ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT
THE MANY FACES OF WORK FULFILLMENT
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## About the Report

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As professionals in the connected era, we’re always “on.” Our work is completed at all hours, across all time zones. We rely on apps, networks, and WiFi to keep business humming. Online profiles with ratings and reviews are replacing resumes and curriculum vitae. We find talent online through our global network of friends, colleagues, and websites. We value agility and expect near-instant results. On Elance-oDesk, more than 25% of the jobs filled are filling within 24 hours of being posted.

This transformation to a “connected” workplace naturally presents new challenges and opportunities for us all. It also requires new thinking. Increasingly we advertise our skills rather than our educations, and take on project-based work rather than full-time positions. We get paid for results and skill relevance rather than years of experience. In fact, new skills become hot, and then commoditized, at an unprecedented pace. This means we’re all wise to focus on agility, flexibility, and skill renewal, rather than consistency and job security.

The numbers reflect this transformation. According to a recent study by Intuit1 by the time millennials (those ages 18 to 33) are 30, they’re likely to have worked for five companies. Intuit also estimates that by 2020, 40% of the US workforce will be independent. A very recent market study commissioned by Freelancers Union and Elance-oDesk2 shows that 34% of the US workforce is already freelancing. This amounts to 53 million Americans.

At this rate, the future of entire nations will depend upon how well they adapt to the new era of work. Economies will flourish or struggle based on whether their workforces are agile and have in-demand skills. Unfortunately, nations with rigid labor markets will adapt more slowly. Those with increased agility will benefit most, as emerging skills like data science flow to the most innovative workforce, and older skills like data entry flow to the lowest-cost workforce.

Our online workplaces provide the groundbreaking technology, and human resources, needed to equip modern businesses and professionals for the connected era. In this report you’ll read how effective and fulfilling this transformation to an agile workplace can be. You’ll also see how our community—each client, freelancer, and employee—is pioneering this workplace transformation.

And as you’ll see in the survey results interspersed throughout this report, our community is more fulfilled than ever before. I hope their stories serve as inspiration to you as we continue our quest for greater purpose and satisfaction in the workplace.

The elance.com and odesk.com platforms are the online workplaces for distributed teams around the world. Meet the freelancers, clients, and Elance-oDesk employees featured in this report.
**ELANCE-ODESK FREELANCERS ARE MORE LIKELY TO BE FULFILLED IN THE WORKPLACE**

What factors make work more fulfilling?

- Elance-oDesk freelancers are most satisfied with autonomy-related work factors.
- Both Elance-oDesk freelancers and other workers want more steady or predictable income.
- Having a steady or predictable income is less important to Elance-oDesk freelancers, but they are also less satisfied with income predictability.
- Both Elance-oDesk freelancers and other workers place high value on a work/life balance. Elance-oDesk freelancers are more satisfied with their current work/life balance than other workers.

**WORK FULFILLMENT SURVEY RESULTS**

Work Fulfillment Survey respondents who are “Extremely satisfied” or “Very satisfied” with the listed aspects of their work.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Elance-oDesk Freelancers</th>
<th>Other Workers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Having time for creative or strategic thinking</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being able to set up my own plan to meet my daily goals</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being able to choose the projects that I will work on</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having the opportunity to do what I do best</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having the opportunity to learn new skills</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being challenged by my work</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting feedback about my work</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earning a good income</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having a steady/predictable income</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being able to balance my work and personal lives</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being able to work where and when I please</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being in charge of the decisions that have the biggest impact on my career</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Elance and oDesk join forces.

In December of 2013, we shared exciting news with the world. Realizing that we were ultimately better together, Elance and oDesk agreed to merge and become one.

The reason was simple.

Rather than two companies with separate paths to success, we could better serve our communities by combining forces.

By sharing a common vision and goals, Elance-oDesk is working daily to deliver on our promise of:

- Better results for customers
- Improved technology
- Community participation as we evolve

In the last nine months, we’ve worked to bring these guiding principles to life. We continue to combine our engineering resources to develop better tools for hiring, collaboration, mobile access, and skill development, among other innovations. While listening to feedback and suggestions from our community, we’re building the world’s best online workplace.
Our mission is to create economic and social value on a global scale by providing a trusted online workplace to connect, collaborate, and succeed.
Obsess over customer success

Never stop learning

Make work matter

Simplify

Be fair
With the merger of Elance and oDesk, and continued growth in each platform, the combined company realized significant growth.

Elance-oDesk at a glance

- **9.3M+** registered freelancers
- **3.7M+** registered client businesses
- **2.7M+** jobs posted
- **2.7M+** jobs
- **$900M+** gross freelancer earnings
- **180+** countries served
- **180+** countries

2014 STATS
## Our Top Performing Countries

### Top Client Countries by Spend  Q2 2014

1. United States
2. Australia
3. United Kingdom
4. Canada
5. United Arab Emirates
6. Germany
7. France
8. Netherlands
9. Israel
10. Singapore

### Fastest-Growing Client Countries  2 year CAGR · Q4 2012 – Q4 2014, $100K minimum

1. Finland
2. China
3. France
4. Russia
5. Sweden
6. Malta
7. Germany
8. Mexico
9. Brazil
10. Romania

### Freelancer Countries with the Highest Earnings  Q2 2014

1. India
2. United States
3. Philippines
4. Ukraine
5. Pakistan
6. Russia
7. Bangladesh
8. Canada
9. United Kingdom
10. China

### Fastest-Growing Freelancer Countries  2 year CAGR · Q4 2012 – Q4 2014, $100K minimum

1. Montenegro
2. Madagascar
3. Venezuela
4. Slovenia
5. Norway
6. Nicaragua
7. Bosnia and Herzegovina
8. Chile
9. Japan
10. Costa Rica
A GLOBAL ONLINE MERITOCRACY
MOBILE APP BUSINESS THRIVES DOWN SOUTH

It’s a story you hear all too often. A bright young entrepreneur from a small town creates a successful new business. But as the company expands, the team can’t find enough local talent to fuel growth.

Reluctantly the founder packs up and moves to Silicon Valley, Manhattan, London, Sydney or wherever top talent lives, only returning for major holidays and the occasional class reunion. Austin Church has a different story to tell. Born and raised in the suburbs of Nashville, Austin loves the quality of life in Tennessee. He also loves spending time with his many friends and family who live nearby.

After starting Bright Newt—an online company that simultaneously manages projects for marketing teams and creates mobile apps—Austin hit a wall when it came to hiring. “I couldn’t find the very best talent around here, nor could I afford the prices people were charging,” Austin says. “But I didn’t want to move. This is where I belong.”

Local boy stays true to his roots.

