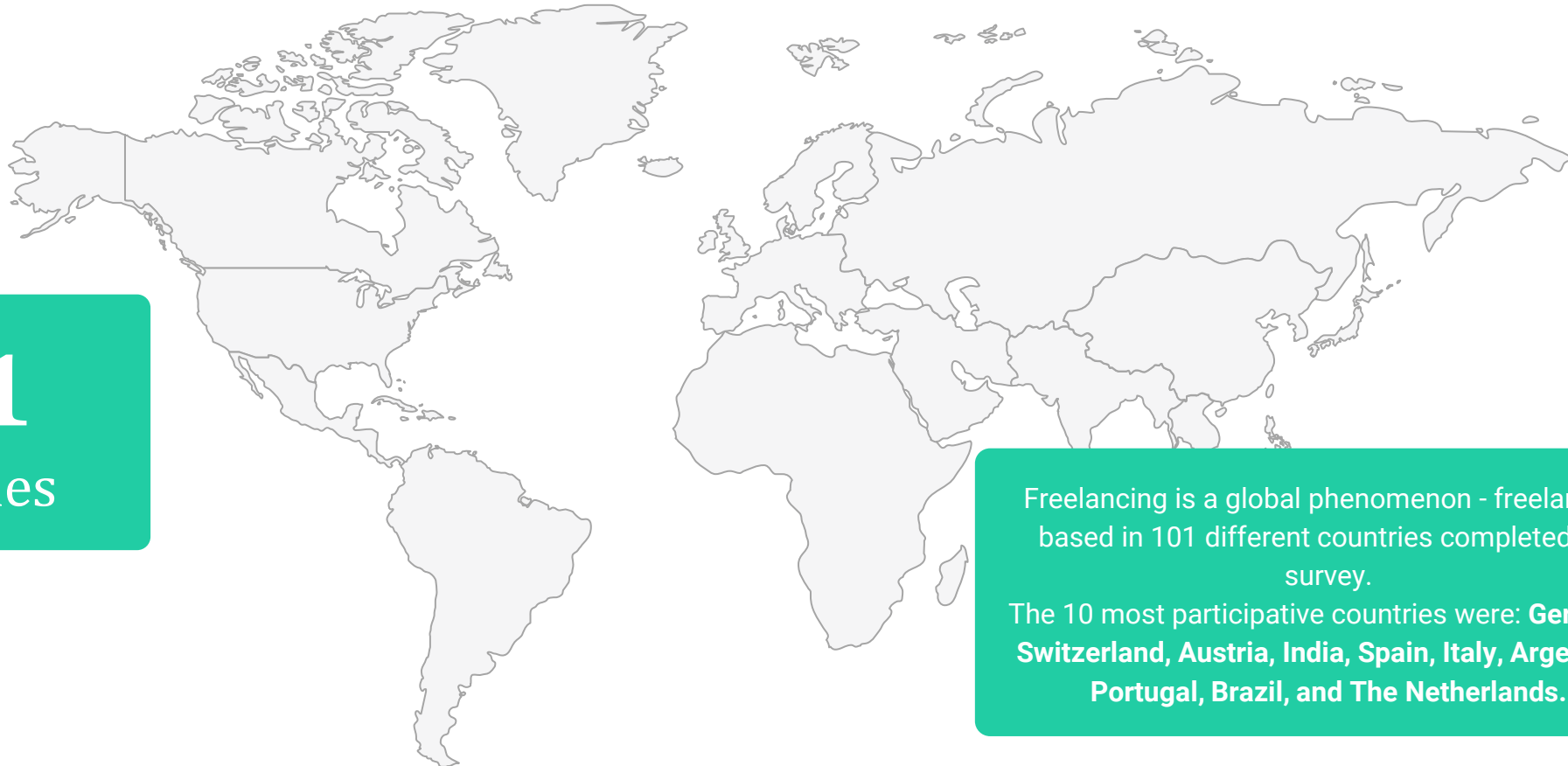
Gender distribution



0.60% reported being diverse or preferred not to say.

Freelancer location

Where do freelancers live and work?



101
countries

Freelancing is a global phenomenon - freelancers based in 101 different countries completed the survey.

The 10 most participative countries were: **Germany, Switzerland, Austria, India, Spain, Italy, Argentina, Portugal, Brazil, and The Netherlands.**

Education

Do you hold a university degree or a higher education title?

80%

4 out of every 5 freelancers have a university degree or other higher education credential.

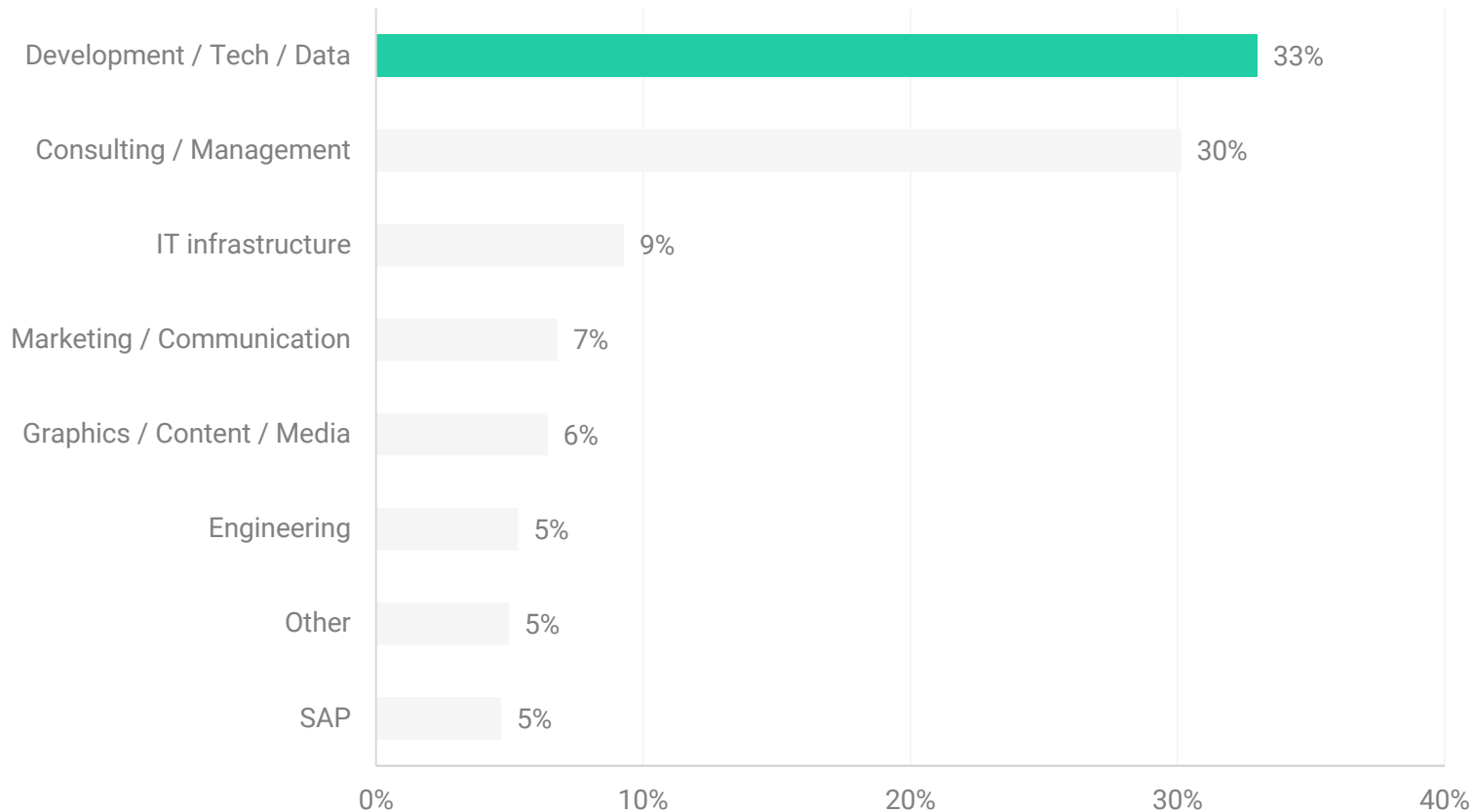
Do you hold a university degree or a higher education title?

