

Adecco

The voice of the temporary worker



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temporary worker



We're a nation defined by our diversity as much as our inclement weather and commitment to orderly queuing. The preferences of our workforce are no different. Colourful in our career choices; myriad in ambition; entirely open to new ways of working. So it's hardly surprising that the popularity of temporary working in the UK & Ireland is growing and leaving a trail of satisfied workers in its wake.

To find out more about the main motivators for today's temps and to debunk some of the myths surrounding this way of working – we recently put our research heads on and took an in-depth look at the UK & Ireland temporary workforce, in all its diverse glory. The results show that while, for some, a lack of professional security will always be a last resort, others are grasping flexible freedom with both hands – and giving temporary working their all.



Temp temptation: the draw of flexible working

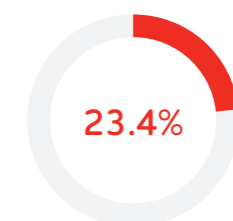
While a significant number (44%) of today's temporary workers admit to being unable to secure a permanent position, more than half chose the temporary route – not because they have to, but because they want to. Yep, that's right. It wasn't forced on them; they're in it by choice. And the figure rises further still for female temps (63%, in fact). But why?

Temporary work offers people a pretty flexible work model at important junctures in their lives: during university; following graduation; when taking their first steps on the career ladder; in between permanent roles; following redundancy; after retirement – you name it.

Unsurprisingly, the flexibility that this style of working affords was cited as the single biggest motivator by 23.4% of our survey respondents, while for 16-24 year olds, the chance to gain new skills and a variety of experiences came out on top. The exposure to and absorption of different skills is, according to the results of our research, the best thing about being a temp; closely followed by flexibility (26%) – while more than 10% of 35-44 year olds believe the best reason to temp is for better rates of pay (a sentiment echoed by just 2% of the over 55s).

With the rise of the portfolio career (as people move from job to job, industry to industry), the temptation to pad out your skill set with a new career experience every few months is growing steadily stronger. In today's more forward-thinking world of work, we're encouraged to keep our options open; move on if we're not happy; strive for the best work/life balance; push for more – Barclays even removed the upper age limit from their apprenticeships scheme last year to target older, more experienced workers. So it's little wonder that the over 55s are so open to temping: the world is still their oyster.

But if temporary working arrangements are to gain real traction in this country, changes must be made.



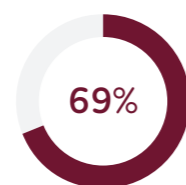
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Flexible working: the great compromise

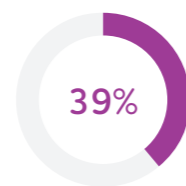
What would the universe be without a little give and take? The lack of any solid commitment to hours, roles or employers might afford you the freedom to take off on your travels at the end of an assignment, but it's not all plain sailing. With flexibility comes a distinct lack of certainty: the single biggest issue for our temporary workers (cited by 69% of respondents). There's also the question of benefits. With pension pots and sick pay often the reserve of permanent employees alone, temps are too often left in the dark when it comes to add-ons. That said, if salary and benefits were a level playing field regardless of contract type, would employers ever tie down top talent again?

But employers can't underestimate the value of their temporary staff – or of keeping their temps engaged. And yet it seems they're in danger of doing just that: 39% of temporary workers are disappointed with the lack of opportunity offered by their current employer to progress their career. If temporary contracts are indeed gaining in popularity, modern day businesses must find workable ways to attract, engage and retain professional temps. With only 11% of our respondents finding nothing to complain about with regards to temporary work.

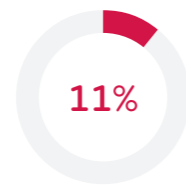
Despite its many benefits – from heightened exposure to an expanse of employers, industries and skills, to a healthier work/life balance afforded by greater flexibility – it seems that temporary contracts remain the poor relation in the ever changeable world of work. Because ultimately, most temps (77%) would accept a permanent role if the opportunity arose; this



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figure does however drop to 59.2% for the over 55s. Is this because older workers have a tighter grip on what they want from life – and are therefore less willing to compromise – or do they simply have less need for security than their younger mortgage-seeking, travel-bugging, wedding-splurging counterparts?

But we could be witnessing a shift. More than 60% of the temps in our survey have been at it for over a year, which you may say is a reflection of current market conditions (the future is anything but certain right now), but with more than 20% having temped for over three years, this increasingly appealing way of working is perhaps becoming a more conscious choice. As it stands, only 8% of respondents reportedly plan on temping indefinitely – a figure that rises to 11% for women and to 18% for the over 55s.

So what's deterring the rest?

Perhaps it's partly due to the fact that only 13% of temps feel they enjoy the same benefits as their permanent counterparts, a full three quarters believe they get less. A third also reported feeling under pressure to swerve their well-earned holiday entitlement, simply because they don't hold a permanent contract. If employers want the same level of motivation, productivity and engagement from their temporary workforce, far more needs to be done to make them feel valued, appreciated and part of the fold. Training opportunities can't be limited to permanent employees alone; nor can the chance to advance their careers, or enjoy workplace benefits.

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The future of temping

Brexit: whichever way you voted, the employment landscape underwent a seismic shift when the die was cast on 23 June; the full effects of which remain to be seen. But what about the impact on the UK's temporary workers?

Only 20% of survey respondents worry that Brexit will negatively impact their working conditions; while 31% anticipate either no change or a change for the better. If we do see a restriction on the free movement of labour – a likely outcome of the decision to leave the EU – then UK employers may find themselves relying far more heavily on home-grown talent. And in an atmosphere of uncertainty, temporary contracts are likely to grow in popularity.

Temporary working is undeniably gaining traction as a lifestyle and career choice, but our workers need more support. More encouragement. More inclusiveness. The employers who can harness the great potential of professional temps will find themselves in greater command of the skills deficit; better positioned to ride the waves of a changeable tide. The ones who allow our temps to flounder are likely to miss out, catastrophically, on an untapped goldmine of talent. And in today's difficult market, no talent is disposable.

VOTTW 2016 Winners

1st Ricoh
2nd Bentley | 2nd Zurich

Congratulations to our 2016 Voice of the Temporary Worker top employers (winners based on employee survey, conducted 2016).

Only 20% of our survey respondents worry that Brexit will negatively impact their working conditions

If you'd like to discuss the findings of our survey in more detail, or for more in-depth advice on attracting and engaging the very best temporary workers on the market, please do get in touch.

Adecco



Uniquely Individual