So Austin forged ahead with his business. This meant working long hours while hoping to find local employees that met his standards, occasionally tapping into whatever temporary talent he could find. But as time progressed, Austin knew that this exhausting solution wasn’t sustainable. That’s when he discovered oDesk and began scaling his business with the help of freelancers.

Austin gets much-needed help from freelancers.

Suddenly, Austin could find skilled workers able to tackle all the time-consuming projects he was struggling to complete himself. “It was like a pressure release valve for me,” Austin explains. “Online I get better work, faster, from people who are more professional.”

Austin’s business is now flourishing. By hiring oDesk freelancers (ranging from app and web developers to graphic designers and data entry experts), Bright Newt produces results for clients needing project management. They’ve also released more than 25 mobile apps that have been downloaded over a million times.

As his business thrives, new opportunities arise.

Equally important, Austin is now able to live a lifestyle that he finds both fulfilling and economically rewarding. “With my team taking some of the operational pressure off of me, I’m able to give my clients individualized attention in my areas of expertise,” he says. Given his knowledge of how to hire and work with freelancers, Austin also has the bandwidth to continue exploring new business opportunities. This includes his latest startup, Closeup, which helps emerging bands find places to play their music. “If I weren’t accustomed to managing and collaborating with people all over the world, it would have been impossible to take Closeup from idea to reality,” he notes.

“My heart, and my business, will always be in Tennessee.”
This explains why after earning both a bachelor’s and master’s degree in physics, and doing postgraduate work in theoretical physics and electrical engineering, Stan was drawn to applied statistical decision theory. Algorithm expertise was one of many skills that enabled him to enjoy a long and fruitful career as an R&D engineer motivated by theoretical and heuristic approaches to software architecture and prototype development.

Three years ago while living and working in Florida, Stan’s wife showed him a newspaper article on the dramatic rise of global freelancing. He immediately recognized that his talents would translate well to online work. “My decision to begin web-based freelancing was perfectly timed with the exponential growth of algorithm work,” Stan explains. As he predicted (and he’s quite good at predicting things), his highly specialized skills were in demand in most parts of the world—just not in his home in southwest Florida.

Stan Smith loves math. He always has, and always will. In his words, “Even as a child, it all made sense. I was born to develop algorithms.”

With such timely skills, there’s no need to slow down.

Stan resumed his career, this time as a freelancer, tackling algorithmic projects on both Elance and oDesk. His online clients don’t care how old he is, where he lives, or when he chooses to work. They just want results, and Stan delivers. And then he takes a daily walk with his wife to watch the Florida sunset.

Rather than trying to convince local HR departments that a 60-year-old algorithm expert is right for the job, he works 60+ hours a week for clients across the US, Canada, UK, and Australia. “And it’s really interesting work,” Stan is quick to point out. “I do the jobs because I love them, and I only do projects if I want to do them.”

A goldmine in his golden years.

Stan is usually invited to work on a dozen or more projects a week, and he accepts the ones that catch his eye and challenge his mind. As well as making more money than he ever did at a full-time job, he’s found a work/life balance that suits him. “I’m just having the time of my life and every moment is a new opportunity for me,” Stan notes. “I’m doing exactly what I want to be doing every day.”

“Here I am 60 years old, and life is getting better and better.”
FREELANCER DEMOGRAPHICS

WORK EXPERIENCE
Half of freelancers have over 6 years of work experience.

EDUCATION
77% of freelancers have a college degree.

AGE
Almost half of freelancers are between ages 26 and 35.

MOST VALUABLE SKILLS
Clients anticipate that web programmers and graphic designers will be most valuable to them in the next 12 months.

TOP CATEGORIES
Elance-oDesk has more IT freelancers than any other category.
BRANDING SUPERSTAR OVERCOMES DISABILITY

In the spring of 2011, Catherine Quiambao was on top of the world.

A successful brand manager in her native Philippines, Catherine had recently married the love of her life and was considered a rising star at the Manila offices of a top multinational agency.

But in just a few short weeks, everything changed.

Catherine was suddenly stricken with Guillain-Barré Syndrome, a rare neurological disorder in which the body’s immune system mistakenly attacks its own nervous system. Due to the ensuing muscle weakness, Catherine was bedridden for several weeks. “I was completely paralyzed from the head down, and it took me more than a year to walk again,” she explains. “I was at the top of my game, and then it all went away.”

“Freelancing literally got me back on my feet.”

On the road to recovery, but with mounting bills.

By late 2012, Catherine began intense physical therapy sessions three times per week, which left her unable to work. “I lost my job due to the long recovery period,” she notes. To add insult to injury, the vast majority of her rehabilitation was not covered under her insurance. The bills were piling up.

As time progressed, Catherine regained muscle control enough to do limited physical activity. But she wasn’t yet strong enough to return to a full-time job. That was when, while still wheelchair bound, a friend suggested that she check out oDesk.

Freelancing provides the answer.

Catherine enrolled in digital marketing courses and began to closely follow blogs that focused on freelancing. She also became well-versed in the emerging social media marketing scene, realizing that there was a promising future for work in this area.

With her new skills, college education, and eight years of solid experience in brand management and marketing, Catherine could excel at a broad range of in-demand projects—from creating strategic marketing plans to organizing the production of TV commercials.

Within weeks of joining oDesk, a steady stream of online jobs began flowing into Catherine’s inbox. She has since built up a successful freelance business that includes several regular Elance-oDesk clients located around the world.

Counting her blessings.

Not only are Catherine and her husband now financially stable, they were even able to make a major purchase recently. “With the money earned on oDesk, we were finally able to buy our own home,” she says. Plus they moved just in time to welcome their first child into the family, a baby boy.

Catherine has discovered that working online has given her back something she thought she might never have again: self-reliance. “oDesk has given me back my sense of worth,” Catherine says. “While recovering, I relied on others for absolutely everything. So I was ready to get back to work, and to enjoy self-sufficiency as soon as I was physically able.”

“I found my heart in freelancing,” she summarizes. “And I’m not going back to a 9-to-5 desk job—ever.”
PROGRAMMER BECOMES IMMUNE TO RECESSION

Boris Hegedís
Web Programmer
Novi Sad, Serbia
Serbia currently has an unemployment rate of over 20%, and skilled jobs are exceedingly difficult to find. Yet right in the middle of these dire circumstances is where you’ll find the ever-smiling, always-working Boris Hegedis. He is a Serbia-based freelance web programmer and designer who decided to take his financial stability into his own hands.

Controlling his fate through online work.

Three years ago, Boris was working as a manager at a local shopping center. Given the scarcity of work and the political nature of the local job market, Boris believed that it was only a matter of time until he was let go. “Nothing was under my control,” Boris explains. “Even while I was working, I never felt secure. With nepotism and political favors prevalent, I could be replaced at the whim of anyone above me.”

