

# Freelancing in Europe

2022

Focus on France, Spain  
and Germany



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# Executive Summary

## ➤ The New Work Order is accelerating

From the perspective of highly-skilled European professionals, our findings suggest freelancing is emerging as an increasingly attractive career choice given the benefits it offers in terms of autonomy, flexibility and work-life balance. From 2020 to 2021 Malt saw a **39%** increase in overall freelancer sign-ups, and a **63%** increase in job categories once considered 'established' (project managers and support functions, for example). Added to that, as technology continues to transform our world at an exponential pace, freelancers are spearheading the New Work Order as early adopters of remote working, agile collaboration and lifelong learning.

## ➤ Portrait of a European freelancer

Freelancers across the three markets we surveyed are experienced professionals ranging from 37 years old on average in France, to 43 in Germany. Their motivations for choosing freelancing are largely aligned across markets – 'independence' ranks as the primary motivating factor (for **95%** in France, **92%** in Spain and **91%** in Germany), followed by 'flexibility on their agenda', 'the ability to choose their work location' and the 'power to choose the clients and projects' they care about. When it comes to challenges, 'negotiating with clients' is the most commonly identified pain point across all markets (**24%** for France, **29%** for Spain, **28%** for Germany).

‘Being paid on time’ is the second biggest challenge for freelancers in France, whereas their German counterparts find ‘managing administrative tasks’ a greater challenge. However, even with these challenges, the vast majority of freelancers feel happy about their careers.

## ● Freelancers are a highly-skilled, specialized talent pool that can bring value to companies of all sizes

The data suggests SMEs are leading adopters of freelancer collaboration. Having said that, in Germany, **20%** of the freelancers we surveyed work regularly with large corporations (vs. **14%** for France and **5%** for Spain). Being at the forefront of innovation, freelancers can be a source of inspiration for all companies, of all sizes. Upskilling is a major challenge for organizations today, and freelancers are the masters of continuous learning, spending half a day per week on average developing their skills or keeping up-to-date in their field. Freelancers themselves confirm the link, stating that one of the main reasons companies of all sizes work with them is to benefit from their specific expertise.

## ● Best practices for effective freelancer-company collaboration

When it comes to effective collaboration between businesses and freelancers, there are best practices Malt has noticed, and which are backed up by the data. Providing a clear and structured brief, communicating your company values and the context within which the project is taking place, and embracing autonomy are all major keys to successful collaboration.

# About Malt

Founded in 2013 by Vincent Huguet and Hugo Lassiège, Malt is the leading end-to-end digitized marketplace where 30,000 companies and organizations find the best freelance expertise to match their business' needs. With 300 employees (50% women/men) and a community of 320,000 freelancers in 5 European countries (France, Spain, Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands), Malt's mission is to give everyone, whether companies or freelancers, the power to choose the best people to work with.

Malt is proud to be part of the Next40, a label created by the French government to support and promote 40 emerging French companies considered promising and likely to become technology leaders.



[malt.com](https://malt.com)



# About BCG

Boston Consulting Group partners with leaders in business and society to tackle their most important challenges and to capture their greatest opportunities. BCG was the pioneer in business strategy at its founding in 1963. Today, BCG helps clients with total transformation—inspiring complex change, enabling organizations to grow, building competitive advantage, and driving bottom-line impact.

To succeed, organizations must blend digital and human capabilities. BCG's global teams bring deep industrial and functional expertise as well as a range of perspectives to spark change and deliver solutions through leading-edge management consulting along with technology and design, corporate and digital ventures—and business purpose. BCG works in a uniquely collaborative model across the firm and throughout all levels of the client organization, generating results that allow their clients to thrive.



[bcg.com](https://bcg.com)

“



It is now common to say the war for talent is over... Talent has won. This year's study confirms that more and more diverse profiles are embracing the freelancer status with an aspiration for more flexibility and independence. Experienced, highly-skilled and fulfilled as freelancers, these talents offer an interesting perspective on the question of the Future of Work, that most companies are currently trying to tackle.

*Vinciane Beauchene*

**Managing Director & Partner**  
*Boston Consulting Group (BCG)*

“



Looking at the freelancing market is like looking into the Future of Work. What's interesting in this year's edition is that we clearly see the effect of two years of a global pandemic. Companies fast-forwarded into the New Work Order and probably skipped 10-20 years of transformation work. And the impact on the labor market is huge. Digital Talents are more in demand than ever, and I am not surprised that they increasingly choose freelancing.

*Vincent Huguet*

**CEO & Cofounder**  
*Malt*

# Introduction

In this second international edition of the Freelancing in Europe Survey, in collaboration with the Boston Consulting Group, we once again looked at the unique data from our freelance community to paint a picture of the freelancing market in Europe and consider its potential implications for the economy at large.

