



Top Five New Year's Predictions For The Gig Economy

Insights

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Jeff Wald just published [an interesting piece in Forbes](#) looking at the top five predictions for the freelance economy in 2017. Given that he touts himself as having “near-precise prognostication,” how could we possibly ignore this article? Let’s take a look at his five predictions, and I’ll offer my own sage wisdom regarding each of them.

1. **Trump Will Be A Boon To The Gig Economy.** Wald notes that Trump’s “pro-business, anti-regulation, populist” philosophy will aid the freelance economy by reducing regulation, dismantling the federal government’s Misclassification Initiative, and reshaping the National Labor Relations Board, among other things.

MY PREDICTION: Overwhelmingly agree. Setting aside any personal feelings you might have for the man, there is little doubt that President-elect Trump will be helpful for businesses in the sharing economy. We noticed this [as early as this past summer](#) when we pointed out that the 2016 Republican Platform became the first major political party to mention the gig economy in its national platform. “Indeed,” it said, “the world of the app economy cries out for the comprehensive regulatory reform proposed elsewhere in this platform.” We briefly touched on similar positives in [our presidential election preview post](#), and went all in soon after Trump’s election with our [Trump administration preview post](#). We also posted two prediction pieces after Trump named his choices for the [Transportation Secretary](#) and [Secretary of Labor](#), hailing them both as positive choices for sharing economy companies. All signs point to a positive 2017 for the gig economy.

2. **Uber Loses Lawsuits But Remains Steady.** Wald next predicts that ride-sharing giant Uber will sustain more lawsuit losses but will retain its current business model. He notes that the lawsuit losses will cause people to “incorrectly freak out” over the decisions, but urges calm by noting they will not be an “indictment against the entire on-demand economy.”

MY PREDICTION: Sort of agree, sort of disagree. I agree that Uber will remain steady and continue with its highly successful business model. In sometimes challenging times, other businesses in the sharing economy look to Uber as a lighthouse in a storm, setting the agenda for how to operate and providing the modern business model. I predict that its continued push for independent contractor status among its workers will eventually carry the day and lead to regulatory reform as the government plays catch up and figures out how to best work with

modern businesses. Uber and others might sustain losses along the way, but it will be classic “lose some battles but win the war” model.

3. **The Death Of “50% By 2020.”** The next prediction by Wald is that analysts will cease to claim that freelancers and independent contractors will occupy 50% of the American workforce by the year 2020. He believes that growth will continue but not at such a pace; he instead believes that 35% is more likely.

MY PREDICTION: I agree that 50% was a lofty target, but I also think 35% is falling a bit short. 40% sounds more accurate. We’ll know more this May when the federal government releases an updated Contingent Worker and Alternative Work Arrangement Supplement to the Current Workforce Population Survey that will include gig workers. At that point, the 2020 target will appear more clear.

4. **Harmony Comes To Naming.** Wald notes that the economy we are talking about carries various monikers, none of which have yet been universally accepted. Whether it’s the on-demand economy, the gig economy, the freelance economy, the sharing economy, or some other name, he predicts there will be more clarity in 2017 regarding one of the names. He predicts: the Liquid Workforce, Non-Employee Labor, and On-Demand Labor.

MY PREDICTION: Nope. This is a fractured world we’re living in, and people will continue to use various monikers interchangeably and without a distinct favorite emerging. I predict that we’ll find ourselves in a similar position when it comes to what we’re calling this modern economy come January 1, 2018.

5. **Corporate Freelance Tidal Wave.** Finally, Wald predicts that mainstream corporate entities will begin moving in droves to reap the benefits of the on-demand economy. He believes that the pieces are in place for the transformation to begin. As he puts it, “these companies will go from dipping their toes in the water to diving in head first!”

MY PREDICTION: He’s spot on. We’ve been predicting this trend for some time now (see [here](#) and [here](#)). Call it the eventual “Uber-ization” of corporate America. I agree that we’ll see some massive movement in 2017.

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