

**2017
CONSULTING
COMMUNITY
SURVEY
FINDINGS**

B2E CONSULTING



CONSULTING
FUELLING **TRANSFORMATION.** POWERED BY EXPERTS

ABOUT B2E CONSULTING

With a community of over 20,000 high calibre independent consultants, B2E is a unique consultancy providing full service consulting, managed capability and individual interim consultants to our clients. We use digital platforms to capture skills and preferences, and communicate roles, enabling our in-house team to rapidly match up our consultants with our client's specific needs.

Founded in 2004, B2E's reputation is based on providing clients with quality project teams and top candidates quickly. Our screening processes are so important that only experienced ex big 5 consultants form the in-house team - they use their programme experience to search out, screen and support the shortlisted consultants.

2017 CONSULTING COMMUNITY SURVEY

In order to understand how Interim Consultants feel about being part of the gig economy, we conducted a short survey of the most actively engaged consultants in our community in November 2017. A total of 285 responses were received, the results of which give us insights into what the gig economy means for them and their clients.

INTRODUCTION

Despite the association of gig economy workers with low-paid rider/driver roles, independent consultants, often the alumni of established big 5 management consultancy firms, have long been freelancing, enjoying benefits such as greater flexibility and freedom from bureaucracy.

Yet given that large projects can only be delivered by a team, is it possible to put together a group of independent consultants on a project and expect them to function as a team and to get the job done for the client? When individual consultants are thrown together can they coherently form a team that puts the client needs first? To help to find answers to these questions we conducted a survey amongst our community of independent consultants. A total of 285 responses were received.

KEY FINDINGS

1. Independent consultants are strongly focused on getting the job done rather than concerns about dealing with internal company issues. 93% of respondents strongly agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: "I believe that successful delivery against my client's objectives drives my career progression, rather than internal company politics".
2. Many are specialising to add value as Subject Matter Experts – 85% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "I have focused my career to become a subject matter expert in one or more areas, in order to add specific value to my clients".
3. There is a strong feeling that they are more able to focus on the company needs since they are independent. 88% disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement "I feel I would be more effective achieving my client's objectives if I were a permanent employee".
4. Clients are able to benefit from the independent's desire to improve their knowledge. 90% agreed or agreed strongly that "I actively invest in self learning and ensuring my knowledge is up to date so as to remain relevant to my clients."
5. Many of those surveyed reported that they do not stay in a role once they feel it is no longer to the benefit of the client. 92% disagreed or disagreed strongly that "My primary concern is staying in my role, even if it's to the detriment of my client's objectives."

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CONCLUSIONS

Key benefits for clients

As predicted by the Harvard Business Review in 2013, this disruption in consulting where smaller firms 'assemble leaner project teams of freelance consultants (mostly midlevel and senior alumni of top consultancies) for clients at a small fraction of the cost of traditional competitors' undoubtedly has a very positive effect for our clients. And whilst even independent consultants are sometimes thought of as an expensive option, often the savings on benefits packages and other overheads prove otherwise.

However, there would be no gain in lowering costs if it also meant that standards and output were lowered. Our survey clearly indicates this not to be the case. Our respondents overwhelmingly feel that they are free to concentrate on achieving their client's objectives more successfully from within the gig economy model than as permanent members of staff.

For consulting clients the **flexibility** of the gig economy is great news. They can get the benefit of experienced consultants to support specific projects and lead knowledge transfer to internal teams. These expert consultants bring to bear recent learning from similar programmes, often from the same industry and are totally focused on achieving the company's objectives.

Key benefits for consultants

It's that f- word again. Over 76% of our respondents cited greater **flexibility** as one of the three key drivers for becoming an independent consultant. This model also appears to be lucrative, as a potential increase in earnings was the next highest driver (56%).

About B2E Consulting

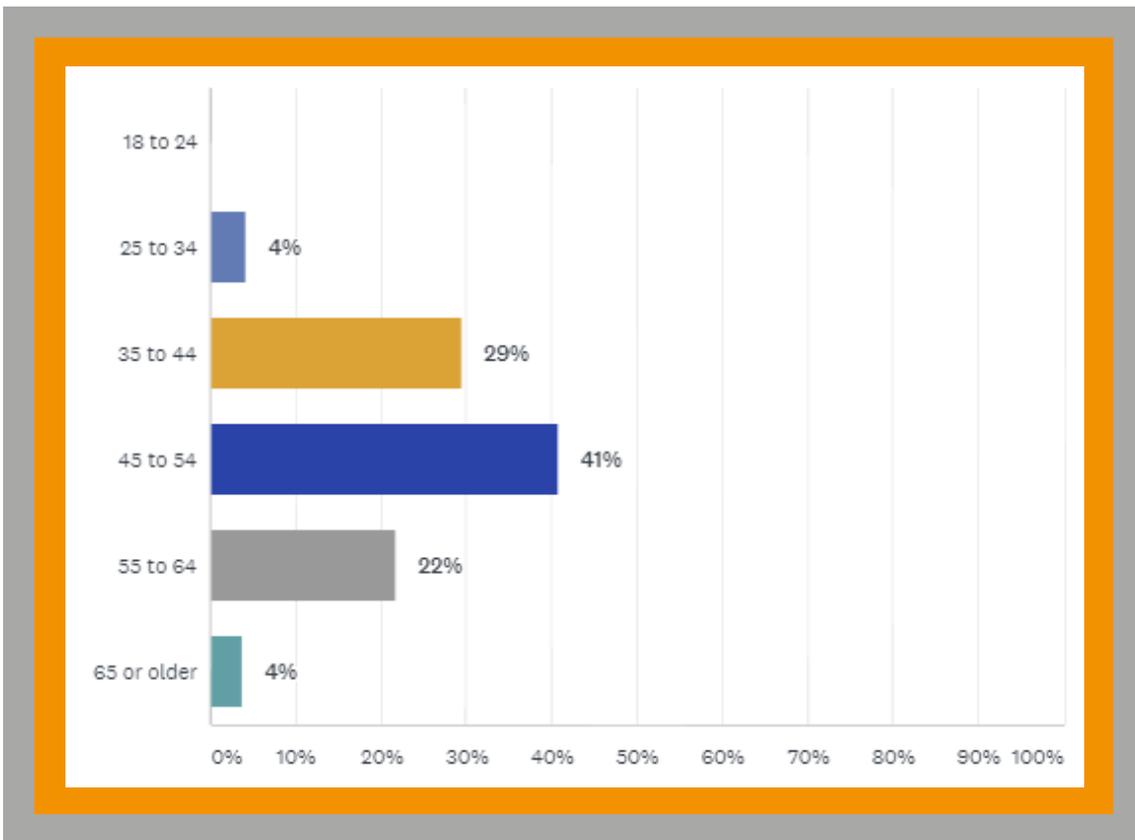
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B2E's reputation is based on providing clients with quality project teams and top candidates quickly. Our screening processes are so important that only experienced ex big 5 consultants form the in-house team - they use their programme experience to search out, screen and support the selected consultants.

