



Recent Survey Provides Insight into the “Rise” of Female Gig Workers

Insights

4.20.17

As we’ve previously reported, the gig economy is an attractive work model for many women who are looking for flexible work arrangements. Despite some drawbacks to gig work (including a lack of job security, benefits and paid leave), recent data indicates that women are flocking to gig jobs in droves. Earlier this month, Hyperwallet released the results of its survey of 2,000 female gig workers in the United States. The survey results provide an interesting perspective as to the average female gig worker, including her motivations for leaving the traditional workforce and the long-term potential for gig work.

According to the survey, women are involved in almost every area of the gig economy, including areas traditionally dominated by men. The majority of female gig workers operate in professional freelance industries such as Upwork and 99designs (43% of those surveyed), while others work in direct sales through companies like Mary Kay and Rodan + Fields (32%), service platforms like TaskRabbit and Care.com (30%), driving for ride-sharing services (22%), home-sharing services like Airbnb and HomeAway (8%) and food delivery platforms like Grubhub (7%). Female gig workers are primarily motivated to take on gig work for the flexible hours and the ability to control their earning potential. Indeed, 86% of those surveyed believed gig work offered them the opportunity to make the same amount as their male counterparts. When asked if traditional work offered the opportunity for equal pay, only 41% responded affirmatively.

The majority of female gig workers are well-educated, with 88% of those surveyed having completed at least some college courses, and most serve as the primary caregiver at their homes. They also rely on other sources of income to supplement their gig work. Only 8% of those surveyed reported before-tax earnings in excess of \$30,000 from their gig work; more than 62% reported before-tax earnings of \$9,999 or less. Thus, the gig economy may give many female workers an opportunity to balance the competing demands of career and family, but it may not provide the financial security that some women need.

While women certainly benefit from the gig economy, the survey leaves some doubt as to whether it is a lasting career choice for women. Only 61% of those surveyed indicated that they would want to work full-time as a gig worker. And almost all of the female workers would recommend gig work to a friend, but only 43% want their children to work in the gig environment. It remains to be seen whether women will continue to embrace gig work as a secondary or even primary source of

income, but the prospect of flexibility and a work-life balance means that gig work is likely here to stay.