20%

of freelancers do not hold a university degree (or higher). In SAP, 15% lack such credentials, compared to 40% in content and media.

Area of expertise

What is your area of expertise?



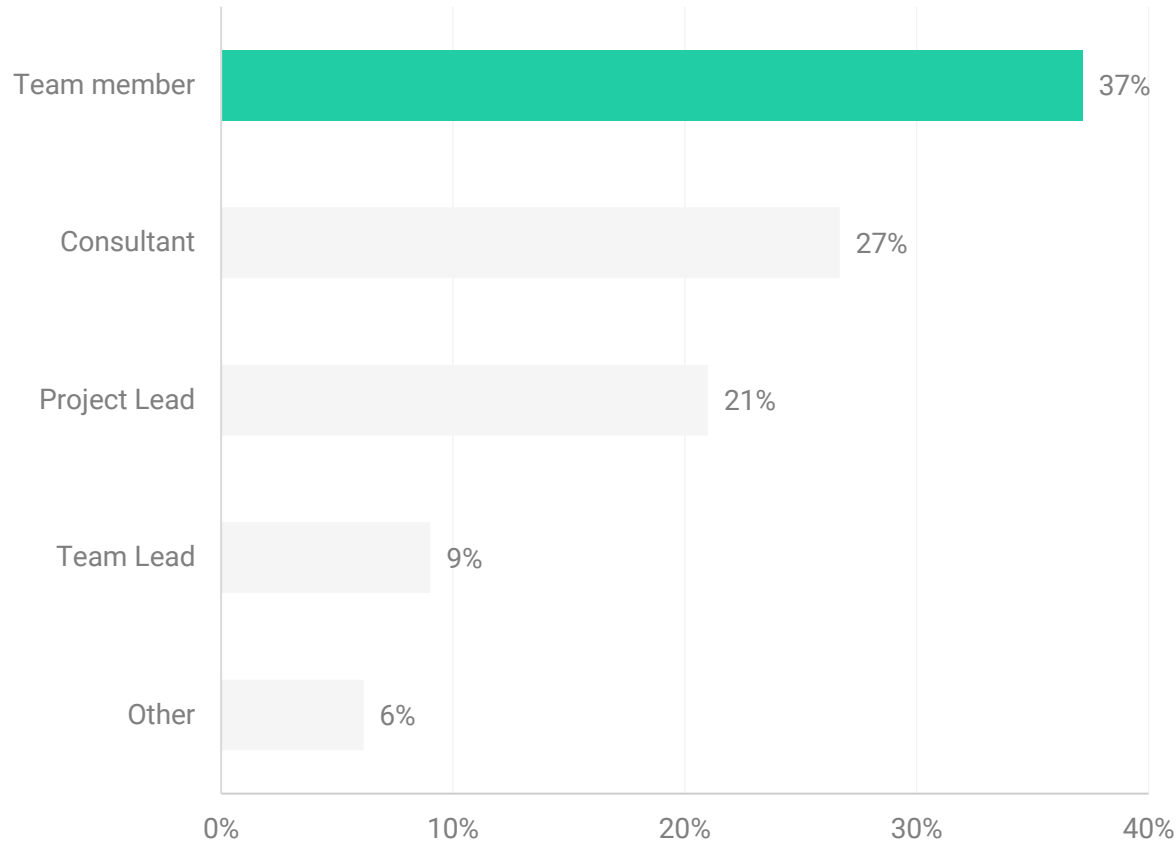
Remarkable

63%

of the surveyed freelancers work in
**development, tech and data or consulting
and management.**