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FINDINGS - Question 1: What is your age?

70% of respondents were between 35 - 54 years of age

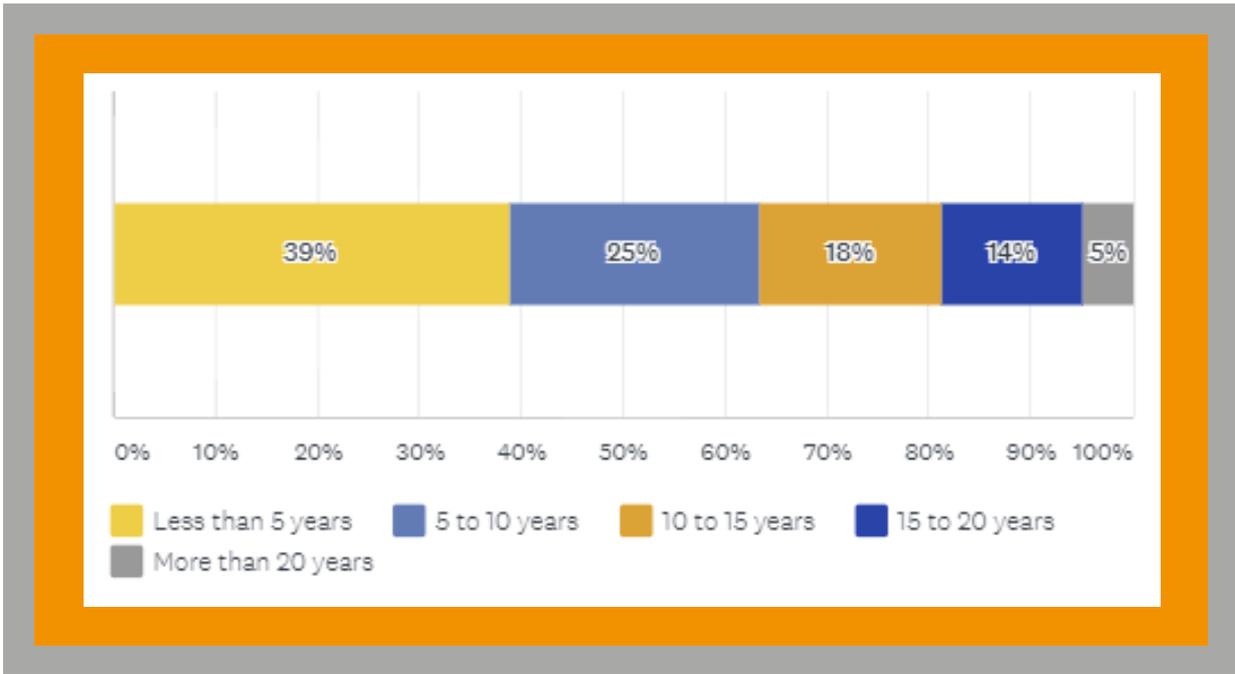


The largest group of respondents were in the 45-54 age range, suggesting that the population of independent consultants surveyed is an **experienced** community.

Question 2: How many years have you been an independent consultant?



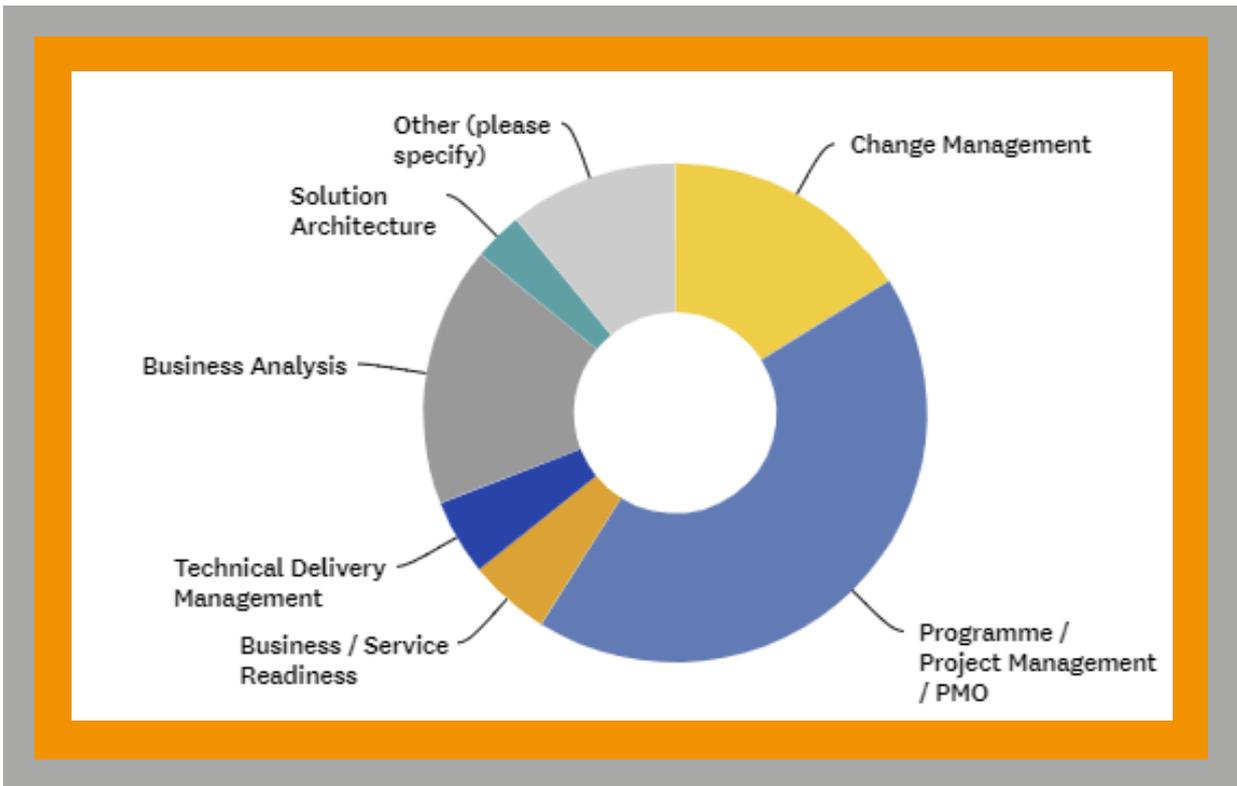
39% of respondents have been independent consultants for less than 5 years



The results for questions 1 and 2 suggest that for the majority of respondents, they have become independent consultants **after** permanent careers, possibly in industry or working for a consulting firm, or a combination of the two.