After two years of living through a global pandemic, now is a good time to review the effects this period has had on the freelancing market and our ways of working.

**Today, 25% of Europe's 13 million digital professionals are freelancers\*.** This group is likely to continue growing in the New Work Order.

Covid-19 has clearly fast-forwarded digital transformation and, with it, the freelancing market. While 2020 saw many freelancers experience a slowdown in activity due to some projects being stopped during the first lockdown, in 2021 the opposite was the case. More and more professionals made the move to freelancing last year, with especially large growth in more established job categories like support functions.

The global consequences of the hybrid work revolution we have witnessed are likely here to stay. In this environment, the freelancing market is especially interesting to look at since it has acted as a forecast for many Future of Work trends for quite some time.

Last year, we already proved that choice and autonomy are at the core of a freelancer's identity. This year, we will see how these values are becoming a reality for everyone.

Since the outbreak of Coronavirus, we have witnessed an acceleration of the trend towards what we at Malt like to call the New Work Order—the flexible, autonomous, freelancing Future of Work.

\*Source: Eurostats



# Methodology of the study

This study was conducted jointly by Malt and BCG from July to the end of September 2021. We collected 3,334 responses from freelancers working through Malt in France, Spain, and Germany.

Thanks to these responses, we were able to paint a picture of a particularly important group among the self-employed: highly-skilled freelancers, mostly working in digital projects in the Talent Economy.



# 1.

The New  
Work Order  
is accelerating

# Skill Gaps & the Rise of Freelancing

From the perspective of companies, demand for digital skills is clearly skyrocketing. This year, the BBC reported that the UK was headed for a “digital skills shortage disaster”<sup>(1)</sup>. No wonder then, that companies are fighting to attract top talent, and European tech start-up **salaries for digital professionals have risen by as much as 60% this year**<sup>(2)</sup>.

From the perspective of highly-skilled professionals, freelancing is emerging as an increasingly attractive career choice given the benefits it offers in terms of autonomy, flexibility and work-life balance.

**40% of permanently employed digital workers indicated they were actively looking for a new job and 73% plan to change jobs in two to three years.** — BCG: Decoding Digital Talent 2021

For those who have taken the step into freelancing, the majority aren't looking back – **70% of freelancers wish to remain freelancers.**

## More "established" job categories are moving into freelancing

There are 6 million highly-skilled freelancers in Europe, 3.4 million of whom work on digital projects<sup>(3)</sup>.

Based on Eurostats data, Malt estimates these **freelancers make up 25% of all digital professionals in Europe**<sup>(4)</sup>.

Sources: (1) BBC — ‘Huge shortage’ in digital skills says Apprentice winner

(2) Sifted.eu — Pay for European startup employees jumps nearly 60% amid war for talent

(3) Malt's estimation based on data from Eurostats

(4) Eurostats

From data-driven marketers, to SEO experts and UX designers, highly skilled freelancers on Malt are characterized by a combination of business acumen and technological prowess that they use in their work on digital projects. Their specializations can be divided into several major job categories:

### Tech & Data

Developers, Data Scientists,  
DevOps, Software Engineers...

### Arts & Design

Graphic Designers, Motion  
& Sound Designers, UX/Web  
designers, Art Directors...

### Marketing & Communications

Marketing Consultants, Analytics Consultants,  
Community Managers, Social Media Managers...

**+27%**  
freelancer  
sign-ups in 2021

At the same time freelancing is becoming a more and more attractive value proposition for established job categories:

### Sales Representatives & Business Developers

### Project Management

### Support Functions & Other

Finance, HR, Legal, Purchasing, Operations,  
Research & other professional activities.

**+63%**  
freelancer  
sign-ups in 2021

## Freelancing is accelerating in a digital world

As businesses increasingly look to the freelancing market for solutions and innovation, the number of professionals taking the career shift into freelancing is growing. From 2020 to 2021, we witnessed a **39%** increase in overall freelancer signups on the Malt platform. Freelancers working in Tech & Data, Marketing & Communications and Art & Design grew significantly by **27%**, while “established” fields once thought to be less associated with freelancing, such as Sales and Support Functions, grew by a whopping **63%\***.