Role on projects

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

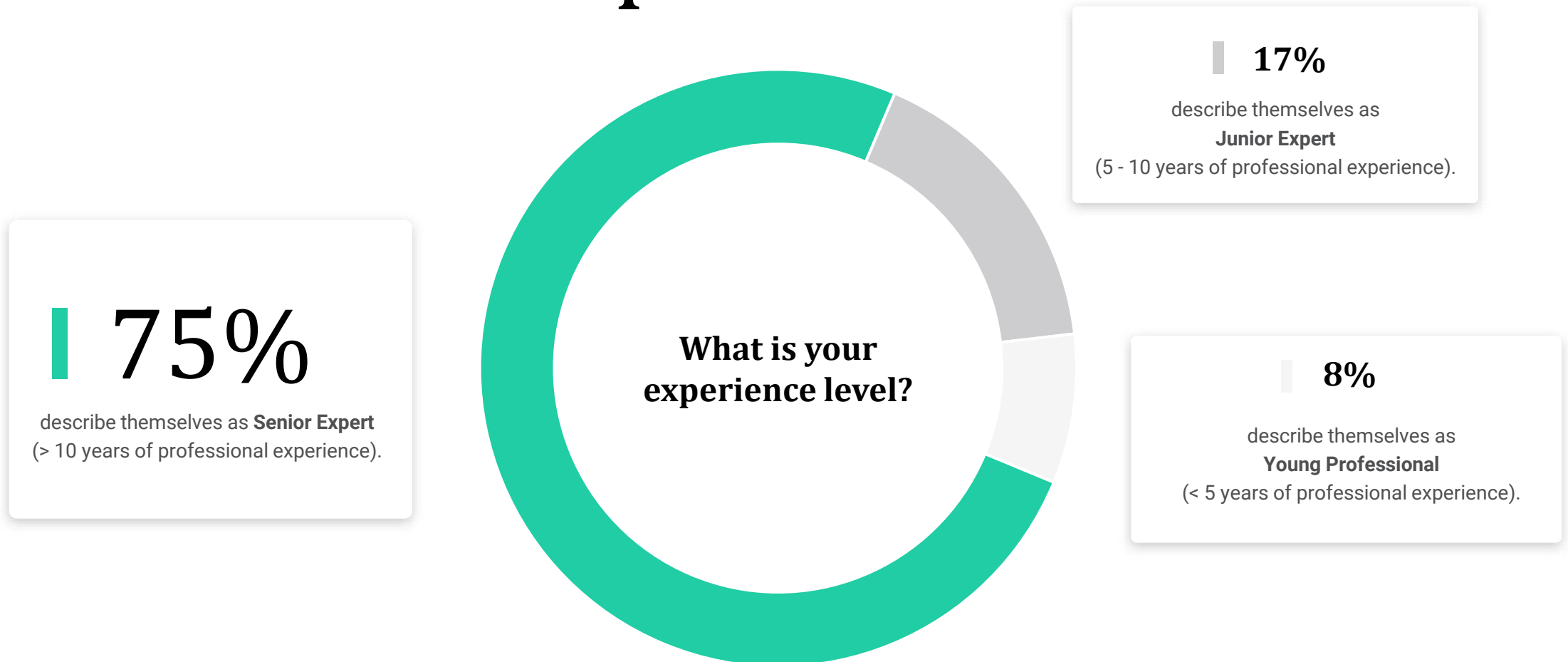


Remarkable

37%

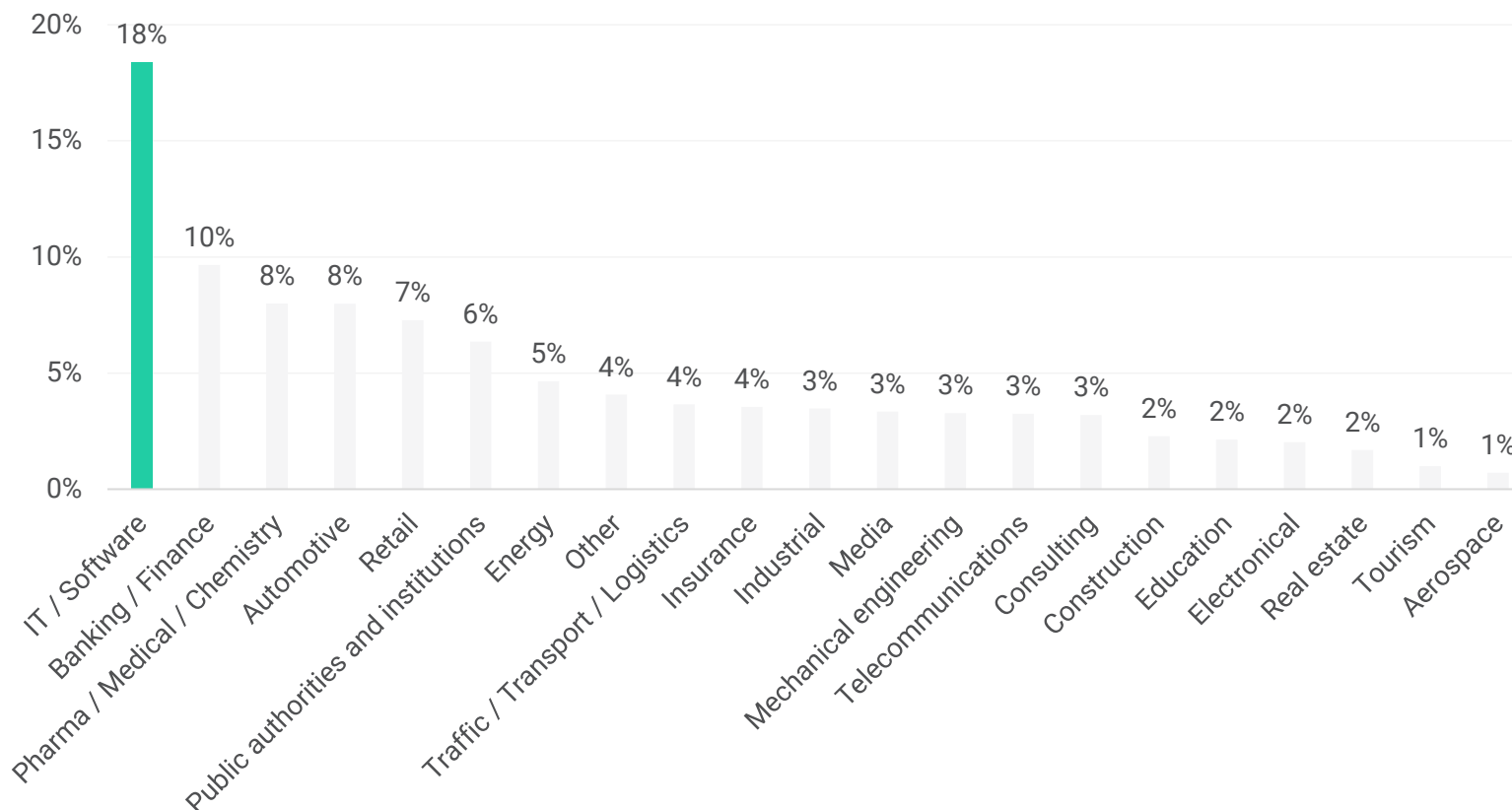
of freelancers are part of projects as **team members** specializing in their own respective areas. 30% are assigned to a project as team/project lead.

Professional experience



Projects industry

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



Remarkable

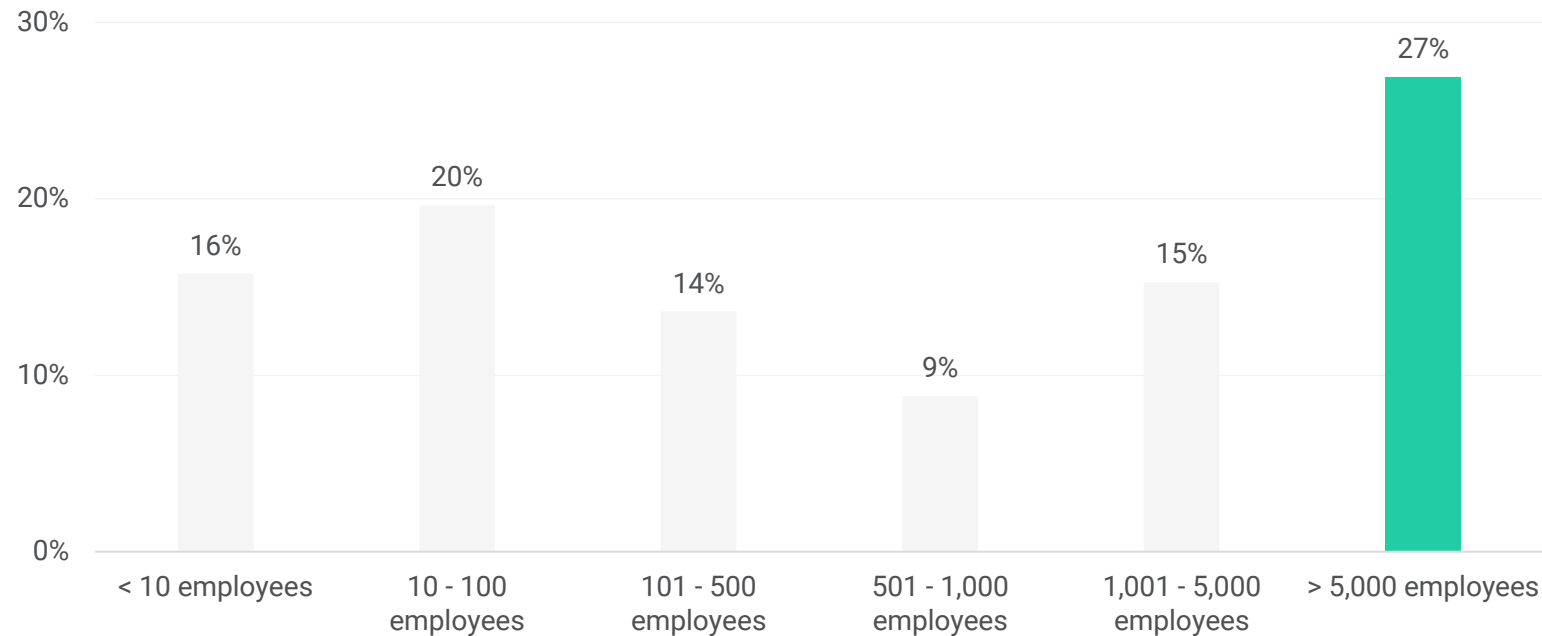
18%

work in the
IT / Software industry.

Top mentions in other industries:
Textile, E-Commerce, Advertising.