Question 3: What is your main Capability area?

43% of respondents identified their main capability area being Programme or Project Management or PMO



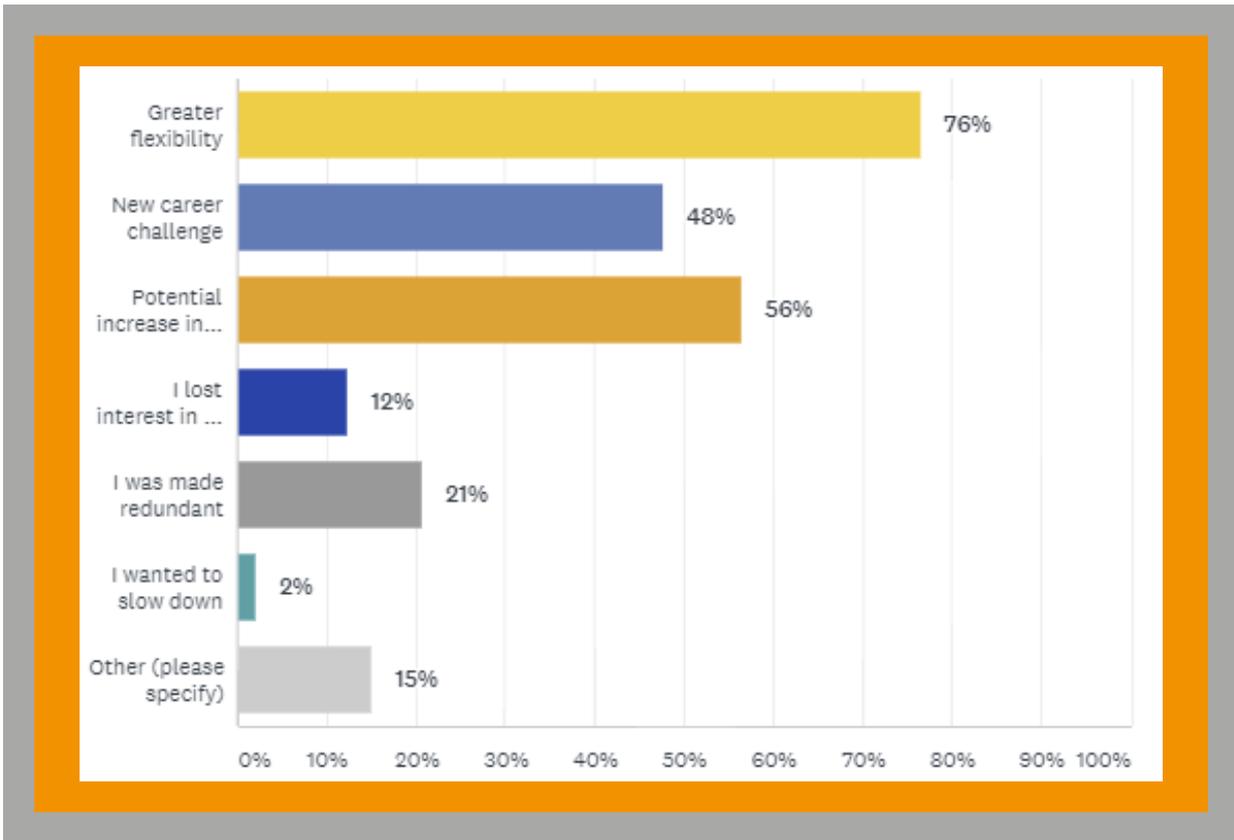
After Programme or Project Management or PMO, the next largest Capability areas were Business Analysis and Change Management, representing 17% and 16% of survey respondents respectively.

Digital Strategy & Transformation, Data Insight / Analytics, Finance Transformation and Procurement were some of the capability areas specified as 'Other' (11%).

Question 4: What were the key drivers for you becoming an independent consultant? (choose a maximum of 3)



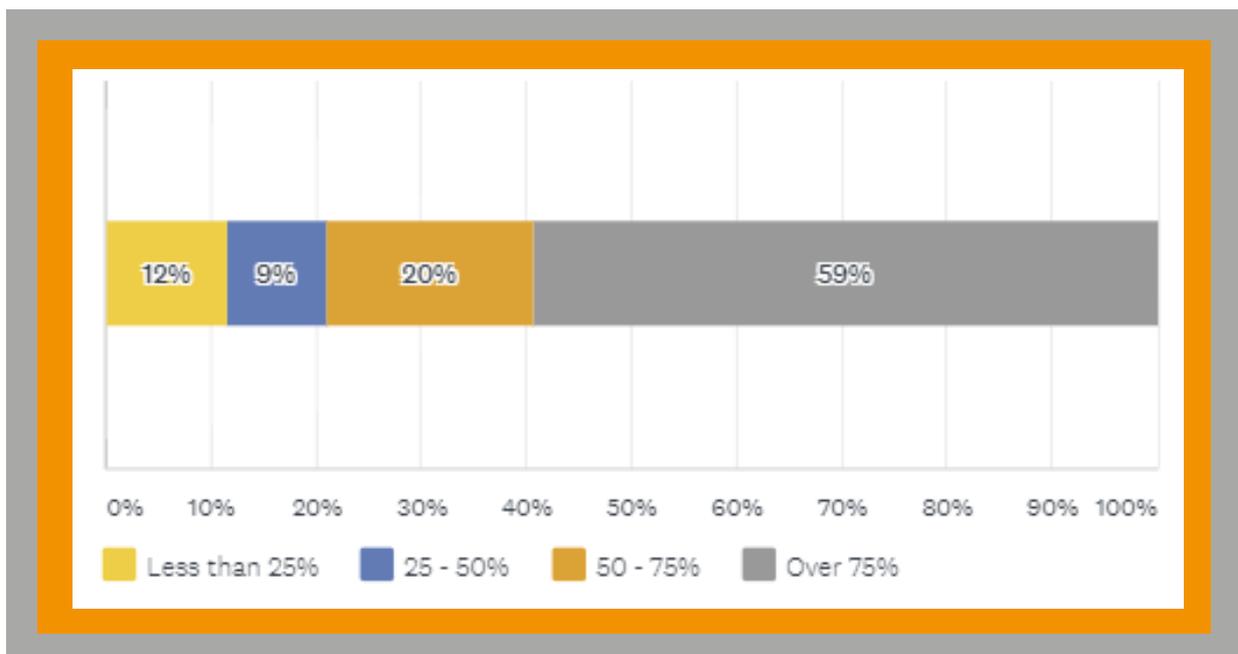
"Less office politics"
"More focused, driven work"
"Greater flexibility / choice"
"Better lifestyle balance"