Like many countries in Southeast Europe’s Balkan states, Serbia has been hit hard by the global economic crisis. The region continues to be mired in a long and deep recession, despite a rich heritage in mathematics and engineering—famed inventor Nikola Tesla was born in the Balkans to Serbian parents.

Boris also found the work itself to be uninspiring and unchallenging. That was why he began the transition from his management position to online freelance work. A superstar at web programming and web development, Boris had always loved technology and spent his free time learning and perfecting his craft. With new skills intact, he began working on Elance and landed his first job within ten weeks.

Fast forward three years. Boris has now left his full-time job and has a successful online freelance business. In fact, he has several regular Elance clients lining up to tap into his services, and he is even considering hiring others on Elance to support him (so his favorite clients won’t have to wait too long for projects to start).

Quality work that fits his lifestyle.

Boris wants control over his career, but he loves Serbia and wants to remain there. Online freelancing gives him the best of both worlds. “I feel like I work abroad but live in Serbia,” he says. “Although I live here, most of my clients are in Australia and the United States.”

Boris also enjoys how his online success is directly related to how hard he works. “If I work, I get paid. If not, I don’t. While working for a company, my salary was fixed no matter how hard I worked,” he points out. And because Boris loves working closely with his clients, he often works evenings—not starting his workday until 10 pm local time. “My biorhythms like it,” he quips.

His family likes him working online too. As well as earning a steady income, Boris has the freedom to enjoy a leisurely cup of coffee with friends on the Danube and spend quality time with his 16-year-old son (who not surprisingly is learning programming and English, and plans to be the next generation of freelancers in the Hegedis family).

“My family and I recently discussed whether I should return to full-time employment,” Boris jokes. “We all agreed that ‘never ever’ would be a good time.”

“Thanks, Elance, for the best three years of my life.”
Most freelancers provide at least half of their household’s income.

- Half: 20%
- Most: 25%
- <Half: 37%
- All: 18%

About 40% of freelancers expect to hire others in the next 12 months.

Elance-oDesk freelancers earn more than other workers in their communities.

- 61% of respondents said they earn “more” or “much more” than most other people in their community.
- 28% of Elance-oDesk freelancers
- 20% of other workers
Although blessed with breathtaking natural beauty and a rich cultural heritage, Bangladesh is plagued by the effects of a poor economy. The end result is hardship for even highly skilled workers who seek career opportunities beyond government work or the garment factories of Dhaka. Such is the case for Nazmul Hossain, a sharp and motivated techie based in Khulna, Bangladesh. “Living in an underdeveloped area, I lack access to local jobs,” says Nazmul. This proved especially discouraging to him after graduating from college. Nazmul was unable to find work despite a BS in genetic engineering and an MA in development studies. “I simply couldn’t support myself.”

Being where the jobs are, without leaving home.
In 2009, Nazmul learned about oDesk and online work from his brother. With his strong grasp of English, Nazmul first began his online freelancer career writing business articles for Western clients. Although successful as a writer, Nazmul saw a skyrocketing demand for freelance web developers on both Elance and oDesk. “I wanted long-term jobs and a scalable skill,” he explains. “I started learning programming in my spare time.”

“I can’t imagine what I would have done without online freelancing.”
For Nazmul, that included taking free online programming and IT courses on Elance-oDesk. Within a year he developed his skills and launched a successful new career. “Online work has changed my life,” says Nazmul. “I earn three times what I could otherwise make. I also remain here in Khulna, which has a lower cost of living and is ideal for freelancing.”

Business is booming.
Today Nazmul writes code for clients around the world, including the US, UK, and Germany. He has three long-term clients, and takes on one-off projects when time permits and the jobs inspire him. “It’s all about finding work that challenges and satisfies me,” he notes.

Recently Nazmul teamed up with three local developers to create a team of talented programmers who work together on projects. This helps free up time, allowing Nazmul to pursue a PhD. His thesis topic? The role of local government in boosting freelance work in Bangladesh. It’s a subject he’s certainly well-versed in, and will benefit many others down the road.

When you’re from the densely populated country of Bangladesh, earning a good income can be difficult.

Although blessed with breathtaking natural beauty and a rich cultural heritage, Bangladesh is plagued by the effects of a poor economy. The end result is hardship for even highly skilled workers who seek career opportunities beyond government work or the garment factories of Dhaka. Such is the case for Nazmul Hossain, a sharp and motivated techie based in Khulna, Bangladesh. “Living in an underdeveloped area, I lack access to local jobs,” says Nazmul. This proved especially discouraging to him after graduating from college. Nazmul was unable to find work despite a BS in genetic engineering and an MA in development studies. “I simply couldn’t support myself.”
DIGITAL NOMADS
HIT THE ROAD
Meet 25-year-old Rocco Baldassarre. In three short years, Rocco has created Zebra Advertisement, a Google 100 Search Engine Marketing (SEM) agency with a client roster of major dotcoms that have footed the bill for his travels around the world. The best part: He gets to bring along his business partner and COO, his wife Christina.

It all began with a future that looked, well, uninspiring.

Born and raised in Parma, Italy, Rocco graduated from a top university with two bachelors degrees and two masters degrees. But after taking a long look at the job market, he quickly became disillusioned. One concern was that in his native Italy, there simply weren’t many promising job opportunities. Those that did exist offered underwhelming starting salaries.

But even more concerning than low pay and long hours, the jobs themselves were lackluster. “I didn’t want an unsatisfying career,” Rocco explains. “And I didn’t want to commit to one place—either one company or one location. I wanted to make my own decisions.”

Life on the road delights.

Armed with an entrepreneurial attitude and some serious skills, Rocco started his own digital marketing agency three years ago. Zebra Advertisement now helps firms grow their revenues with successful pay-per-click campaigns on search engines and social media sites. Rocco and Christina have been so successful that Zebra was recently recognized as a Google AdWords All-Star, and they were flown to the search giant’s California-based Googleplex for a two-day summit.

Since all their work happens online, Rocco and Christina have taken up the digital nomad lifestyle. “I made it clear to my clients that my expertise exists regardless of where in the world I’m currently working,” he notes. “Clients like the idea of my mobility. We’ve actually gotten more business since we hit the road.” Rocco is now leading a life that so many only dream of. He and Christina have now lived in Italy, Switzerland, Germany, France, and the United States. “I figure that I save 10 hours a week by not commuting,” he says.

As well as picking up new languages (which he absorbs with a passion), Rocco is also able to learn a lot from working with people from different cultures. “In Italy work is very different than in other places,” he explains. “While living in Germany, I learned to be direct, and in the US I learned different nuances of professionalism. I’ve learned what different people like, don’t like, what to talk about, and most importantly, what not to talk about.”