Company size

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



Remarkable

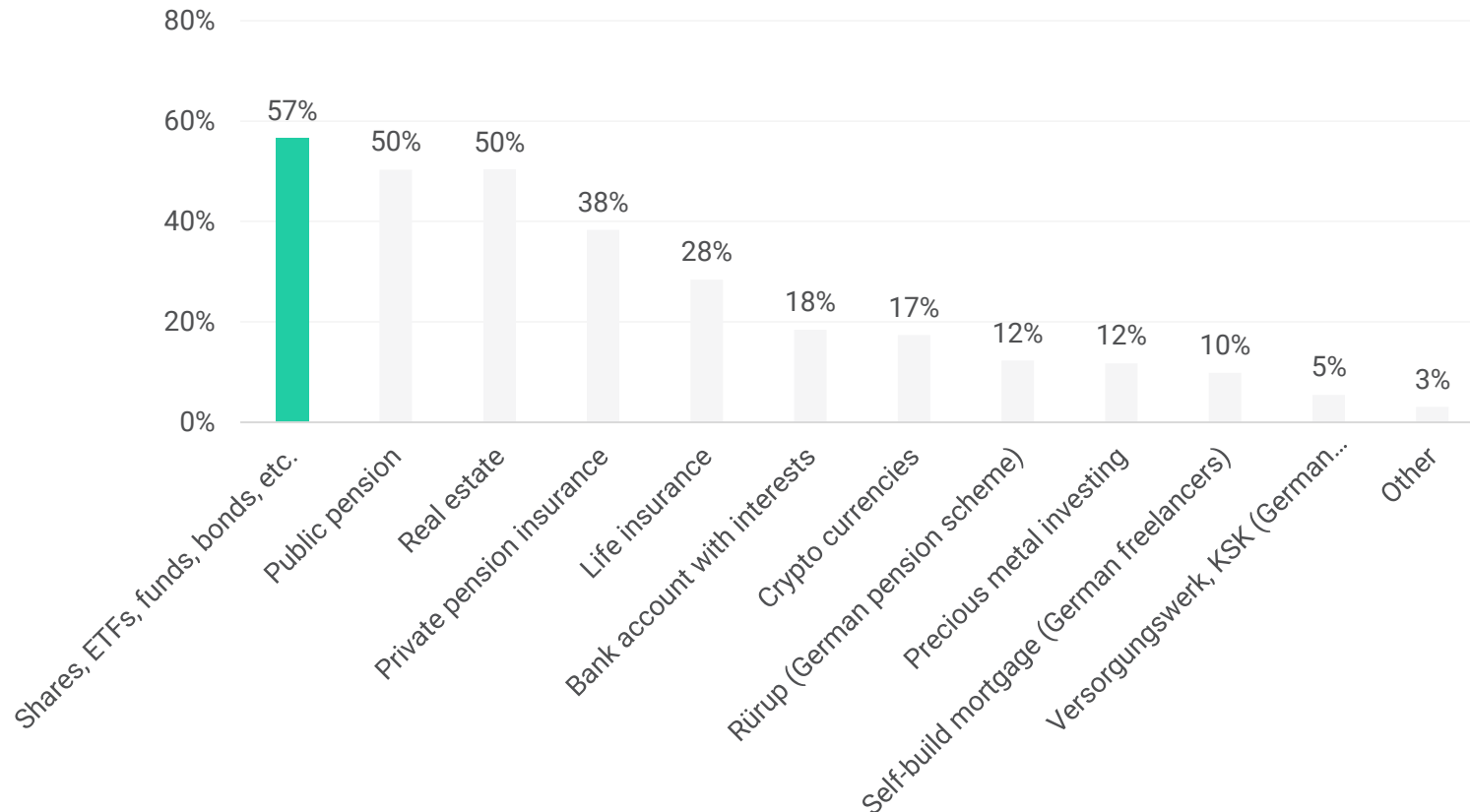
27%

work in companies with **more than 5,000 employees** - a decrease from 28% in 2022.

Trend: More small and medium-sized businesses are turning to freelancers for their projects.

Retirement

How are you saving money for your retirement?



Remarkable

€1,049

is the average amount that freelancers are putting aside for **retirement** per month.

In 2023, **securities** such as **shares** or **ETFs** have become the most popular method for saving for retirement. This shift is likely influenced by the rise of neo-brokers.

Demographics

Key findings



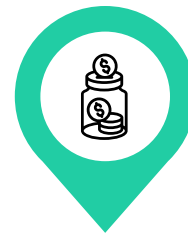
16% / 84%

Women / Men



44 years old

Age



€1,049

Retirement savings



80%

University graduates



63 years old

Planned retirement age

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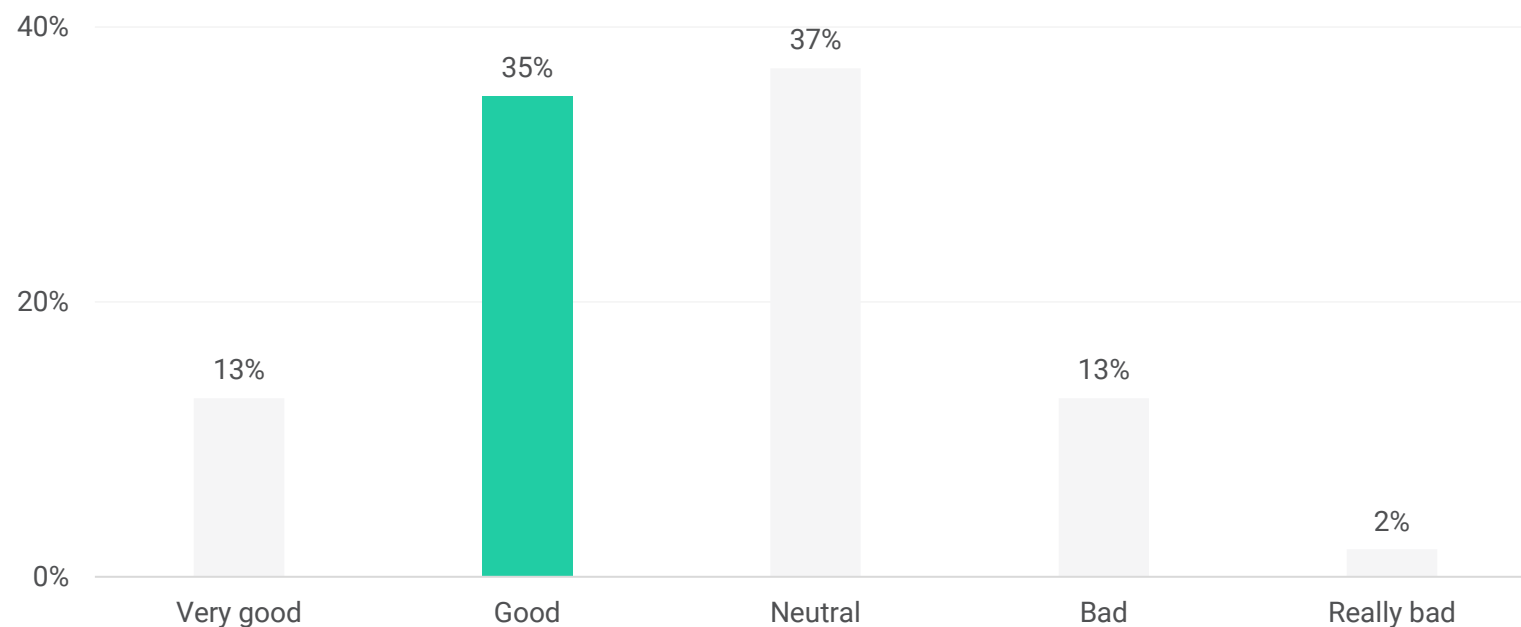


Loss of livelihood



Project market

How would you rate the actual project market situation for freelancers?



Remarkable

48%

rate the actual freelance project market as **(very) good**.

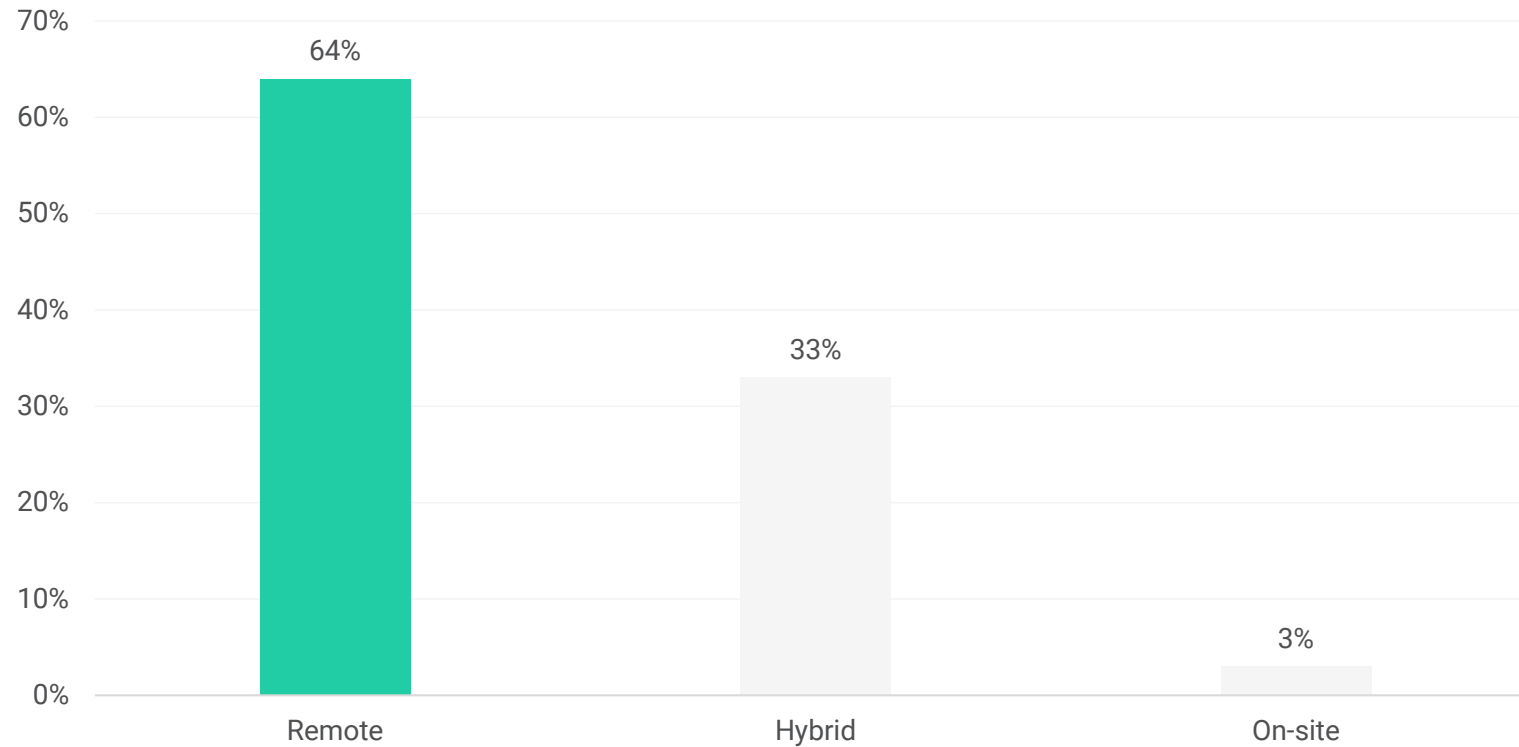
In 2022, 64% thought that the project market was (very) good.