Over 76% of our respondents cited greater flexibility as one of the three key drivers for becoming an independent consultant. This model also appears to be lucrative, as a potential increase in earnings was the next highest driver (56%).

Question 5: In the last 12 months, approximately how much of your chargeable time has been utilised?

59% reported that over 75% of their chargeable time had been utilised in the last 12 months

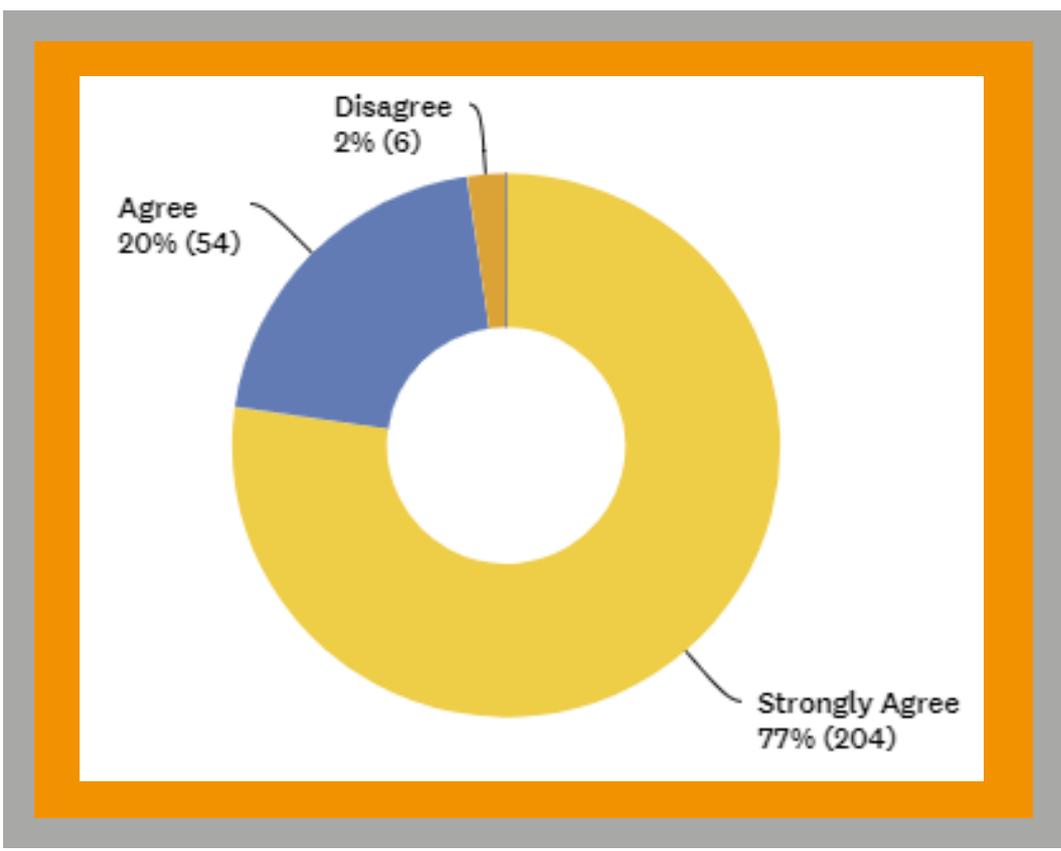


Whilst 59% of respondents reported that over 75% of their chargeable time had been utilised in the last 12 months, for 12% this less than 25% had been utilised. Some of these commented that they "only want to work part of the year".

**Question 6: Select how strongly you agree or disagree with the statement...
I tend to focus on getting the job done, not worrying how to get the next promotion**



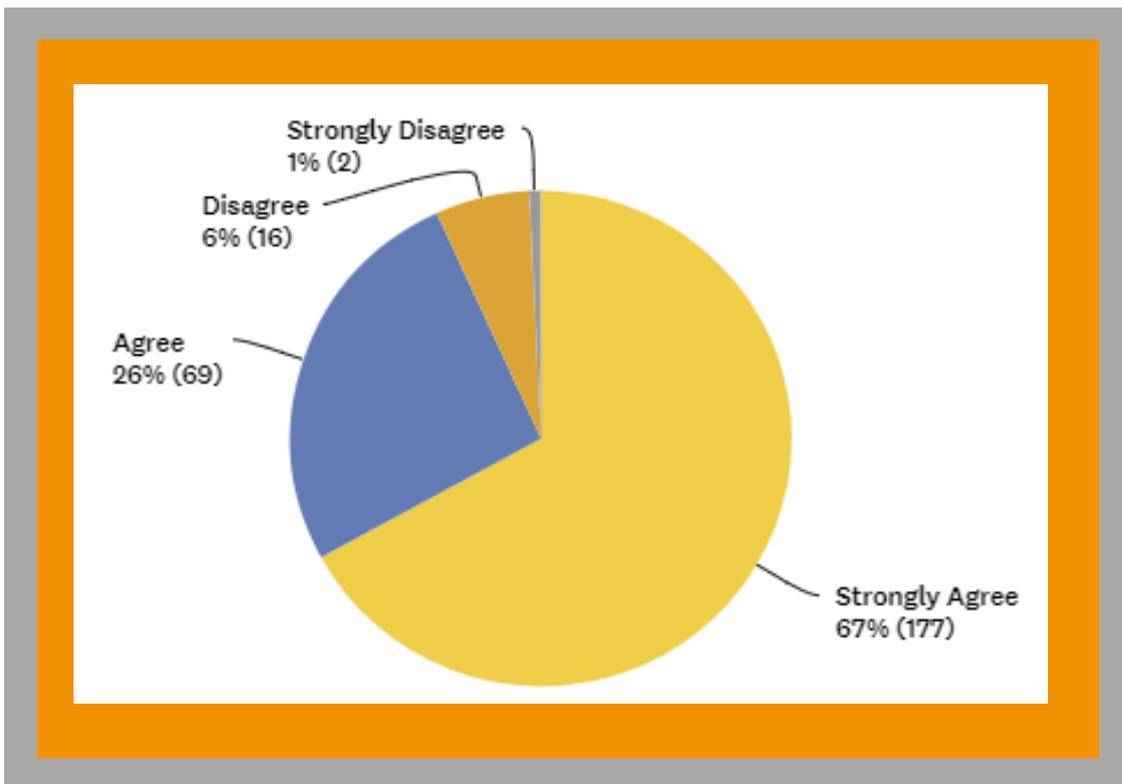
"I wish I could have joined the gig economy earlier, as I wasted so much money (low permanent salary) and wasted so much time in politics to get promotions"



97% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with the statement "I tend to focus on getting the job done, not worrying about the next promotion".

**Question 7: Select how strongly you agree or disagree with the statement...
I believe that successful delivery against my client's objectives drives my career progression, rather than internal company politics**

"I like that I don't feel a need to get involved with company politics - I'm here to deliver a service, and that is my #1 priority. I'll work around the politics to get the job done."

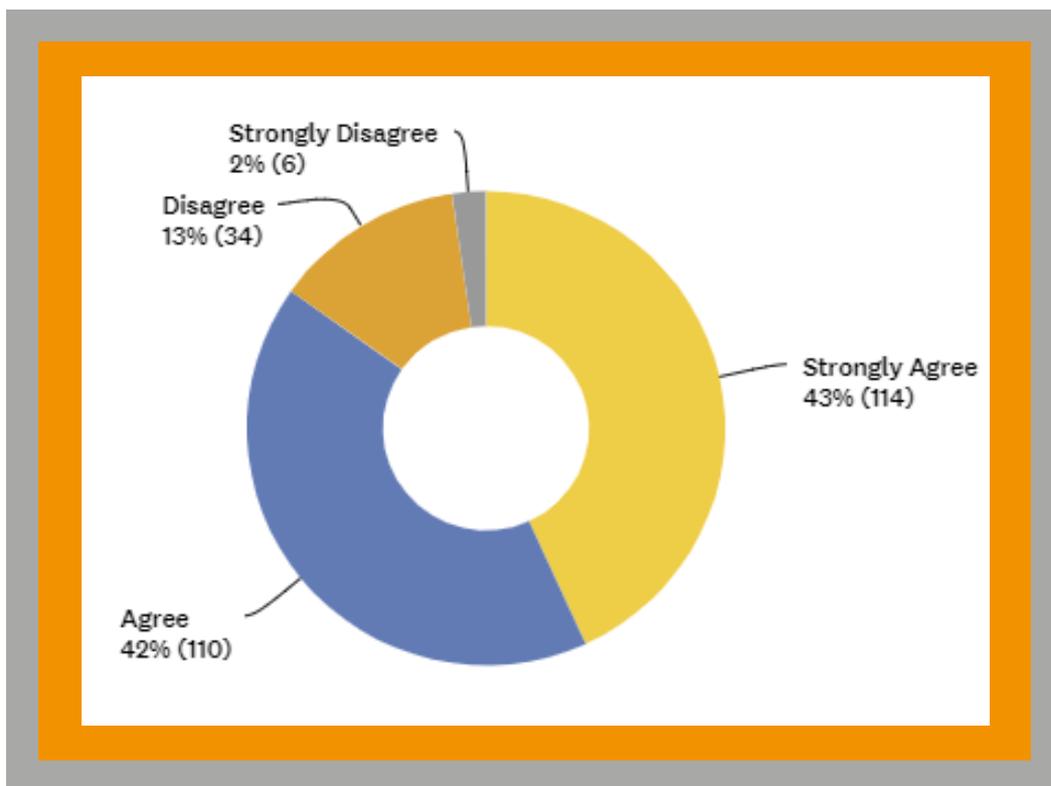


Independent consultants are strongly focused on getting the job done rather than concerns about dealing with internal company issues.

93% of respondents strongly agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: "I believe that successful delivery against my client's objectives drives my career progression, rather than internal company politics".

**Question 8: Select how strongly you agree or disagree with the statement...
I have focused my career to become a subject matter expert (SME) in one
or more areas, in order to add specific value to my clients**

"I like being the SME ...and enjoy the fact that I can take that skill to other places. I occasionally miss the 'progression' element of employment but much prefer the flexibility and the fact that I can be myself"