Based on our survey data related to length of experience in freelancing, we saw significant growth last year in first-time freelancers joining our platform. **In fact, 17% of sign-ups in France were new to freelancing, compared to 16% for Spain, and 11% for Germany.**

Before making the shift, these same newly-minted freelancers had, on average, gathered a solid **9-10 years of experience as full-time employees.**

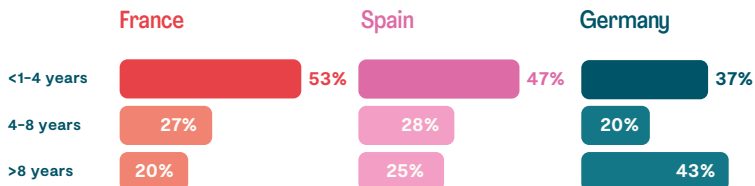
France  
**9**  
years

Spain  
**9**  
years

Germany  
**10**  
years

This is in line with the overall average of past work experience we see before becoming a freelancer.

### Number of years working as a freelancer:



\*Source: Internal Malt data, Jan 4th, 2022

## Freelancing is still a strong choice

Among current freelancers, we identified two main motivational drivers.



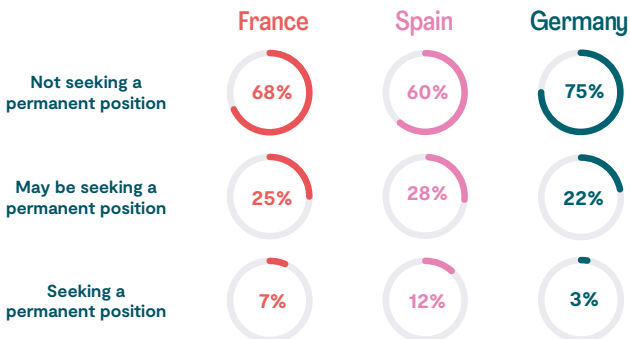
The fact that **freelancing is a strong choice** is clearly supported by the data.

**“I decided to become a freelancer by choice”:**

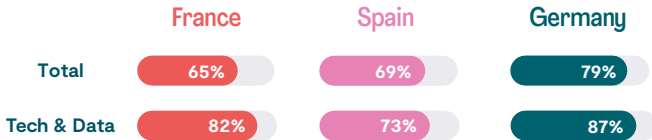


Similarly, only a small number are actively looking to leave their freelancing lifestyle in favor of a permanent position.

**Most freelancers are not looking for a permanent position:**



## Most freelancers tend to feel confident about the future, especially in Tech & Data:



Similarly, while the pandemic was tough on everyone, only a minority of freelancers say they feel lonely at work (**30%** for France, **22%** for Spain and **18 %** for Germany). What looked like a down-turn in freelancer activity in 2020 actually turned into an acceleration in 2021. Taking all this data into consideration, we can safely state that freelancing has gained great momentum in the last year and remains at the forefront of the transition towards the New Work Order.

## ► The hybrid revolution

Since the start of the Coronavirus pandemic, digital and remote work have become the “new normal”. For better or worse, the majority of our professional and social lives have been propelled into the digital space.

This is having a profound impact on the world of work, and is the context within which freelancing in Europe has gained greater momentum in the last year, with a **39%** increase in signups on the Malt platform.

In fact, this trend is becoming so central to work life that Germany is now considering making remote work a legal right\*. Elsewhere, the global uptake of remote and asynchronous working are signs of an accelerating digital transformation that, though spearheaded by freelancers, could also become default ways of working for full-time employees.

\*Source: World Economic Forum — Germany drafting law to give people the legal right to work from home



## ◆ Signs of Digital Transformation

Looking at the data from BCG's recent survey on "Decoding Digital Talent 2021" there are clear signs of digital transformation and a hybrid world of work in employee data:



### Productivity

75% report a steady or improved productivity



### Work from home

63% wish to work on average 3.2 days per week from home



### Flexibility

48% want some flexibility in where they work



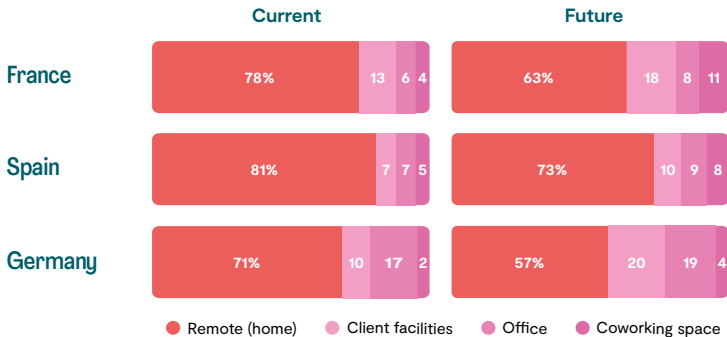


# Freelancers are spearheading the New Work Order

As technology transforms our world at an exponential pace, freelancers are spearheading the New Work Order as early adopters of remote working, agile collaboration and lifelong learning.

In 2022, freelancers plan to keep working remotely for the majority of their time. However, in comparison to their reported location of work in 2021, we can also observe that freelancers in all countries plan to spend more time at their clients' offices in the future, thus embracing a more hybrid world of work.