Project market situation



Workplace

Where are you completing your current project from?



Remarkable

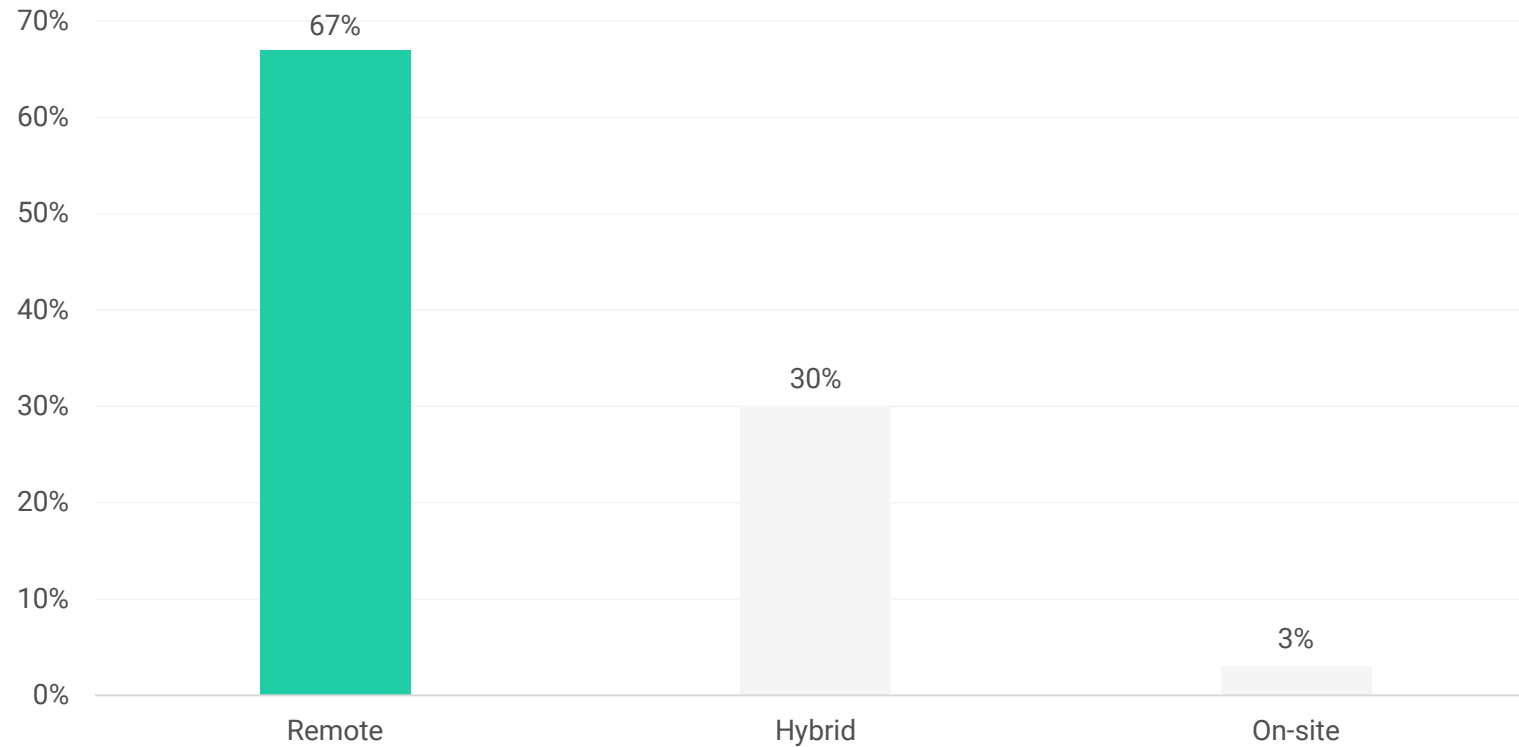
64%

work **remotely**.

33% of freelancers work with an
hybrid working approach.

Ideal workplace

Where do you prefer to work?



