The Great Flexit: 3 in 4 U.S. employees say they're likely to go freelance within 3 years, and 42% value their independence over a higher salary

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New research shows employees in the U.S. and beyond are embracing AI to speed up work and quietly laying the groundwork to go freelance

NEW YORK, Nov. 12, 2026 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- 81% of full-time US employees are interested in being their own boss, and 42% value that independence over a higher salary, according to the Next Era of Work report from Fiverr (NYSE: FVRR) and Talker Research.

The survey polled 5,750 full-time employees and freelancers across the United States, Germany, the United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia. The results point to a major values shift; in 2022, a Gallup poll found an increase in income or benefits was workers' most important factor in whether to switch jobs.

Fiverr Chief Human Resources Officer, Sharon Steiner, is dubbing the trend "The Great Flexit," a play on the post-pandemic Great Resignation, with full-time employees building AI skills now to be their own boss and have the free time and flexibility that comes with it. Rather than making a dramatic exit, many workers are "soft launching" their freelance careers by taking the steps to go independent while working 9-5.

Instead of quietly quitting, many employees appear to be quietly planning. Among U.S. full-time employees surveyed:

- 19% already hold multiple jobs or clients at once
- 22% maintain a professional profile or personal brand as part of their everyday workflow
- 18% already use a portfolio instead of a traditional resume
- 72% say becoming a freelancer is more within reach today than ever before

Cameron Gurr, a former Disney employee, has earned more than $1.2M over five years and worked with 10,000 clients as a career coach and professional resume writer on Fiverr after leaving his full-time job to freelance.

"When I made the decision to not continue working at Disney, my answer was a nervous 'no'. I was giving up a seat at the table I'd worked hard to earn and betting on myself, without any guarantees, a safety net, and employer-sponsored healthcare," says Cameron Gurr. "More than $1 million in revenue later, freelancing has opened my world. I've traveled to more than 10 countries, gained greater control over my time, and built a business."

Time is the new currency, and AI has quickly become a way for workers to earn some back. Many of the full-time employees are already beginning to leverage AI to create more flexibility in how they work. In the United States, 22% work with AI assistants or agents and 21% are becoming AI fluent.

"The Great Flexit is a wake-up call for every HR leader," says Steiner. "Compensation isn't enough to keep top talent. The companies that come out ahead will be the ones that build the infrastructure to work with independent talent instead of losing those skills altogether."

For full-time employees who plan to work for themselves, the freelancers surveyed offer a look at what to expect. They report far more control over their schedules, priorities, and workplace than full-time employees have, along with fewer meetings. Global findings include:

- Freelancers are about twice as likely as full-time employees to have flexible hours, with 53% saying they do, compared with 27% of full-time employees
- Nearly half of freelancers, 49%, say they set their own priorities, compared with 27% of full-time employees
- 43% of freelancers work from home, more than twice the 19% of full-time employees who do

Freelancers also expect the workplace to change fast. U.S. freelancers are more likely than full-time employees to expect these to be standard before 2030:

- AI assistants at work, 36% compared with 24%
- Companies hiring contractors over full-time staff, 28% compared with 19%

The Next Era of Work Report from Fiverr can be viewed here.

Research Methodology: Talker Research surveyed 2,850 freelancers and 2,900 full-time employees from the U.S., UK, Canada, Germany and Australia who have access to the internet; the survey was commissioned by Fiverr and administered and conducted online by Talker Research between Sept. 21 and Sept. 29, 2026. A link to the questionnaire can be found here.

About Fiverr
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From small businesses to Fortune 500 companies, millions trust Fiverr for projects in software and AI development, digital marketing, finance, business consulting, video animation, music, architecture, and more.

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