



# Women Love the Flexibility of Their Side Hustle—But Still Face Unequal Pay

Insights

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Earlier this year, the founders of Ruby Ribbon, UrbanSitter, and BabyQuip created a multi-company survey of women who gig to learn more about their experiences and expectations. The study included survey results from over 1000 women who perform gig work on at least one of their platforms. These women have plenty of experience in this arena, with a quarter reporting they started handling gig work before the term “gig economy” was even coined.

According to the study, the top three reasons women chose a side hustle include flexibility (44 percent), to earn a good income (38 percent) and to build a business (24 percent). Ultimately, 94 percent of these women rated flexibility as a very or extremely important aspect of their main side gig, with stay-at-home moms being the most likely to indicate that flexibility was extremely important to them.

Women of all ages engage in gig work. The study quotes a woman in her 20’s saying “It’s just nice being my own boss and making my own schedule and doing things I enjoy.” A college-educated woman in her 60’s was quoted as saying “This is a great way to feel useful after retirement.”

These women do not want a traditional employer-employee relationship. The vast majority prefer to have an independent relationship, with only 12 percent of the survey respondents saying they would want to be an employee of the company for which they gig. They like calling their work a “side hustle” and nearly half find their gig work to be extremely fulfilling. As a result, nearly a third of respondents said they plan to continue in a side gig “forever”.

While the gig economy clearly carries strong appeal, women still face challenges when it comes to equal pay. While three-fourths of the survey respondents said they are satisfied with the money they earn, studies show that the gender pay gap also exists in the gig economy.

A study released by economists from Stanford University and the University of Chicago found a 7 percent hourly earnings gap. The Bureau of Labor Statistics released a study which found that women make less than men in both temporary and independent contractor positions. A study that looked at the profiles of men and women on Upwork and Fiverr also found that men charged (and therefore made) more than women for similar work.

For now, women who engage in side hustles enjoy being their own boss and the flexibility their gigs provide. As one survey respondent summarized “My experience as a woman who has a side job is very empowering. I do not have to rely on anyone else to help me with my bills, I am fully self-supporting and independent, which is an amazing feeling.”