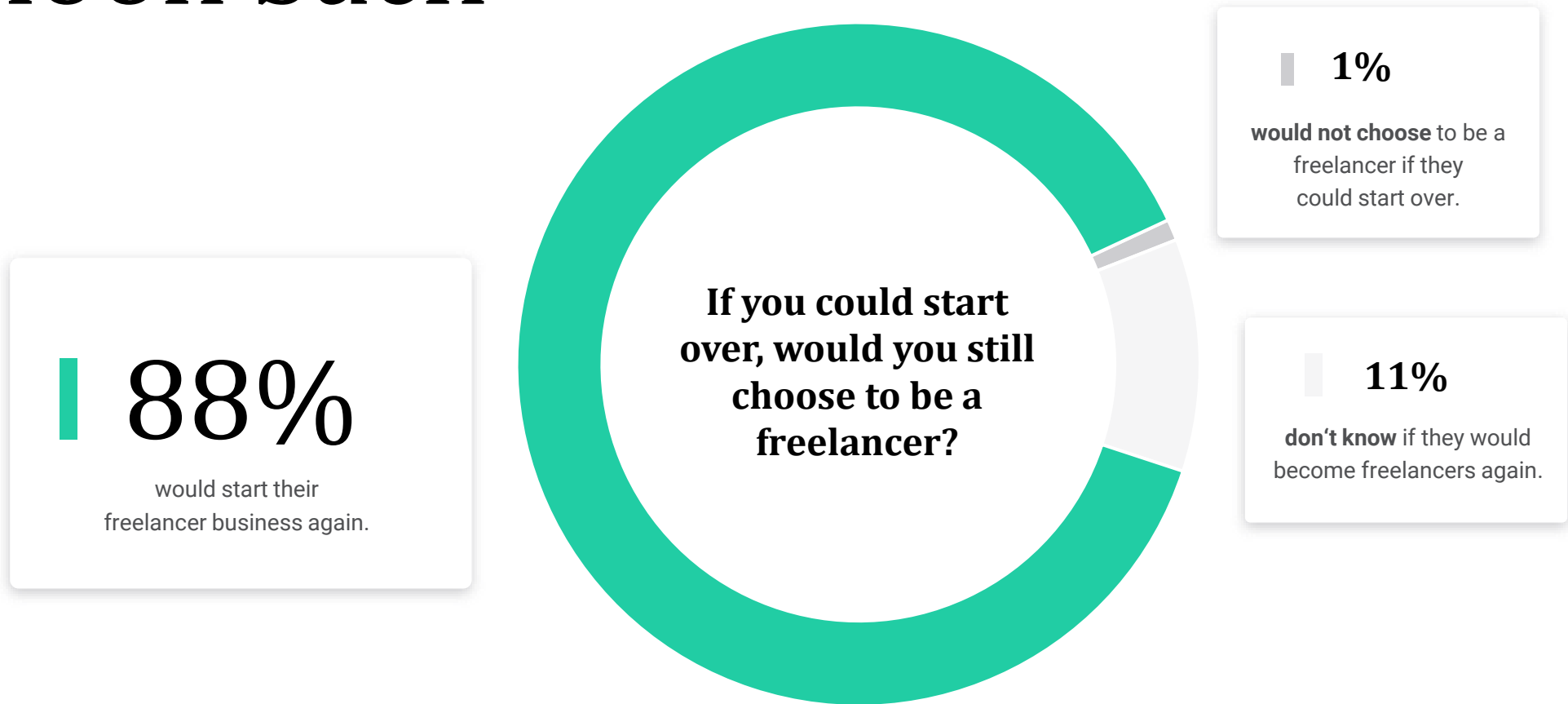
Remarkable

67%

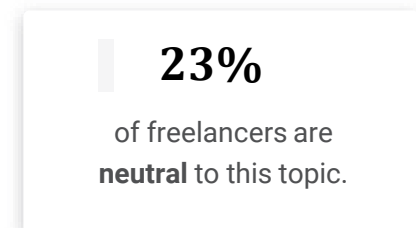
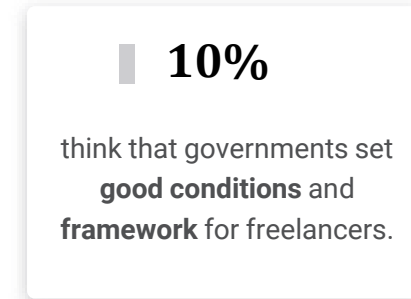
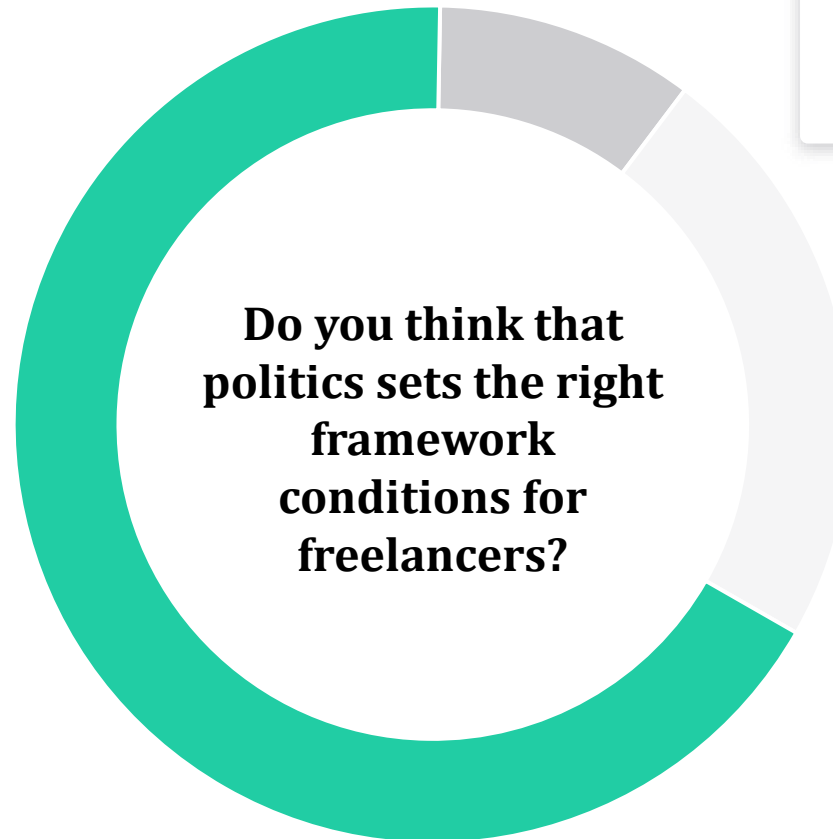
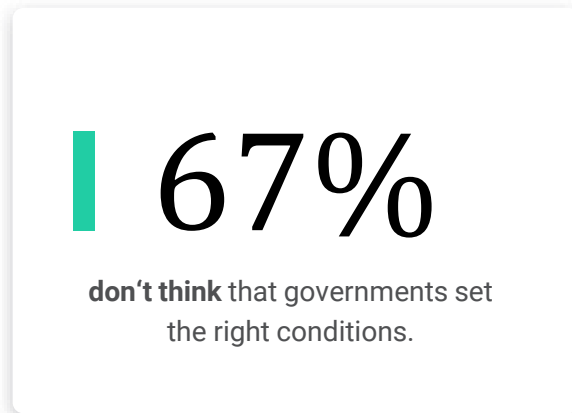
of freelancers prefer to
work remotely.

Only 3% of freelancers would be
happy working 100% on-site.

A look back

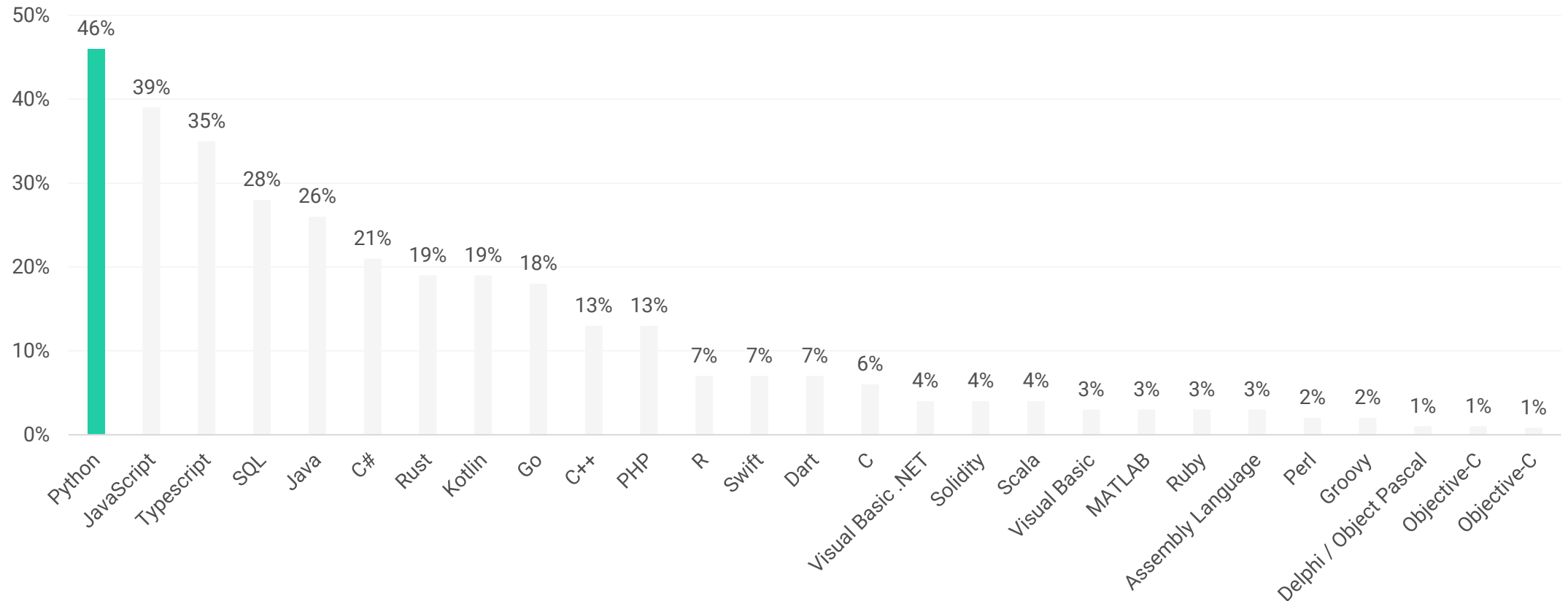


Government support



Programming languages

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



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Impact of AI on the freelance market





AI is not a threat to the creative industry but a useful tool.

It lacks creativity, experience, empathy, and holistic thinking. No AI can understand the complexities of customer needs.