“Fresh out of college, I couldn’t envision myself wasting five years doing mindless work.”
In the winter of 2008, Bernard Vukas was sailing along in a promising corporate career, teaching three-day workshops in Zagreb on how to create a successful business plan.

But the one thing Bernard couldn’t plan on was a sudden and severe downturn in the Croatian economy, which ultimately cost him his job. “I didn’t really like the corporate life anyway,” he says, looking back now. “My life was boring and I was waiting for something exciting to happen.”

What happened was that Bernard learned about online freelancing, thanks to an ex-boyfriend who worked on oDesk and Elance. “When I began, I had no idea what freelancing was all about,” he notes. “I didn’t know what was possible.”

Taking his work on the road.

With his top-notch skills personalizing Microsoft Office products for businesses (his nickname is Mr. Spreadsheet), Bernard found more than enough work to fund a comfortable life in Croatia. But where the story takes a real turn is when he sets off on a leisurely bus tour from Serbia to Turkey.

What was possible, Bernard soon discovered, was that as a freelancer he could take his work with him anywhere. “Not wanting to put my clients on hold, I made use of my time between stops to accomplish work,” Bernard explains. “Things went smoothly, and suddenly location was completely irrelevant to my ability to make a living.” With this realization, Bernard soon began planning his next extended getaway. He especially wanted to escape Eastern Europe’s bone-chilling winters.

A suntan is not the only thing that Bernard has to show for his life as a digital nomad. He’s also learning new skills every week. “I’m constantly challenged by projects I earn on Elance-oDesk,” he points out. “I’m able to work with different people around the world on diverse jobs, and on every project I enhance my value in the marketplace.”

Thankful that he jumped ship from the corporate world to freelancing, Bernard points out that he could never go back to a windowless workstation. “After my beachfront office on the island of Boracay, I don’t think a desk job would be so interesting now.”

“I would never have expected this life if someone had asked me a few years ago.”

Exhilarating work in exotic locations.

Spending at least three months at a time in a single location, he now travels the world and works from “home.” So far that home has been Thailand and the Philippines, among many other ports of call. Plus he occasionally returns to his former home in Zagreb, catching up with Croatian friends and family while working for his online clients.
COMMUTING TRENDS

WORK LOCATION
Most Elance-oDesk freelancers work from home.

MEDIAN DAILY COMMUTE
The median Elance-oDesk freelancer commute is 0 minutes.

AVERAGE COMMUTE TIMES
Most Elance-oDesk freelancers have no commute.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commute Time</th>
<th>Elance-oDesk Freelancers</th>
<th>Other Workers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No commute</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;30 min</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30–45 min</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45–60 min</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1–2 hrs</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2–3 hrs</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;3 hrs</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The life of a digital nomad suits Elance-oDesk staffer Sondra Orozco perfectly. With days on the windswept beaches of Bali with her new husband, and nights working US hours at a local coworking space, she’s maximizing her time for daily adventures.

“I love the nomad life,” says Sondra, a product manager on the Elance-oDesk team. “But it’s not all fun in the sun. Being a digital nomad requires a delicate balance of work and play. You want to spend your days doing cool things, but, as an employee, I also need to work full-time and keep in regular contact with work.”

She’s up for the challenge.

Sondra’s road to becoming a digital nomad is similar to many. With amazing career skills coupled with a lure toward independence and adventure, she and her husband, Jeremy, began exploring innovative ways to enjoy a more fulfilling work/life balance.

“Adventure called, but I couldn’t imagine leaving a job I enjoy so much,” Sondra explains. That was when she approached her Elance-oDesk manager about the desire to become a digital nomad. Together they agreed that it would be a wonderful experiment, where everyone on the team could learn from the real-world happenings of portable work. “It was thrilled that she was open to the idea,” recalls Sondra.

All signs point to success.

So far the experiment is going along swimmingly. During her short time as a digital nomad, Sondra has already traveled to six countries and is currently in Bali. Given the time difference between Bali and San Francisco, Sondra works at a local coworking space from 7:00 pm to 4:00 am. This gives her some “quiet time” for focusing while her colleagues in the US and Europe are offline, plus time when she can collaborate with her remote engineering teams in real time. “Who would have thought that moving to an island paradise would make me more productive?” she points out.

Sondra is also thrilled to be living at extended-stay hotels that make life easier. “We’ve eliminated traffic, cooking, cleaning, and laundry,” she adds. “This leaves us tons of time to relax and explore. Pinch me!”

“I love my job at Elance-oDesk, but desperately wanted to travel.”
VISIONARY COMPANIES EMBRACE THE EXTENDED WORKFORCE
“Demand for agency work is either hot or cold,” says Erling Løken Andersen, Founder and CEO of Omega Media, an Oslo, Norway-based SEO, IT, and design agency. “The work ebbs and flows and you have to be prepared for that.”

Erling would know. In 2004, he founded and grew the award-winning agency, selling it four years later for $12 million. But shortly thereafter things went downhill and the owners decided they couldn’t run it without him, so he bought it back for $30,000.

A new strategy to stay nimble.

Today Omega Media is thriving once again, servicing global clients such as Coca-Cola, Warner Brothers, McDonalds, and PlayStation. Erling attributes much of his success to discovering Elance in 2011. Since then he has relied on highly-talented distributed teams he can call upon when demand is hot. “Sometimes we get very large projects that take a few months,” Erling notes. “Without Elance we wouldn’t have the scalability or nimbleness to deliver.”

This year alone, Erling has hired more than 50 freelancers through Elance. He has a team of Ukrainian programmers, checking in with them during live visits three times per year to instill an “extra layer of trust.” But he also touts the skills of his Romanian designer, who can turn a Photoshop sketch of a website into HTML or CSS in under a day, and his Serbian ghostwriter who can blog up a storm. With a team like this, he’s up for any challenge that his clients present.

The ebbs and flows of agency life work for Erling.

“A typical work day for me starts at 11 am or noon Oslo time and I work until 8 or 9 pm,” says Erling. “I think as we see more blended teams on different time zones, there’s going to be a blurred line between office hours and home hours. And I’m ready for it.”