## Hybrid collaboration is gaining momentum:



## "I'm most efficient..."



### France

At home

48%

It depends on the tasks

30%

### Spain

At home

51%

It depends on the tasks

25%

### Germany

At home

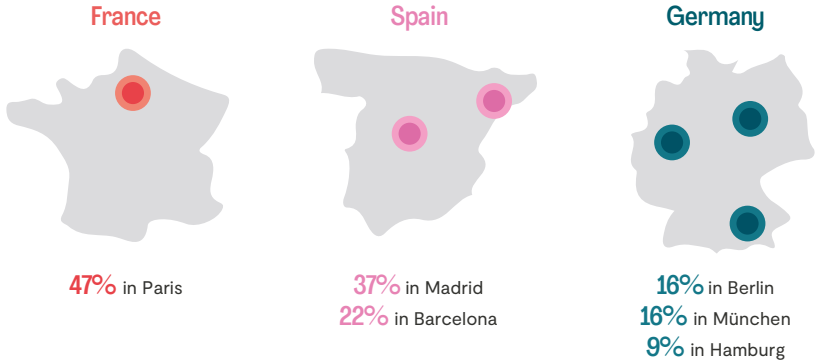
40%

It depends on the tasks

26%

A smaller proportion of French freelancers are located in greater Paris compared to 2020 (47% compared to 55%), which may be linked to a trend of moving out of major centers that may have been accelerated by working-from-home laws implemented during the lockdown.

### Major freelancer cities:



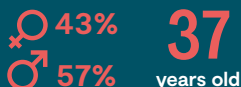
**Freelancers are continuous learners.** They spend **4 hours per week** developing their skills or keeping up-to-date in their field. **More than half** of freelancers report having changed specializations at least twice in their careers:



# Freelancer Portrait

## Who are they? Gender, age, education

### France



**37**

years old

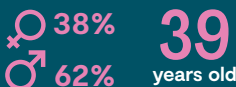
**90%**

have at least  
a bachelor's  
degree\*

Previous experience as  
a salaried employee:

**91%**

### Spain



**39**

years old

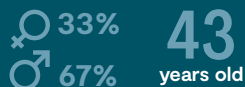
**78%**

have at least  
a bachelor's  
degree\*

Previous experience as  
a salaried employee:

**97%**

### Germany



**43**

years old

**79%**

have at least  
a bachelor's  
degree\*

Previous experience as  
a salaried employee:

**91%**

\*Or an equivalent degree

## Job categories\* & daily rates

### France

### Spain

### Germany

546€

311€

746€

Tech & Data

### France

### Spain

### Germany

692€

415€

982€

Project Managers & Agile Coaches

410€

217€

615€

Arts & Design

795€

446€

1074€

Business Consulting

419€

200€

652€

Marketing & Communications

462€

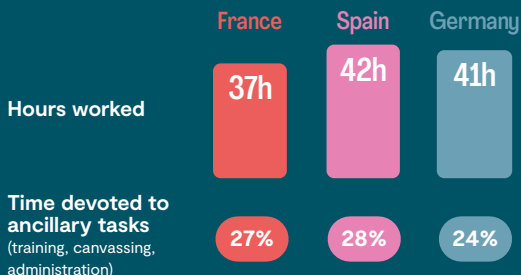
190€

768€

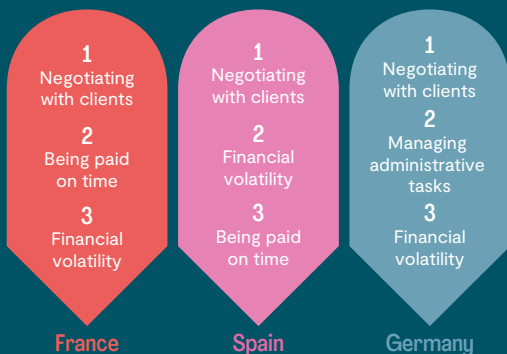
Support Functions & Other

\*Refer to page 12 for examples of job roles within each category

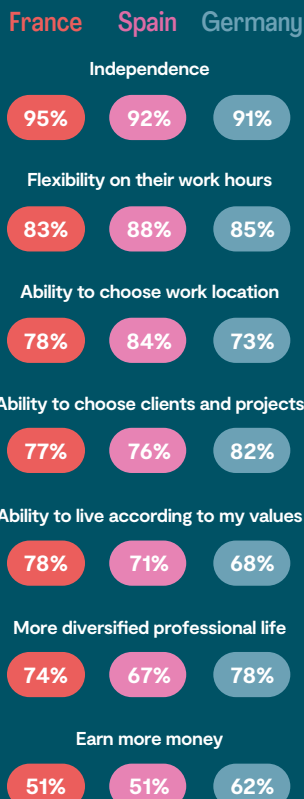
## Their typical work week



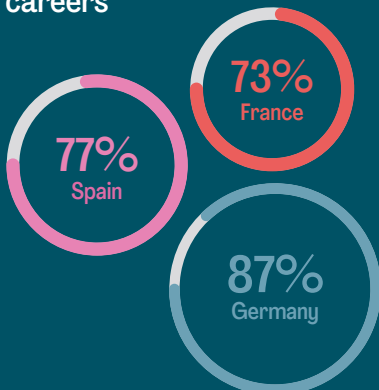
## Their challenges



## Their main motivations



## But overall they are happy in their careers



A woman with long dark hair, wearing a mustard-colored sweater, and a man with glasses and a red polo shirt are sitting at a white table. They are both looking at a laptop. The man has his arms crossed. In the background, there are bookshelves and other people in a bright, modern office environment. The image is partially covered by a large teal shape on the left and a pink shape at the top left.

# 2.

Freelancers  
are a highly-skilled,  
specialized talent pool  
that can bring value to  
companies of all sizes

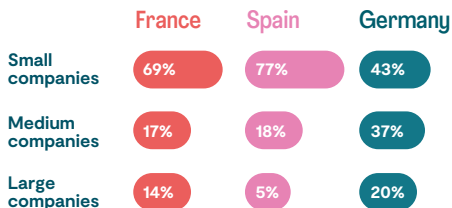
# Which types of companies leverage freelancers the most?

Despite the fact that many companies are coping with skills shortages and a growing need for flexibility and outsourcing in times of increased activity, our data shows that large companies seem to work with freelancers less than small and medium sized organizations.

Overall, the data suggests SMEs are leading adopters of freelancer collaboration. In Germany, **20%** of the freelancers we surveyed work regularly with large corporations (vs. **14%** for France and **5%** for Spain). Being at the forefront of innovation, freelancers can be a source of inspiration for all companies, of all sizes.

In Germany, mid-sized companies seem to be more inclined to work with freelancers, compared to their Spanish and French counterparts. This can likely be explained by the strong standing of mid-sized companies in Germany.

## Types of companies represented in freelancers' client portfolios:



# Freelancers offer advanced skills

## ◆ Get access to specific skills

For organizations, one benefit of working with freelancers is access to specific skills that are not present in-house. Facing the current talent shortage, companies of all sizes will be forced to unlock new talent pools. And freelancers happen to be a perfect option to unlock a flexible talent pool in a tense job market. They tend to be highly-skilled and dynamic, offering the kind of expertise that is in high demand at companies looking to keep up with digital transformation.

Our data suggests freelancers spend an average of **4 hours per week developing their skills** or keeping up-to-date in their field.

For companies looking to hire external talent, this is especially valuable given that the **average half-life of a digital skill is just five years—meaning that every five years, that particular skill loses 50% of its value.**

The need for upskilling is a massive challenge; harnessing the potential of freelancers will help organizations keep up with the fast-paced changes in the digital field. After all, freelancers are the masters of continuous learning.

Freelancers themselves confirm this finding, stating that one of the main reasons companies work with them is to benefit from their specific expertise.





“

AXA Climate is a branch of AXA that has been in existence for 3 years now and is growing very fast. To support this growth, we call on a lot of external talent, especially freelancers. They come in to reinforce our teams, for short periods of time, to work on MVP projects or to assist us in responding to calls for tender. For this, we look for very specific skills – business experts that do not exist in our company. We also choose the freelancers we work with according to their sector expertise. For example, we had a call for tender for an automotive supplier and looked for a freelancer who already knew the automotive sector, who could bring us their perspective and complete our analyses.

*Théophile Bellouard*

**Head of Adaptation Services**

AXA Climate



“

Often, my clients do not have an agile structure and organization. To make them aware of the benefits of these methods, I set up a hybrid work methodology. For example, I keep the V-cycle project management (project committee, specifications...) to reassure them, but I communicate and manage in an agile way, especially with the technical teams. I also think that having both technical and managerial skills brings a lot to my clients. I don't hesitate to challenge the tech teams as well as the rest of the teams, and to create links between them.

*Samira Abkach*

**Digital Project Manager**

## Agile is the methodology of choice for Tech & Data freelancers

According to tech and data freelancers, the main benefits of working in Agile are efficiency and better customer centricity, leading the large majority to work in this way.