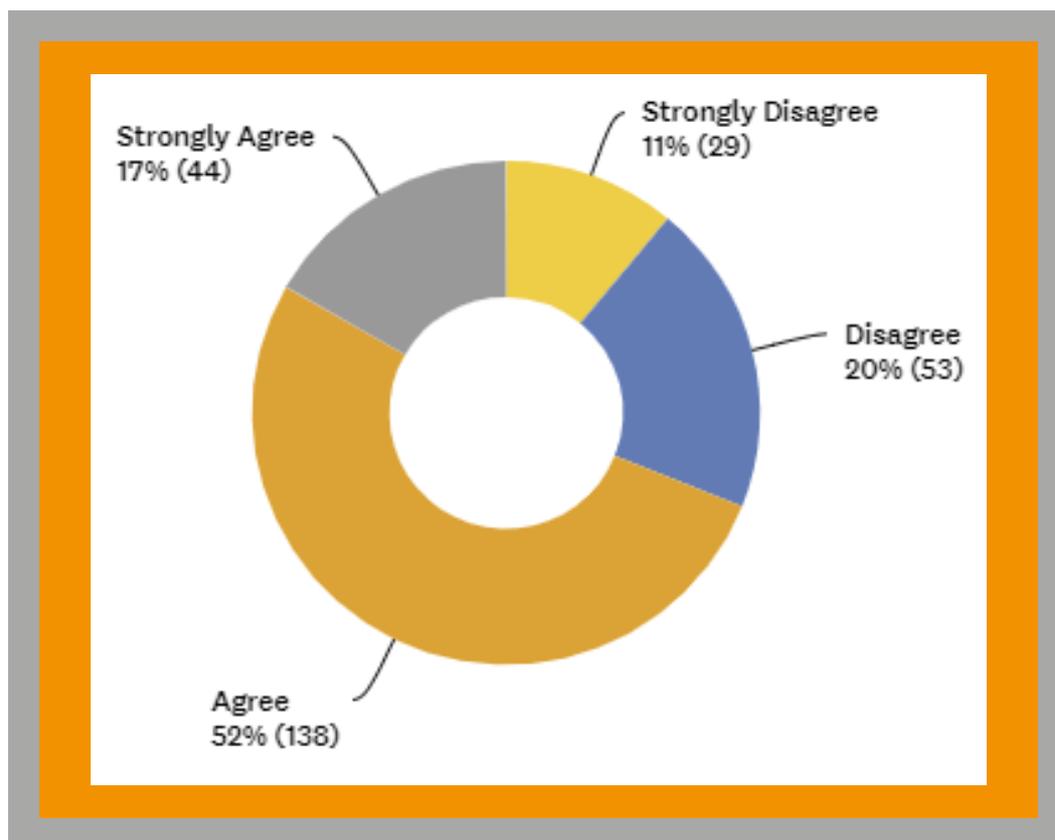


Many independent consultants are specialising to add value as Subject Matter Experts.

85% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "I have focused my career to become a subject matter expert in one or more areas, in order to add specific value to my clients".

**Question 9: Select how strongly you agree or disagree with the statement...
I always feel an equal and valued member of the team, even when the team is mainly permanent employees**

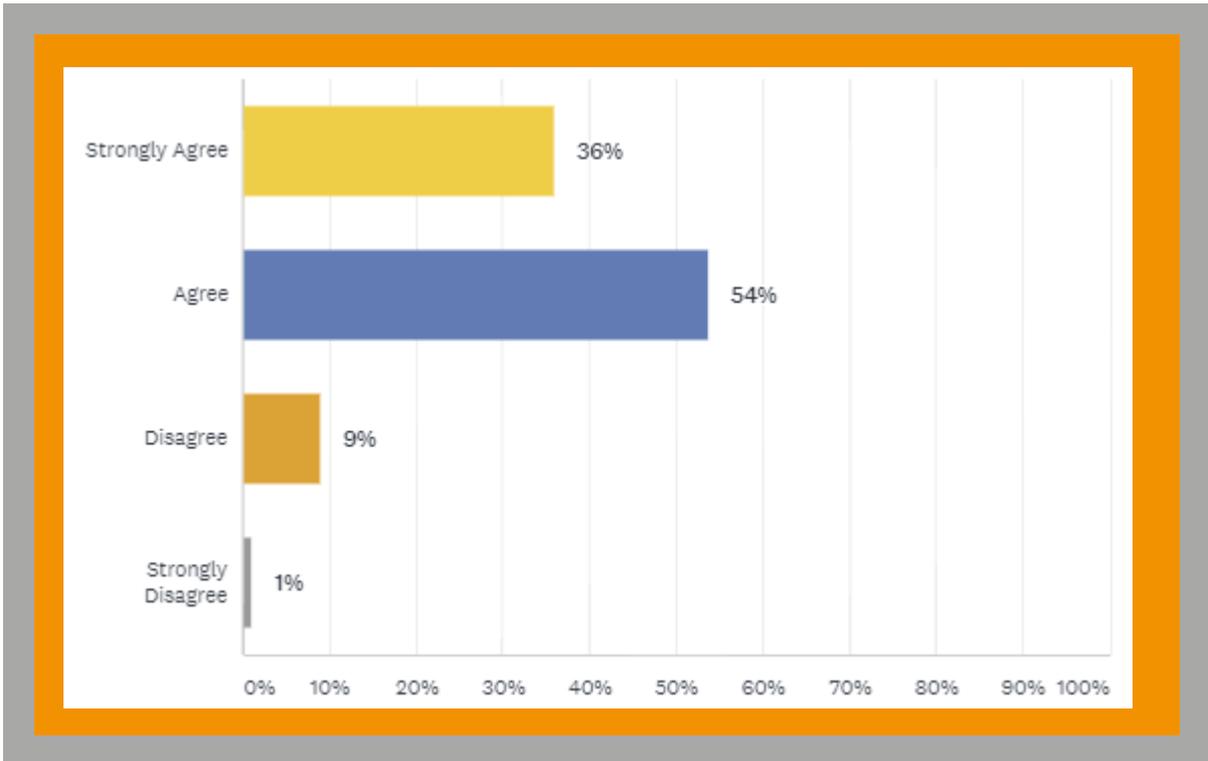
"Respected for your knowledge and experience and not drawn into company politics. Permanent staff don't see you as a threat."



69% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with the statement "I always feel an equal and valued member of the team, even when the team is mainly permanent employees".

**Question 10: Select how strongly you agree or disagree with the statement...
I actively invest in self learning and ensuring my knowledge is up to date
so as to remain relevant to my client**

"Having control over my own development has significantly improved my ability to deliver high quality result"