“We find quality people on Elance in a matter of minutes.”
ABOUT ELANCE-ODESK CLIENTS

**BUSINESS OWNERS**
8 out of 10 are business owners.

**STARTUPS**
Half consider their companies to be startups.

**HIRING LOCALLY**
Only 1 in 5 clients would have hired locally.

**HIRING OUTLOOK**
Almost 9 out of 10 say hiring online is a long-term strategy.

**TECHNOLOGY USAGE**
More than 3 out of 5 are early adopters of technology.

**AGE**
Almost half of clients are 35 years old or younger.

**BUSINESS OWNERS**
85% Business owners
15% Employees

**STARTUPS**
50% Startup businesses

**HIRING LOCALLY**
44% Hire online freelancer
22% Work extra hours
20% Hire locally
11% Delay/cancel project

**HIRING OUTLOOK**
89% Long-term strategy
11% Temporary solution

**TECHNOLOGY USAGE**
63% Early adopter
10% Late adopter
27% Average

**AGE**
48% 18–35
28% 36–45
15% 46–55
7% 56–65
2% 66+

**THE FUTURE OF WORK**
Almost 9 out of 10 say hiring online will soon become common practice.

**Q.39** What is your role in this business?
**Q.42a** Do you consider your company a "startup" or not?
**Q.41** Which of the following statements best describes your company's attitude about new technologies?
**Q.22** If there had not been an appropriate oDesk/Elance freelancer available for this project, what would you most likely have done?
**Q.26** Which of the following statements best describes your feelings about hiring online freelancers?

**Q.41** Which of the following statements best describes your company's attitude about new technologies?

**Q.51** What is your age?

**Q.46a** Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.
To thrive in the highly competitive retail BBQ sauce business, you certainly need a secret sauce. For Beth Granai of Outta the Park Eats in Cary, North Carolina, this includes much more than a closely guarded blend of unique ingredients. It also involves her “secret sauce” for outmaneuvering the competition: freelancers.

Beth and her husband Scott took a chance on their dream and founded Outta the Park Eats in 2009 after leaving their tech sales jobs. They found some local success, but were struggling to take their business to the next level by 2013. They urgently needed a new logo and new packaging for their all-natural and organic sauce. “We were told by many retail and marketing professionals that our label wasn’t selling us any bottles. The colors were wrong for food, the design was poor, and it missed the mark with shoppers who ‘look first’ and read second,” Beth explains.

Local talent didn’t fit the bill.

After sinking over $5,000 into rebranding with a local consultant, Beth wasn’t getting the quality she wanted. Other design firms in the area offered to tackle the job, but they each wanted to start from scratch. That would amount to another major investment, which Beth was less than excited about. And that’s when she turned to oDesk. Within days she’d found a freelancer able to deliver amazing work at a fair price.

“Plus—and this is key difference—the art my oDesk designer produced included digital painting and complex tomato, ginger, and pepper illustrations,” Beth notes. “The effort that went into my redesign project was enormous, compared to what the previous designers had done.”

The results of the new packaging were astonishing and immediate, and sales of their BBQ sauce have skyrocketed since then. They’re now seeing double-digit growth and are well on their way to building a sustainable business as a recognizable brand. “Freelancers have allowed us to achieve things that would have been impossible otherwise,” Beth points out.

Initial success leads to even more freelancers.

Following in the footsteps of her fruitful design project, Beth continues to hire freelancers for multiple jobs. This includes business and marketing consultants, as well as Search Engine Optimization (SEO) experts for the website. She notes that SEO has been a nagging problem for some time, and that she had no good ideas on how to address it until she began working with experts.

With so many talented individuals working alongside Beth and her team, the future looks bright for Outta the Park Eats. No doubt we’ll be seeing their delicious BBQ sauce in more and more shopping carts.

“Freelancers were game-changing for our brand.”
Online domestic cleaning marketplace Hassle.com is quickly becoming a “household” name in Northern Europe. But that wasn’t always the case. The startup, founded by Alex Depledge and her two Accenture colleagues, Jules Coleman and Tom Nimmo, initially launched as Teddle.com in 2011, offering a platform to match customers with local service providers such as tutors, cleaners, and handymen. But like any great company, the founders soon realized that focus would be the key to their success. In December of 2012 they pivoted to concentrate exclusively on becoming the market leader in European house cleaning bookings.

By March 2012, the operations team had the back office humming and the product team was shipping beautiful, well-oiled features on a daily basis. Alex knew it was time to take on more aggressive growth targets, but time and money were both problematic. She struggled to find the hours to teach herself advanced AdWords. Plus, she needed their remaining seed funding for payroll and overhead to run their small office, and she’d already drained her personal funds from her consulting days. To make matters worse, competitors from the US were beginning to make major strides over the ocean.

New marketing channel helps triple growth for “UK Startup of the Year.”

Alex decided to make a bold move to put her last remaining funds toward a lean online marketing strategy that could be executed quickly with high ROI. Because she knew only a few local marketing experts, none of whom she could afford, Alex and the Hassle.com team turned to oDesk for help.

They settled on a remote Google AdWords specialist from Estonia. Alex delegated research, bidding, and the optimization of campaigns to her new teammate, saving her founding team 30 hours per week. Within three short months, AdWords campaigns accounted for 69% of all inbound leads, fueling 291% revenue growth.

What a difference a year makes.

After a November 2013 rebranding, and hiring a staffer temporarily to coordinate with their remote marketing freelancers, Hassle.com is unstoppable. Tech City News readers voted them 2013 Startup of the Year. They’ve raised $6.1M in funding from top-tier European VC Accel Partners and have expanded to more than 20 cities throughout Europe. We look forward to following their continued rise to startup stardom.

“I really like that freelancers have quantifiable reviews on oDesk. Even when interviewing in person, it can be very hard to divide talent from the talkers.”

Alex Depledge
Cofounder & CEO · Hassle.com
London, UK
While they admit that office space is tough to find and pricey, the real savings, they say, is in time. For example, hiring three full-time employees in Germany could easily take them nine months, and finding the office space to house them would tack on even more time.

Their winning playbook.

The story begins with furnitureleasing.net—a platform Daniel built (with some assistance from Yoni on the marketing side) to merchandise the rental of furniture. It was originally targeted toward expats living in Germany, but in discussions, Daniel and Yoni realized that the product had even greater potential. “We knew we had such a nice piece of rental management software,” says Daniel, “we decided to try and sell it to companies who needed to manage rentals. It could work for many businesses, and the idea for minute-rental.com was born.”

So they took their playbook of hiring talented freelancers, and set their team of experts to building out the rental software business. It turns out that their proprietary software impressed investors, to say the least.

A mini United Nations.

Yoni and Daniel are expert project managers who have learned to break every project down into microprojects and then delegate the pieces to experts from all over the globe. An American freelancer writes their software specs, which he then turns over to Polish developers to build. Market research, business development, Python, and Excel are done by UK freelancers. Another American freelancer handles financial modeling, while a Nicaraguan freelancer works on UI/UX design and branding. Their data entry specialist and video production guys are from Serbia and their voiceover guru is Filipino. Competitive analysis and web data extraction happens in Malaysia. Finally, the CRM environment was built with care by an Indian developer. The bonus to such a diverse team? They’ve got an ever-ready team of proofreaders in more than 10 languages on hand to review their localized content.