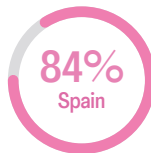
### Tech & Data freelancers working in Agile:

France  
**69%**

Spain  
**73%**

Germany  
**78%**

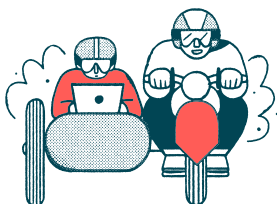
### Main benefit identified: a more efficient way of working



## Unlock extra capacity

Companies who are in need of extra capacity in moments of peak activity also stand to benefit from engaging more freelancers. It takes 6 days on average to hire a freelancer on Malt, whereas average time-to-hire for full-time employees has been increasing each year. A LinkedIn study in August 2021, drawn from analysis of 400,000 confirmed hires on the platform, found that median time to hire for Engineering and Research roles had reached 49 and 48 days respectively\*.

### Companies who work with freelancers to increase capacity in busy periods:



	France	Spain	Germany
Small companies	18%	43%	56%
Medium companies	13%	38%	68%
Large companies	46%	44%	63%

\*Source: LinkedIn — *Can you wait 49 days why getting hired takes so long*, by George Anders

“



At Total Wash or in other entities of the Group, the benefits of freelancers' "soft skills" are clearly felt. As everyone knows, we have a very heavy industrial DNA. That's why we absolutely need to surround ourselves with people who will bring their digital experience to us and show us what digital is all about. We are not a Google or an Amazon and do not always have these digital reflexes. When we turn to freelancers on Malt who have 10 years experience, we naturally capitalize on that.

*Michael Centeno*

**Strategic & Digital Director**  
*Total Wash (TotalEnergies Group)*

“



Ideas are good and important, but they don't become real if the implementation fails. My clients value my expertise in strategy implementation. The ideas behind the New World of Work and Digitalization are well known, but instead of discussing it, we need to start tackling the projects behind it with the talents that are needed for it. And we need to overcome our personal pride for the sake of a shared vision.

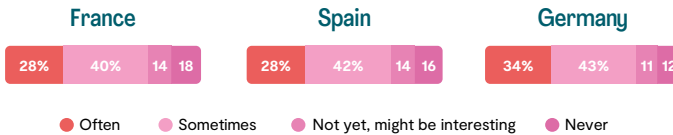
*Tatjana Wiedemann*

**Business Transformation Expert**



## ◆ Collaboration with other freelancers

Similarly, integrating freelancers in existing teams is already a current practice that will likely continue to grow in the near future. Most freelancers (**68%**) are already used to collaborating in teams composed of multiple freelancers, but only **28%** do so regularly.



Collaborations need not necessarily come from already established teams of freelancers—they can also be initiated by companies based on their needs. We found in France, for example, that **36%** of inter-freelance collaborations are initiated by the company, compared to just **24%** by a freelance collective, and **13%** by an external provider.

In short, last year's circumstances combined to create the perfect opportunity for companies to start tapping into the advanced skills and experience that the freelancing market can provide.

## ● A strong EVP can attract both employees & freelancers

Investing in your company's Employee Value Proposition (EVP) not only makes sense for attracting full-time employees – it could set you apart with talented freelancers too. The data suggests freelancers' expectations are well aligned with those of full-time employees, so shaping and communicating a clear EVP could help companies win on both fronts.

When it comes to remote work for example, freelancers and employees are aligned. **48%** of freelancers consider home as the most efficient working environment, while **51%** of salaried employees reported they have been able to maintain or improve their productivity on collaborative tasks while working mainly from home throughout the pandemic.\*

Added to that, productivity drivers are similar between employees and freelancers. Being connected socially at work matters for both groups, with two-thirds of freelancers reporting that **'good working relationships'** make their top three most important criteria for good collaboration, and half saying the same for **'regular communication with the team'**.

On the employee side, BCG data suggests social connectivity is the leading enabler of collaborative productivity for full-time employees.\*

\*Source: BCG reports — *What 12,000 employees have to say about the future of work*, and *Decoding The Digital Talent Challenge*

## Cliché 1

# Freelancers are lone wolves

Freelancers spend 3–4 hours weekly on networking, suggesting further willingness to learn, connect and constantly improve their professional status.

Companies can rest assured that freelancers are ready to collaborate and blend into teams easily.





“

Resource management on development projects using freelancers has enabled us to be more dynamic, meeting the needs of the business (time & costs) in a much more efficient manner. We are able to scale up projects according to business priorities ensuring we have the right talent at the right time. Working in an agile environment means specific talents are needed at various stages of the development lifecycle. Malt has supported us in acquiring the right talent at the exact time it is needed.

*Jonathan Crowther*

**Business Director**

*Pfizer Global Site Intelligence*



“

In my experience, even for a short-term project, companies benefit from experienced professionals when they are in need of extra hands because they quickly manage to gain an overview of the most important priorities and become operational right away. In the end it is about lifting weight off the core team, so avoiding long onboarding and training periods is key for everyone involved in an ongoing project. As an experienced freelancer my clients appreciate how my work shows an effect right away and sends the right signs to the employees in the team.