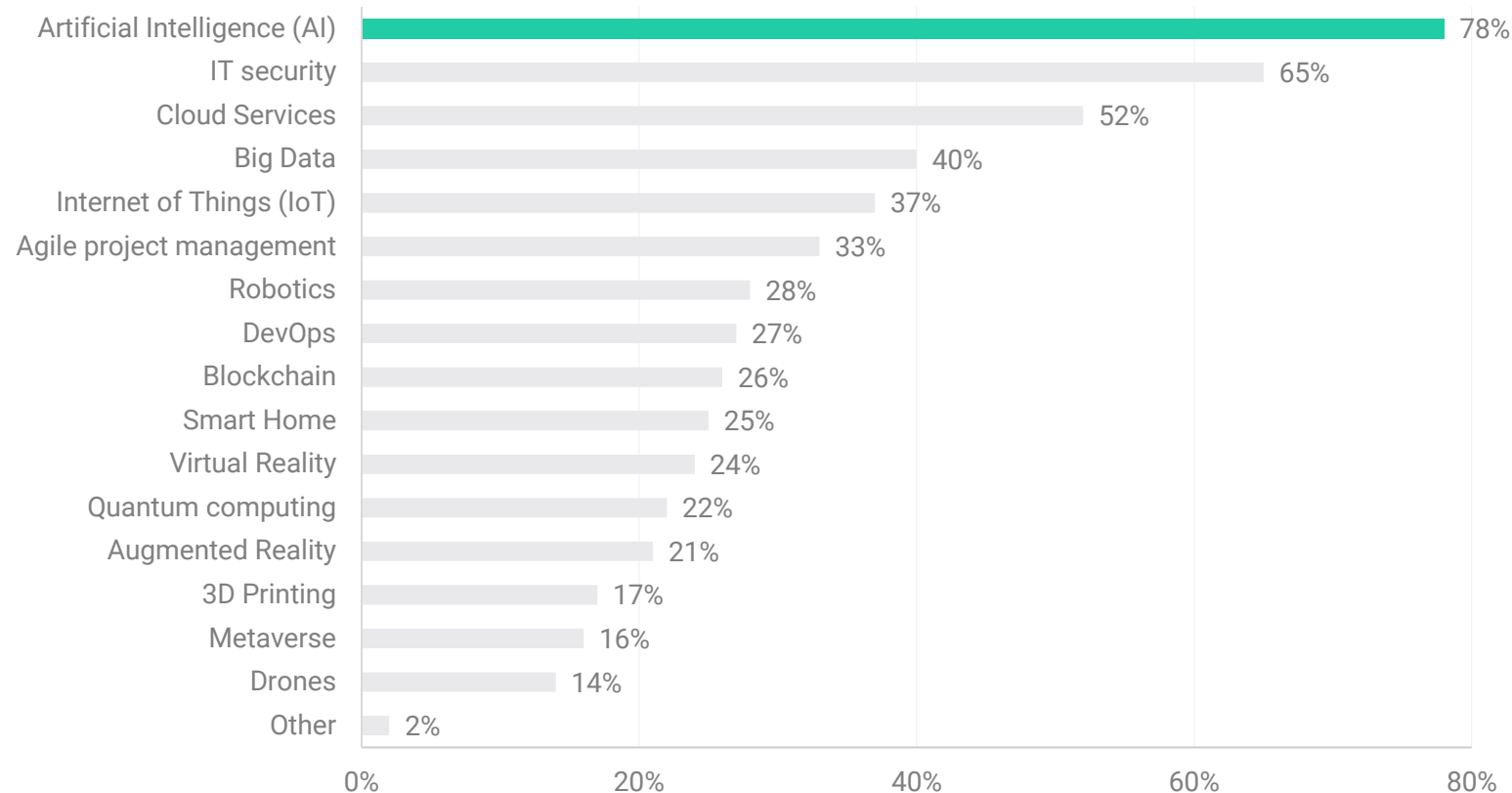
We should focus on our core ability: flexibility. With it, we can explore, learn new things, and grow.

Maria Murnikov

CEO / Brand Writer / Communications Strategist

Future's top technologies

In your opinion, which of the following IT industries will see a marked rise in the future?



Remarkable

78%

attribute growing importance to **Artificial Intelligence**.

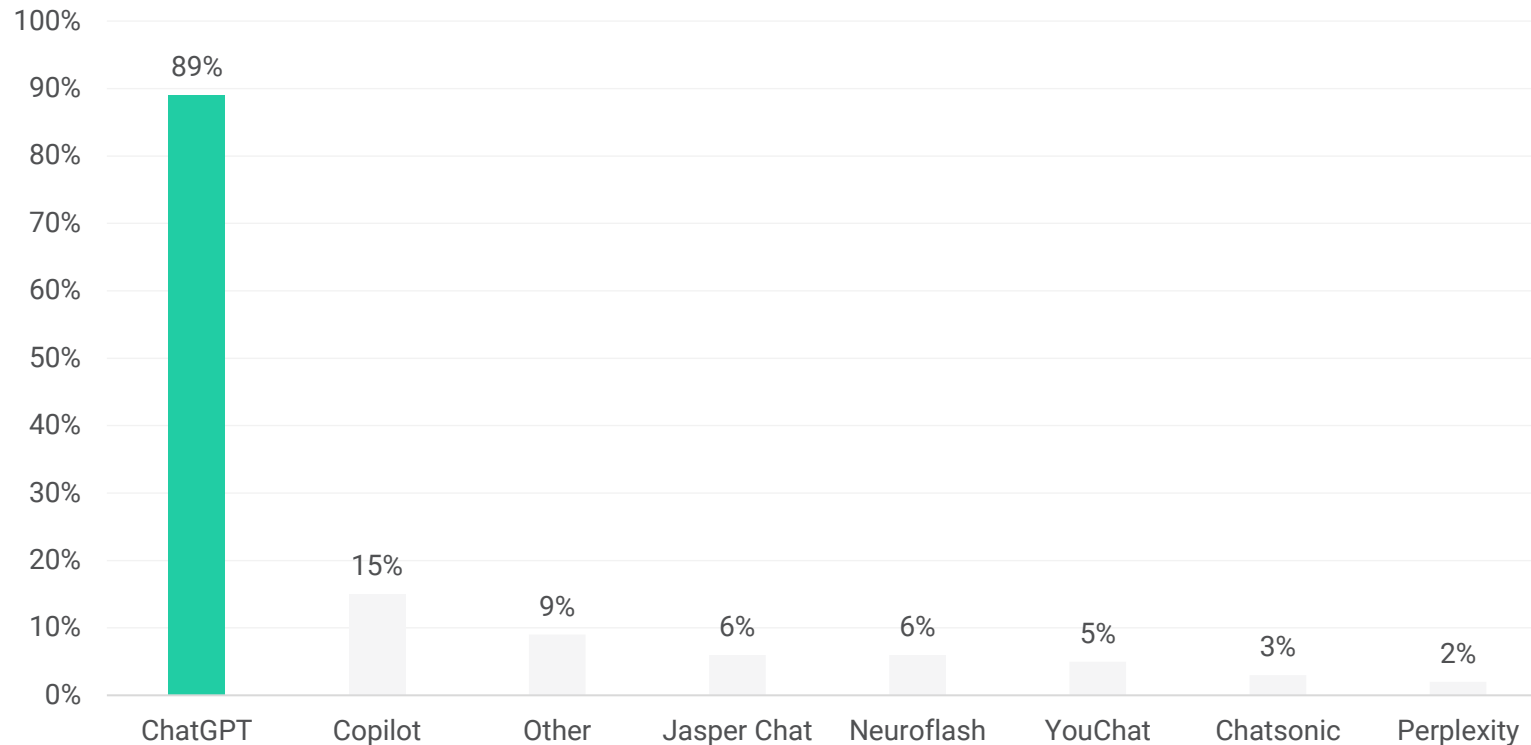
In 2022, AI was at the second place (65%) and IT security at first place (67%).

Use of Artificial Intelligence



AI-based tools and software

Which AI-based tools do you use?