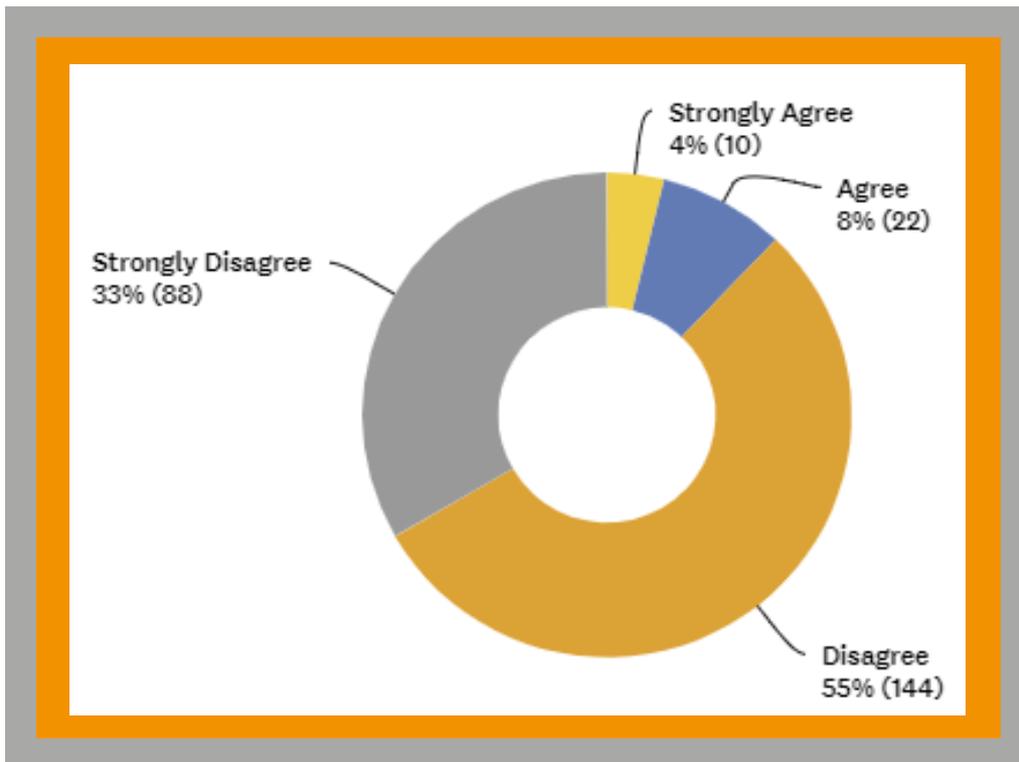


Clients are able to benefit from independent consultants desire to improve their knowledge.

90% agreed or agreed strongly that "I actively invest in self learning and ensuring my knowledge is up to date so as to remain relevant to my clients."

**Question 11: Select how strongly you agree or disagree with the statement..
I feel I would be more effective achieving my clients objectives if I were a permanent employee**

"... can bring impartial and non-political value to the argument or potential options to the solution to the problem. Having a blend of permanent and independent or third-party consultants can bring the right balance to the project/programme or functional team."

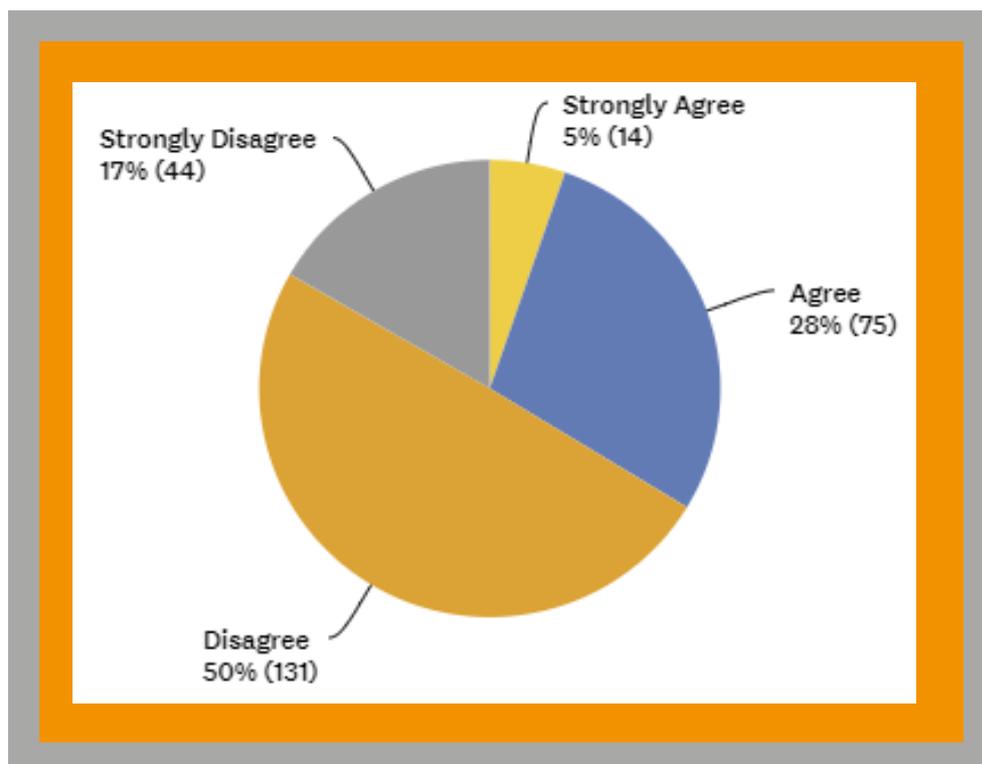


There is a strong feeling amongst respondents that they are more able to focus on the company needs since they are independent.

88% disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement "I feel I would be more effective achieving my client's objectives if I were a permanent employee".

Question 12: Select how strongly you agree or disagree with the statement...
I feel I get the same opportunities as a permanent employee to progress my career

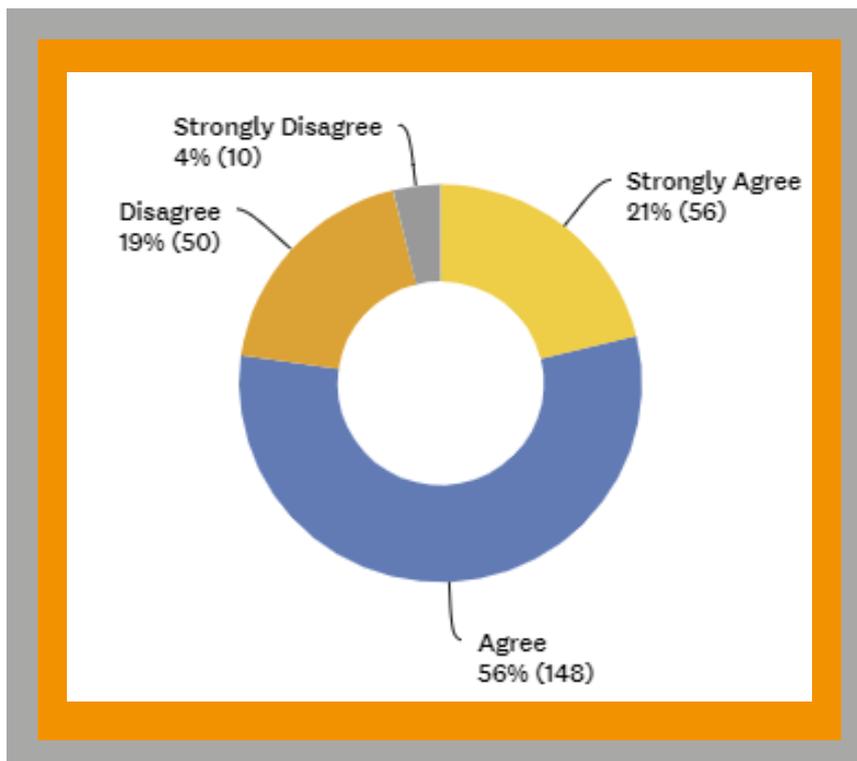
"As an independent I accept that I am solely responsible for any career progression"



67% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the following statement:
"I get the same opportunities as a permanent employee to progress my career".