Fluent in English and German, Daniel is half Japanese but grew up in Germany. Yoni is from Israel but has started a family in Germany. “Our own international backgrounds have made us very comfortable hiring and working with people from all over the world,” notes Daniel. And working with people all over the world every day is a wonderful thing.

“Minute-rent.com simply would not have happened without oDesk freelancers.”
SHARPENING SALES FOR ONLINE RETAILERS

Holly Cardew, a petite Aussie with a quick wit, sits in South Park’s Caffe Centro in the SOMA district of San Francisco sipping an espresso. She’s the 27-year-old founder of Sydney-based Pixc, an online service that enhances product photos by photoshopping out their backgrounds.

Holly works with five to 40 graphic designers at any given time, depending on demand, to provide a 24-hour turnaround for the photos destined for her clients’ ecommerce sites. In just one year, she’s helped hundreds of ecommerce store owners increase their online sales. According to Holly, a product displayed on a transparent background increases online sales by as much as 39%.

Finding a need. Filling the need.

The idea for Pixc came out of necessity while Holly was running another startup. In 2012, she built the online marketplace Country & Co., a site for country artisans to sell their wares to city folk. “The merchants would send me really bad photos,” she says. “With poor lighting, awkward angles, and bad staging, they just didn’t do their merchandise justice.”

Holly worked out her value proposition, investor pitch, and margins over a six-month period while participating in Telstra’s muru-D accelerator program. Along the way she was named one of the Top 50 Australian Female Entrepreneurs Under 40.

Holly also loves working with a multicultural team, and gets satisfaction from connecting people who “need the work” with those who can “do the work.” “While these are broad cultural generalizations, I’ve found that freelancers from the Philippines tend to have exquisite English and are highly organized. Freelancers from Eastern Europe and Sri Lanka are very honest and loyal,” she explains.

Embracing the world of online work.

Holly is in town to meet with the Elance-oDesk team, as well as payments guru PayPal and ecommerce giants eBay and Google. “Your coffee doesn’t quite measure up, but I love everything else about the Bay Area,” she says. “The pace of startup life, the work ethic, the way entrepreneurs jump at a chance to help each other out.”

We’re glad Holly is embracing the spirit and camaraderie of online work and Silicon Valley, and enjoying the fulfillment it brings to lives and careers.

“I simply couldn’t guarantee a 24-hour turnaround time without my team of Elance graphic designers who work while I sleep.”
In just three years, WeWork has transformed 19 buildings across six cities into beautiful, collaborative workspaces, providing infrastructure, services, events, and technology to its members. They also have plans to open five more buildings and expand into three new markets by the end of this year.

We caught up with WeWork Cofounder and Chief Creative Officer Miguel McKelvey to clue us in on how he creates such inspiring community centers.

**BUILDING A COWORKING COMMUNITY**

In 2013, Elance-oDesk teamed up with WeWork to bring online talent to coworking communities across the US.

In just three years, WeWork has transformed 19 buildings across six cities into beautiful, collaborative workspaces, providing infrastructure, services, events, and technology to its members. They also have plans to open five more buildings and expand into three new markets by the end of this year.

We caught up with WeWork Cofounder and Chief Creative Officer Miguel McKelvey to clue us in on how he creates such inspiring community centers.

You’re an architect by training, which is rare for a startup founder. How did the idea for WeWork develop?

When I graduated from architecture school at the height of the initial dotcom boom, I got sucked into startup life. A childhood friend and I started a social network for people learning English as a second language called English, baby! At the time I thought we’d build it, raise money, hire a hundred employees, and then IPO for $100 million—all in the span of a year. Instead, we built a small company and got a great education in running a business.

But each year I told myself I had to go back to architecture. After five years in startups I moved from Portland to New York and took a job at a small architectural firm. That firm ended up getting all of the American Apparel projects, and I oversaw the rollout of 180 stores around the world.

Afterward, I took all I had learned and ventured out on my own as an architectural designer but felt professionally and personally isolated. Luckily Adam (his WeWork Cofounder) and I developed the idea for what would become WeWork shortly thereafter, and I was able to collaborate once again.

What’s the typical profile of a WeWork member?

Our members run the gamut: startups, small businesses, freelancers, nonprofits, programmers, lawyers, writers, independent filmmakers—you name it.
Besides WeWork locations, what or where is your favorite place to work?

Actually, I’ve worked really hard to make sure that I’m not working when I’m not at the office. When I walk out of the building, my brain shifts almost immediately to other things and it doesn’t return to work until I come back the next day. I answer emails and text messages once in a while, but for the most part when I’m not inside a WeWork building, I’m doing my best to be 100% present doing something else.

How do you select the location and aesthetic of each space?

Each location is unique because we designed it in response to the building structure itself, and to the environment that surrounds it. Whenever possible, we choose buildings on corners. This way there are windows on two sides of the building and daylight comes in from multiple directions.

You’re home to thousands of startups and entrepreneurs across the globe. How do you help them grow?

We create environments where individual pursuit and collaboration collide. These collisions happen at weekly networking events, happy hours, mentoring sessions, inside our mobile app, and through serendipitous encounters in our halls and lounges.

We also ask our members to actively take part in the community by attending our events. These range from our unique four-day Summer Camp adventure in the Adirondacks, to our WeStory series featuring successful business leaders. We also host product launches, elevator pitch presentations, holiday parties, seasonal celebrations, and weekly happy hours.

Many of the Elance-oDesk Mobilizers attended Summer Camp this year and had an absolute blast.

We’re so glad your team could make it! Your values of freedom, opportunity and innovation really come across in your Mobilizers. They brought great energy and fun to the event. And they’ve been great resources for the freelancers and startups in our New York, Boston, DC, Seattle, SF, and LA locations.

Thanks so much for your time.

My pleasure. Cheers to another year of partnership in 2015.
Some startups turn to freelancers out of frustration. Others, out of desperation. For mobile app Vivino, it was just the opposite: preparation.

“From day one, freelancers were our blueprint for success.”

“This was our master plan,” said Heini Zachariassen, Vivino Cofounder and CEO. “The idea was to build a beta version via freelancers, then further scale our freelance team after gaining a foothold in the market.”

The strategy worked like magic, as Vivino’s wine app prototype was an instant success. With the help of additional freelancers, they’ve now grown to become the highest-ranked wine app in America. Vivino is also the world’s most downloaded wine app, used by everyone from casual wine drinkers to serious oenophiles. With Vivino, people easily photograph and share wine labels, as well as rate and discuss wines.

Success through a hybrid workplace model.