Remarkable

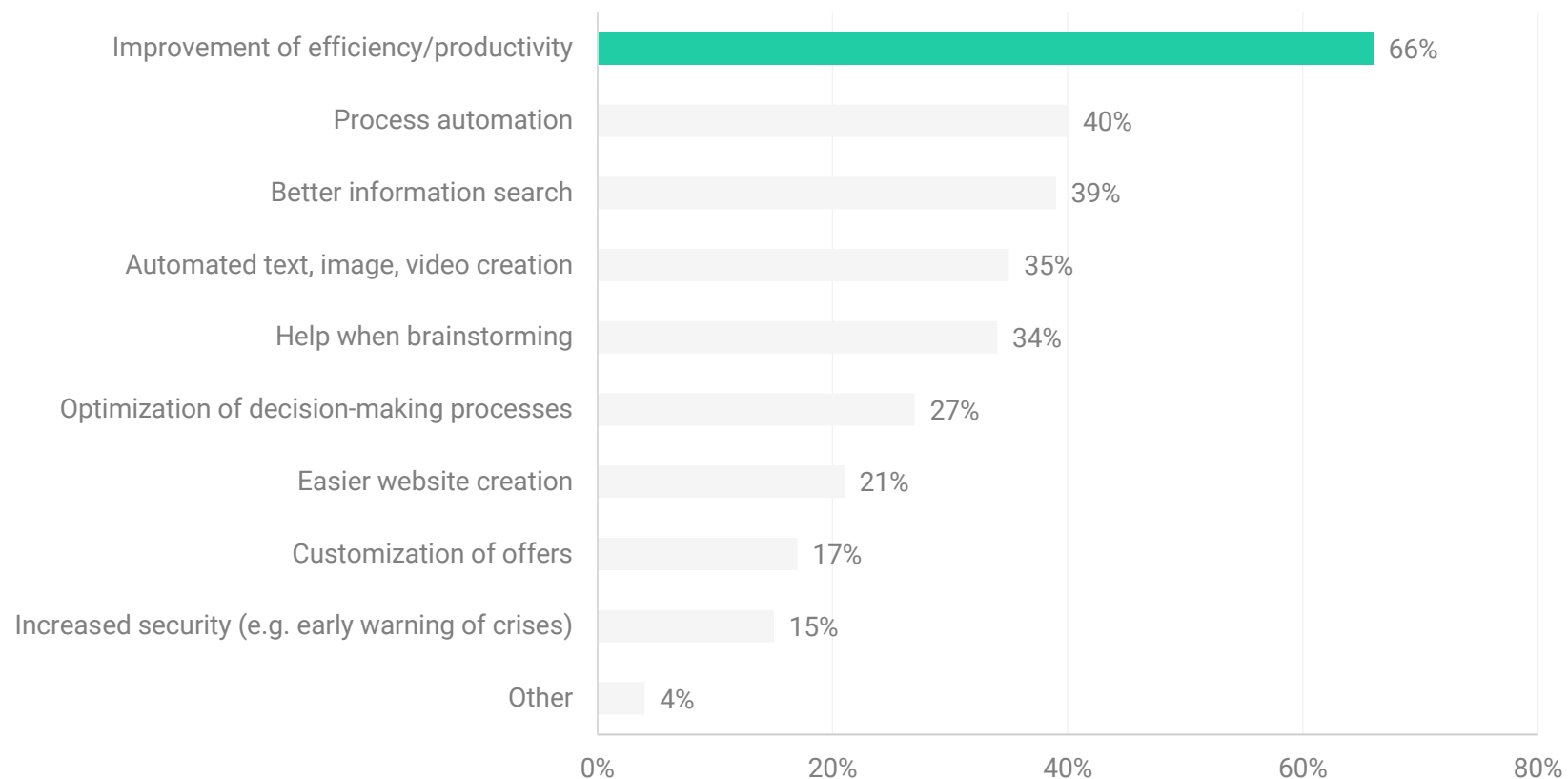
89%

of freelancers using AI-based tools
opt for **ChatGPT**.

Top 5 mentioned tools (other):
Midjourney, DeepL,
Dall-E, Notion, Tensorflow.

Benefits of AI

In your opinion, which benefits offer AI in your field of work?



Remarkable

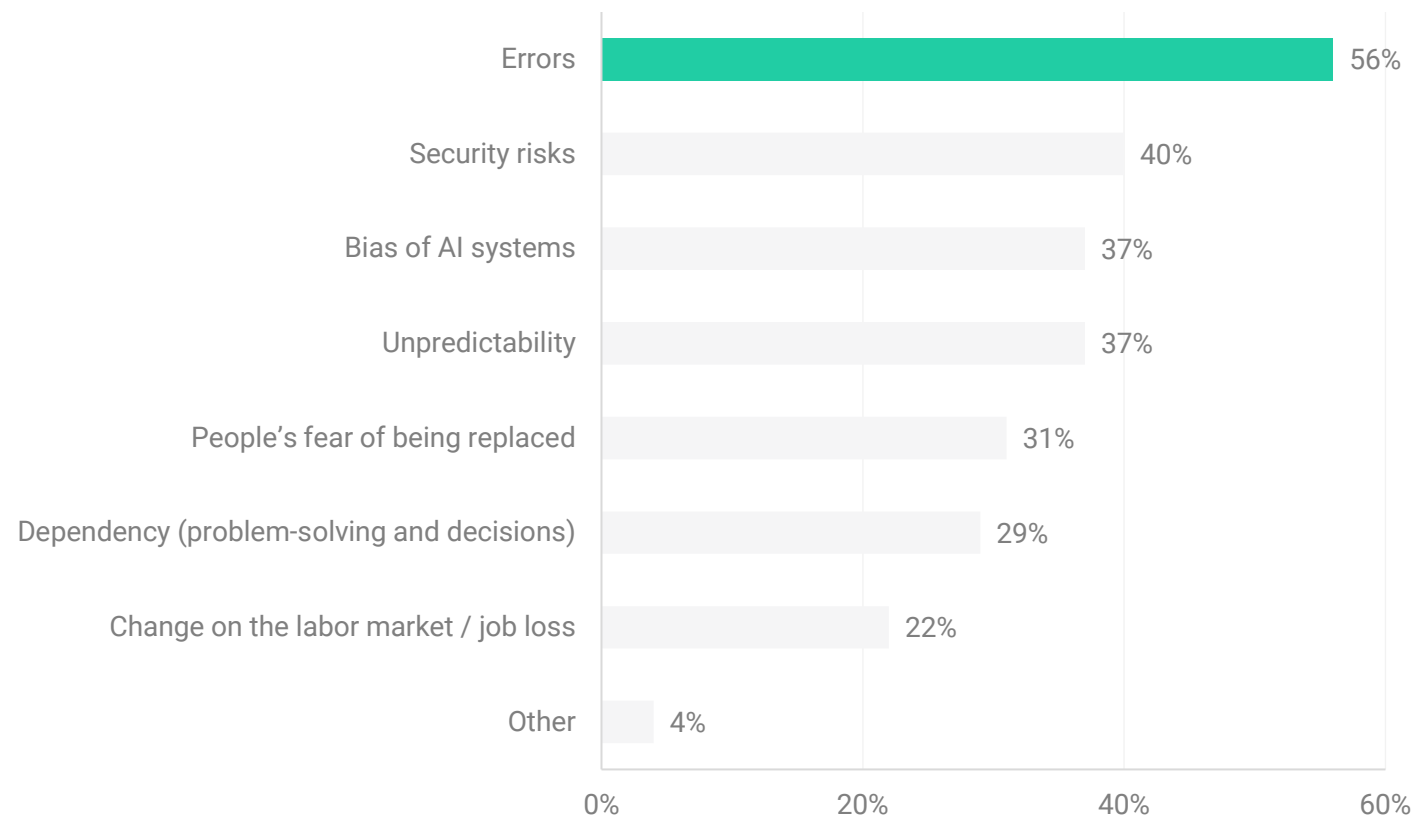
66%

see the **improvement of efficiency and productivity** as a benefit.

40% consider **process automation** as an advantage.

Risk of AI

Which are the most significant risks of AI in your field of work?



Remarkable

56%

perceive the **vulnerability of AI to errors** as a significant risk.

Only 22% fear a change in the job market or job loss in their field due to AI.

Freelancer facts 2023



26 days

Vacation



€12,000

Start capital



40 hours

Work per week



€96

Hourly rate



80%

University graduates



€6,200

Monthly net income



62%

Income satisfaction



€1,049

Retirement savings



63 years old

Retirement age

freelancermap

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Nuremberg, 22nd June 2023





freelancermap was 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 IT experts and clients find each other **without commission fees**.

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