Question 13: Select how strongly you agree or disagree with the statement...
I sometimes feel I am treated as a commodity, my clients are not interested in my career goals or interests

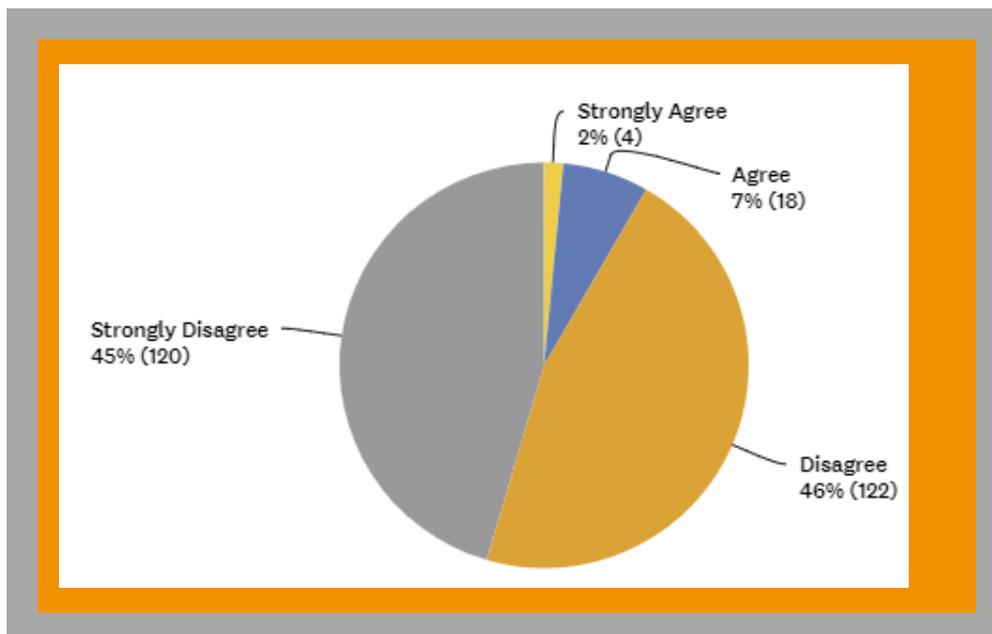
"It is a choice a consultant makes to work as one, so there is no room for feeling like a commodity. All the consultant needs to worry about is the task at hand and how best to deliver that. "



77% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the following statement: "I sometimes feel I am treated as a commodity, my clients are not interested in my career goals or interests".

**Question 14: Select how strongly you agree or disagree with the statement...
My primary concern is staying in my role, even if its to the detriment of
my client's objectives**

*"I am pleased if I work myself out of a role
and having handed it over to the client in a
much better state than when I started the
assignment"*

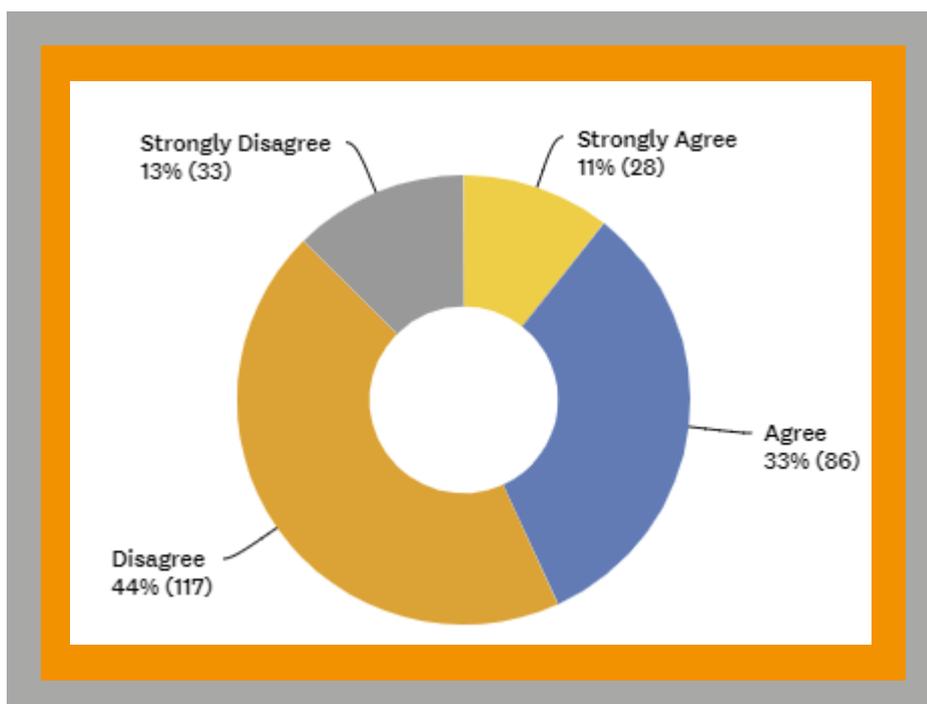


Many of those surveyed reported that they do not stay in a role once they feel it is no longer to the benefit of the client.

92% disagreed or disagreed strongly with the statement that "My primary concern is staying in my role, even if it's to the detriment of my client's objectives."

Question 15: Select how strongly you agree or disagree with the statement...
I wish I could work on a greater diversity of projects, I am often pigeon-holed and I can lose interest

"Being an independent consultant is a lifestyle choice, for those with drive, ambition and an appetite for variety"



The final question of the survey provided the closest result. Whilst 43% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "I wish I could work on a greater diversity of projects, I am often pigeon-holed and I can lose interest"; 57% disagreed or strongly disagreed with it.

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