Originally founded in Copenhagen in 2010, Vivino was the brainchild of Heini and his partner, Theis Søndergaard. With their huge love of wine and a small budget, the two realized they couldn’t afford (nor find) the talent they needed in Denmark. They turned to Elance-oDesk, initially hiring two freelance mobile developers to build a prototype version of the product. Investors liked what they saw in the beta and soon funded Vivino.

But rather than fill an office with cubicle farms and full-time employees, Heini stuck to the plan and built a true hybrid workplace. This included hiring a few staff members in key positions, then building teams of freelancers around them for support.

Vivino works with a range of freelancers—from mobile app developers and QA teams to data entry experts, content writers and translators. “We also need people with highly specialized talents, like image recognition,” explains Heini. “There’s no way we could hire these people full time. Freelancers give us the flexibility to scale by project.”

Continued acceleration and growth.

Today Vivino is growing faster than the two co-founders could have ever imagined, with over six million customers having downloaded the app. So far “Vivinos” have used the app to upload photos of over 72 million wine labels (hence the need for image recognition specialists) and submitted ratings on more than 15 million bottles of wine.

Vivino recently moved their corporate headquarters to San Francisco, utilizing a mix of 80 full-time and freelance workers spread across three continents. But Heini is quick to point out that they have plans to hire even more freelancers in the near future. “Without remote teams we could never achieve our lofty goals.”
When three good friends from Moscow had a great idea for an online business, the creativity began flowing like the Moskva River itself. They set out to solve a problem each faced on daily basis: wasting time switching between platforms and services to fetch the links they saved or liked.

They lamented that the information they actually needed wasn’t necessarily found on the platforms where they spent the most time browsing. They were overloaded, Google displayed only what was popular, and their Facebook friends overshared.

Thus, Channelkit was formed. “Channelkit is like Pinterest, but for links,” Cofounder and CEO Nina Zavrieva explains. “It helps you describe, search for, and discover new content through other Internet users. The website is essentially a knowledge base for learners and researchers on any topic.”

A former employee of both Boston Consulting Group and Rocket Internet, Nina and her co-founders went to work creating a great business idea. Together they designed the brand, mapped the UI logic, and thought about monetization. But they quickly hit a roadblock: Programming would obviously be the backbone of the company, and not one of the three could code.

After trying and failing to find local web developers with the right skills at the right price in Moscow, the team soon found a creative solution by hiring on oDesk. “It became obvious that online freelancers were our only option for technical talent,” says Nina.

“We had a very thorough selection process. We were looking for a real member of the team.”
Hiring a fellow Russian, who happens to be a digital nomad.

Looking for someone who spoke native Russian but was more affordable than locals, Nina found it easy to search for Elance-oDesk freelancers by preferred language and geographic region. “We needed to be able to communicate to collaborate,” Nina emphasizes.

That’s when she found Greg Funtusov, a Russian programmer and digital nomad who was living in Bologna, Italy. “It was a perfect match on a professional level, and we’ve become good friends as well,” mentions Nina.

“My team is 100% distributed. My co-founders spend half their time in St. Pete, I’m usually in Moscow, and our tech lead is a digital nomad. We know what everyone is working on even though we’re in different places. It wouldn’t work without oDesk.”

Plans to extend the business to mobile.

With the success of Channelkit, Nina and her partners are now working on a mobile version of their product. Naturally, she’s already scoping the project and plans to hire mobile programmers and developers from Elance-oDesk. “I’m sure we’ll find good people,” she says. “There’s always a perfect match there.”

And speaking of perfect matches, Nina loves to tell the story of a meetup she attended recently in Moscow. While talking with a business owner and freelancer who both work on Elance-oDesk, the two realized that not too long ago the businessperson had hired that freelancer through the platform. And then to top it all off, they realized that they both lived in the same building. Small world, eh?
A LOOK WITHIN
In 2010, he received a longer contract for the oDesk Professional Services Team, taking on increasingly complex projects. His work and attitude were so exceptional that in 2012, Yury was hired as a full-time Product Architect by oDesk. This transition to employee status included relocating Yury (as well as his wife and children) from Omsk to the San Francisco Bay Area.

The move was a true win-win for both Yury and Elance-oDesk, which enjoys not only Yury’s programming prowess, but his ability to coordinate complex freelance teams. As someone who has “walked the walk,” Yury understands the mindset and cultural differences of the global engineers he works with. This helps reduce friction and promotes smooth collaboration and high-quality work.

Success at every level—from home life to the workplace.

As for Yury, he’s living the dream. While he’s traded the freedom of freelancing for the structure of employment, he’s happy with the decision to join Elance-oDesk and is enjoying his time in California. “Other than switching from metric to imperial units, the transition to life in America has been everything I hoped for,” he notes. “I am truly fortunate to be here.”

Despite its reputation as a Siberian outpost for Russian exiles (the writer Dostoyevsky was banished there), Omsk, Russia, has been turning out a plethora of talented tech workers in recent decades. One such hometown talent is Yury Yurivich, a developer and local ambassador for the Python programming language.

Yury always loved writing code. Even while earning his Masters in physics from Omsk State University, Yury continued to code and hone his skills in his spare time. After graduating, Yury knew that a career in programming would be more fulfilling than the world of physics. “Programming challenges me in so many positive ways,” he explains.

In search of coding projects to work on, Yury first learned about oDesk from a friend. He soon discovered that his Python programming skills were in high demand online, and he earned several interesting projects working through tech agencies in the oDesk marketplace. He also found jobs working solo, writing code for many innovative clients. This included oDesk itself, which took notice of Yury after spotting his consistently high ratings from clients.

Rising up the ranks at oDesk.

Yury’s trajectory at oDesk was spectacular. He began by working on the occasional Python job, mostly projects associated with the oDesk API.
Although members of the distributed “team” had already met by video conference, sometimes it makes sense to gather in person. And that’s exactly why key members of the worldwide Elance-oDesk team met recently—ready to build relationships and explore new avenues of thinking among the cobbled streets of Prague.

Connecting and consulting, face to face.

In all, 20 team members gathered for two weeks in the Czech Republic’s famed capital city. This included Product Managers Shane Kinder and Shipra Kayan from the Elance-oDesk HQ in California, as well as freelance engineers from across Europe and Asia.

“It was like a hackathon,” reports Shane. “We bounced ideas off each other, built on those ideas, and came up with all kinds of new solutions that leveraged the collective brainpower in the room.” This included “Day in the Life” sessions, where people explained their roles and gave tips and tricks to help others. “This wasn’t the sort of information you would normally share in a 15-minute video call,” notes Shane, “but it was really beneficial to everyone.”

More than just a facilitator of freelancing, Elance-oDesk is also a keen practitioner of online work. The company’s original platform was largely built by remote teams and, to this day, our technology is developed by a combination of global freelancers and full-time staffers.