*Marcella Uhte*

**Creative Project Manager  
& Brand Consultant**



# 3.

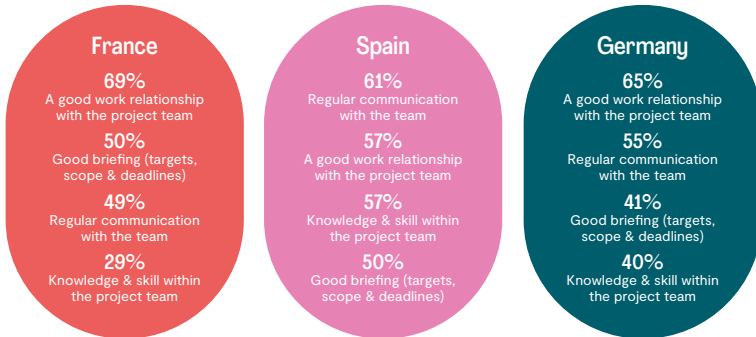
## Best practices for effective freelancer-company collaboration



Taking into account all the benefits of working with freelancers, there are three important tips companies must remember if they wish to kickstart effective collaborations with this unique talent pool.

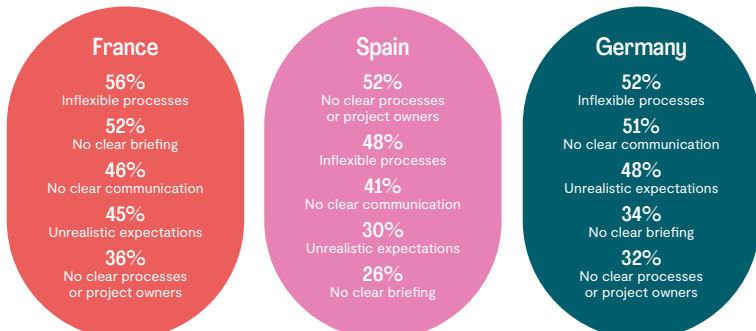
## Freelancers value good working relationships, quality briefings & regular communication...

### Important for freelancers:



## ...while freelancers consider inflexible processes the biggest roadblock.

### Main roadblocks:



**Tip n°1**

# Content is King. Communication the Queen.

A good briefing is key to framing your project and making sure that collaboration with the freelancer goes smoothly. Make sure to **state the goal**, a **clear timeline** and **the expectations** right at the beginning of a project.

It's also important to **place the project in a wider context** to convey your vision. This is because most freelancers choose their projects based on how interesting or valuable they judge the content to be.

A **clear briefing** will also serve as the basis for discussion for any potential negotiations, and help create a win-win situation for both parties.

To help facilitate smooth communication it helps to appoint a **dedicated point of contact** who handles the freelance collaboration and makes sure that the line of communication for feedback, tasks and timeline is streamlined.



## Our freelancer data supports this best-practice

- Most freelancers consider a good briefing (**50%** for France and Spain, **41%** for Germany), and regular communication with the team (**49%** for France, **61%** for Spain, **55%** for Germany) to be among the most important factors for a good collaboration.
- Interesting job content is by far the most important reason for freelancers to choose a project. **71%** for France, **61%** for Spain and **76%** of German freelancers indicate it as the first or second most important criteria when choosing a project.
- Additionally, + **44%** of freelancers give a particular importance to knowing the high-level challenges of the company.
- Negotiating with clients constitutes by far the most concerning challenge for freelancers (**24%** for France, **29%** for Spain, **28%** for Germany)

Source: Malt – *Companies are from Mars, Freelances are from Venus*

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I need a clear vision from the very beginning of the briefing, to know why I am working and for what purpose. I wait for the project to be presented to me, to which demand it responds, and therefore its objectives in broad terms. I also like to know the history of the project, and why they chose a freelance rather than a permanent contract. All this gives meaning to my work.

*Yoann Ligner*

**PHP Developer & Scrum Master**

## Tip n°2

# Communicate your values.

Even if your brand is already established, don't shy away from **clearly communicating your values** in your **project description** (just as you would in a job description). This helps freelancers gather **unique indirect clues** about your company culture, way of working, and even the tone of voice of your internal and external communications.