According to Shipra, the get-together also helped the team better understand and appreciate each other. “By forming personal relationships, you build trust and respect that might not otherwise be there.” She also noted that the team came together in ways you would never expect, such as Russian and Ukrainian engineers befriend each other despite the tense political situation between their two nations. “We truly bonded like one unified team,” she explains.

And because “all work and no play” runs counter to the fulfilling work/life balance of online teams, the group had more than a few events outside the walls of their homebase—the C3 coworking space. Events included a happy hour meetup with local freelancers at Impact HUB Praha, a boat ride on the Vltava river, a bike trip through the countryside, and multiple dinners and long nights at local jazz clubs.

With the tremendous success of this year’s meeting of minds in Prague, the team is already planning another trip soon. It promises to be another great opportunity for collaborating, bonding, and fun.

“We became friends and came together as a team.”

Shipra Kayan · Product Manager · Elance-oDesk
STRENGTHENING OUR ELANCE-ODESK COMMUNITY ABROAD

With a love for travel and zest for adventure, Katrin Hippler simply wouldn’t be happy with just a regular “desk job.” This certainly isn’t a problem these days, given her work as manager of the Elance-oDesk Mobilizer Program.

“Mobilizers” are community organizers who are skilled in how to get the most from Elance.com and oDesk.com, and how to translate that information to potential and current freelancers and business clients. Today you’ll find Mobilizers in over 50 cities around the world—from Athens and Manhattan to Tel Aviv, Moscow, and Cape Town—with additional locales in the works.

“Since we can’t be everywhere at once, Mobilizers use their marketing expertise to help us reach out to our users,” says Katrin.

Her role requires visits to many remote locations to meet with Elance-oDesk Mobilizers, as well as the global community of clients and freelancers they support. Katrin’s job is to foster and support today’s new way of working, and to help communities continue to grow and be successful working online.

“At Mobilizer events,” Katrin continues, “I see so much love for Elance-oDesk. It warms my heart when people come up to the stage to share how online work has changed their lives in so many positive ways.”
When asked about his hiring of online freelancers, Elance-oDesk Senior Vice President of Product & Engineering Stephane Kasriel likens his philosophy to the classic tale of Pig and Chicken. When opening a restaurant together, Chicken suggests the name “Ham & Eggs.” Pig is leery, noting to Chicken, “You’d only be involved, but I’m committed.”

Long story short, Stephane is very committed to online teams.

Under Stephane’s stewardship during the past three years, the Elance-oDesk “team” has grown to over 200 engineers and product managers—many of them freelancers. His reasoning: “Why limit your talent search to your own backyard? We’re successful because our team is world-class and worldwide.”

He wrote the book on how to hire engineers online.

Stephane has perfected best practices for hiring and working with remote teams, even writing a Kindle ebook on the subject—Hire Fast & Build Things: How to Recruit and Manage a Top-Notch Team of Distributed Engineers. In his book, Stephane speaks to topics ranging from the advantages of building distributed teams to common concerns, team structure, and creating a shared infrastructure.

Today Stephane’s online network at Elance-oDesk is primarily centered around freelancers in Central and Eastern Europe. “Like everyone else, we see a talent gap out there,” he says. “Rather than plodding through with traditional approaches, we know where to find top developers. Winning the talent war requires going where the best workers are—online.”

Eating our own cooking.

It makes perfect sense that Elance-oDesk would be at the forefront of working with freelancers, as no team is in a better position to see the positive results. It’s literally in the DNA of the company.

“The need for a distributed team is the reason the oDesk platform came to be,” Stephane points out. “Our cofounders were working thousands of miles apart—one in Silicon Valley and the other in Greece—and the two created the platform to work together.” Today Stephane continues to build on this technology, creating and evolving the foundation for a marketplace that connects top talent with businesses who recognize the opportunities of remote teams.

“Our engineering team was distributed from day one.”
ABOUT THE REPORT

This report presents the results of three online surveys conducted by Genesis Research Associates, an independent marketing research consultancy. The first survey assessed the work attitudes and satisfaction of Elance-oDesk freelancers vs. average workers (Work Fulfillment Survey); the second was an in-depth profile of Elance-oDesk freelancers (Freelancer Profile Survey); the third was an in-depth profile of Elance-oDesk clients. Genesis Research Associates collected and tabulated survey data for all three reports and consulted with Elance-oDesk on the presentation of data.

The Work Fulfillment Survey was conducted among Elance-oDesk freelancers and Research Now panelists who work for wages (either at a regular job, as freelancers, or as business owners). All respondents were screened to ensure that they had at least 10 years of formal education.

In total, 1000 responses were collected from Elance-oDesk freelancers and 1000 from Research Now panelists. The Elance-oDesk freelancers included a 60:40 mix of odesk.com freelancers to elance.com freelancers. Responses were collected between July 24 and August 8, 2014.

The audience was divided among developed and non-developed countries, using the World Bank’s Human Development Index for categorization. 60% of the respondents were drawn from nations that were scored as very highly developed; 40% were drawn from nations with high/medium/low development scores. Quotas by country for each cell were as follows:

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<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>600</strong></td>
<td><strong>600</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Elance-oDesk Freelancers</th>
<th>Average Workers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>400</strong></td>
<td><strong>400</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Respondents could choose to take the survey in English, Russian, or Tagalog. Respondents were asked to rate the personal importance of various work-related issues that reflect autonomy, financial rewards, work-life balance, etc. They rated each of these issues on a five-point scale from “Not at all important” to “Extremely important.” Next, they were asked to rate their level of satisfaction with each of these issues on a five-point scale from “Not at all satisfied” to “Extremely satisfied.” Finally, respondents were asked a few demographic and career questions, such as they type of work they do, the size of the firm they work for (if they have a regular job), where they typically work (in an office, at home, etc.), the length of their commute, as well as their gender, age, and economic situation (as compared to others in their community).

This online survey was conducted among a representative sample of Elance-oDesk freelancers. Respondents were screened to ensure that they are currently registered as freelancers on either odesk.com or elance.com.

A total of 5910 freelancers responded to the survey. Responses were collected between July 23 and August 1, 2014.

The questionnaire included questions about freelancers’ work, their perceptions of/attitudes about the two brands, and their work and demographic profiles.

This online survey was conducted among a representative sample of Elance-oDesk clients. Respondents were screened to ensure that they had hired a freelancer on either odesk.com or elance.com.

A total of 4013 Elance-oDesk clients responded to the survey between April 4 and April 21, 2014.

The questionnaire included questions about experiences working with Elance-oDesk freelancers, perceptions of/attitudes about the brand, and their demographic profiles.
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