## Our freelancer data supports this best-practice

Freelancers, especially tech freelancers, are concerned with diversity & inclusion as well as sustainability. **59%** say they wouldn't accept a project offer if the client does not match their expectations regarding diversity & inclusion. **49%** say the same for sustainability, while full-time employees are more concerned about sustainability (**61%**) with Diversity & inclusion coming second (**48%**). – Source: BCG: Decoding Digital Talent



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For me, company culture is something so important that it can affect the decision to accept a project. The values of the people working in projects such as skills and commitment to their own project, flexibility and teamwork will determine to a large extent both their personal and professional success. It is important that the person in front of you is a good listener. And it is very important that you as a freelancer know how to actively listen and communicate.

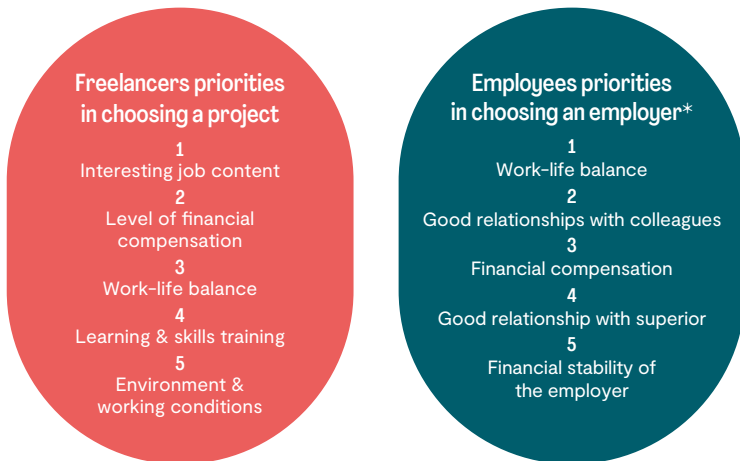
*Virilo Tejedor Aguilera*

**Senior Data Scientist**  
Kaggle Master

## Tip n°3

# Embrace autonomy.

When asking freelancers what factors matter the most when choosing a project, **interesting job** content is by far the most important factor. But when looking at more “soft” factors, the good news is that employees and freelancers do **not differ** that much. They **both** value a **good relationship with colleagues**, a **healthy work-life balance** and **good working conditions**.



As such, embracing freelance work is all about creating as much room as possible to **learn from each other**. Fostering a good relationship ensures the freelancer can bring their external perspective to the table—which, after all, is **why you’re hiring them** in the first place.

\*Source: BCG reports — *What 12,000 employees have to say about the future of work*, and *Decoding The Digital Talent Challenge*  
Above graph compares digital freelancers with digital full-time workers.

One should also keep in mind the importance of giving the freelancers access to the right tools. And last but not least, it is important to never micromanage: freelancers need to have enough freedom to execute the project as they see fit and apply their own unique process to deliver results.

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I feel like I add a lot of value to companies and their teams as a freelancer. All my project experience so far has shown me how important and enriching external resources can be for companies and their teams. Both from a professional and cultural perspective. With freelancers, companies create a new and refreshing dynamic that is unparalleled. New perspectives emerge that reveal completely different paths and possibilities, which can result in an enormous uplift for the whole team.

*Brigitte Weber*  
Coach & Trainer

## ◆ Our freelancer data supports this best-practice

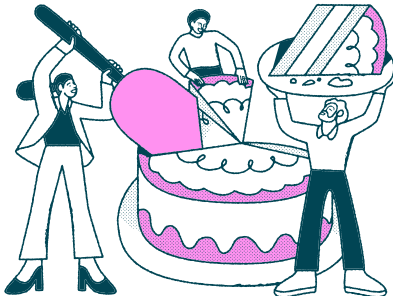
- One in two freelancers considers inflexible processes to be the biggest roadblock when working with large companies.
- For more than 90% of freelancers, the main motivational driver to become a freelancer is independence.

## Cliché 2

# Freelancers & employees are different breeds

When push comes to shove, freelancers and employees are not that different from one another. This means companies wanting to harness the power of freelancers don't need to radically change their attitudes or way of working.

A willingness to embrace the Future of Work will be the catalyst to unlocking all the benefits of the highly-skilled freelancer talent pool.



# Conclusion

In 2021, a number of factors combined to accelerate the shift towards the New Work Order. First, the Covid-19 pandemic emerged as an important driver behind widespread adoption of the freelancing trend among digital workers.

Second, the need for upskilling is a massive challenge. Harnessing the potential of freelancers has helped organizations keep up with the fast-paced changes in the digital field.

After all, with **an average of 9 years of job experience**, and **4 hours per week** spent developing their skills, **freelancers are the masters of continuous learning**.

This year's data confirms that the future of the digital freelance market is bright, both for freelancers and companies looking to ride the digitization wave. With a **39% increase** in signups on the Malt platform, it is clear that freelancing is emerging as an increasingly attractive career path. It is now up to companies to fully unlock the potential of the highly-skilled freelancer talent pool.



