



FlexingIt[®]

Business consultants & Experts.
Curated, on-demand.

Professional Gig Economy

2019-20 Report Card

Key Themes

How the Professional Gig Economy fared in 2019-20

- The **professional gig economy in India continues to be powered by demand for skilled consultants**, growing at a CAGR of 30%+ over the last few years; In fact, Flexing It saw a 4X growth in the value of projects facilitated through its platform in 2019-20 compared to the prior year
- **Large corporates and enterprises are driving demand** with 75% growth over the prior year as they **deepen how they engage with top-tier independent & flexible talent**
- **Consulting, FMCG and Pharmaceuticals/Healthcare** emerged as the top 3 industries using skilled freelancers, accounting for more than half the assignments in 2019-20
- **Strategy** followed by **Marketing & Technology** are the top 3 skills in demand (50% of the projects) with use cases focused on driving growth and digitisation
- **More than a third of the projects had a remote component - even pre-COVID** - signalling a growing comfort by companies to leverage flexible work practices

How leading sectors & organisations are leveraging independent talent – a growing strategic focus & distinct trends

- For **Consulting firms, Independent talent offers access to deep expertise, on demand**; 45% of the assignments utilized domain experts with 10-15+ years of experience
- **Large pharma & healthcare firms** have embraced flexible talent with the top 2 skills in demand being **strategy and manufacturing/operations**
- **FMCG companies are seamlessly integrating** freelancers into how they operate – leveraging ‘doers’ in core business areas such as marketing and supply chain to drive implementation; 86% of these ‘doers’ have <10 years of experience
- The **Development/non profit sector was an early adopter** of using freelance experts on mission critical work, and it continues to offer **maximum flexibility with sharply defined project work** (2/3rds projects are for less than 3 months)



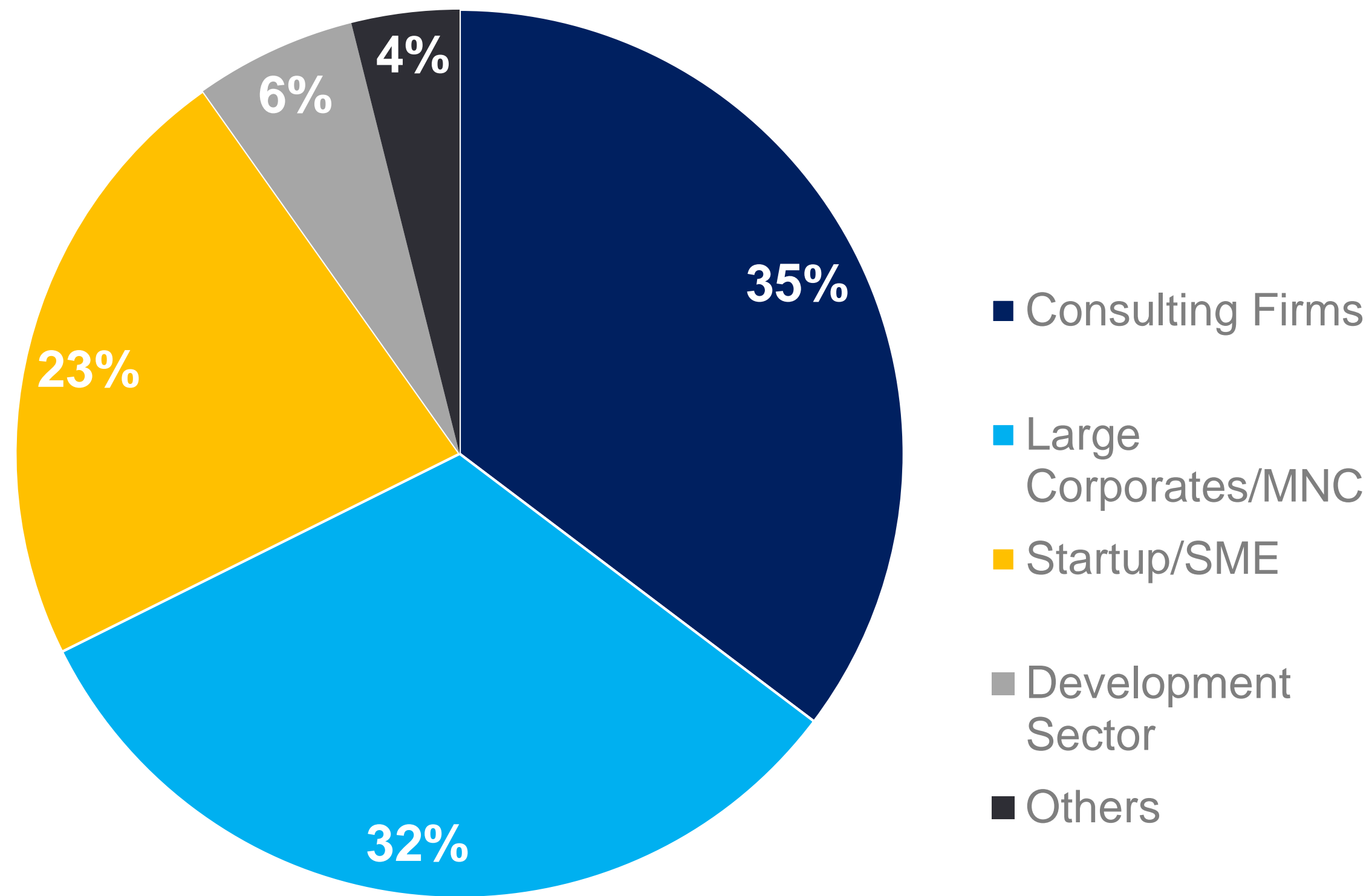
Key Themes

Why we believe COVID-19 will meaningfully accelerate growth in the gig economy

- As seen in past periods of crisis, we expect that the economic uncertainty caused by the pandemic will **accelerate the trend of companies looking to leverage freelancers and consultants** as they opt to keep costs variable while accessing **top expertise** to pivot to market conditions. Upwork's stock is up 125% and closer to home at Flexing It, we have seen strong growth **in demand** just between Q1 & Q2 of 2020
- Comfort with and a strong acceptance of the benefits of remote work - 90% of onsite **projects on Flexing It successfully transitioned to remote** during the pandemic! In addition purely remote assignments on the platform doubled
- The **overwhelming success of WFH** for many organizations has **led to longer term planning** around distributed teams and a mix of full-time, flexible and freelance talent - 40+ new inquiries from large companies in the last month looking to pilot new ways of working
- We are going to see **demand for a new set of skills with a strong shift to digital skills across the value chain** – examples include expertise in defining online customer experiences, cyber security specialists, experts to develop digital commerce strategies, and analytics and data science professionals
- **A 2x increase in consultants registering on Flexing It signals a mindset shift amongst professionals** now looking at freelancing as a smarter long term option or as an alternative career strategy in an uncertain job market
- **Women's jobs are 1.8 times more vulnerable** to the Covid-19 crisis (McKinsey Global Institute). Although freelancing is a strategy that could offer financial stability & flexibility for women, it remains greatly under leveraged; Post COVID, Flexing It saw an **8 percentage point increase in registrations of women freelancers** on the platform

While demand for freelancers grew for all segments, large corporates have shown the most significant growth signalling rapid adoption of flexible talent

Types of Organisations driving demand for Independent Consultants

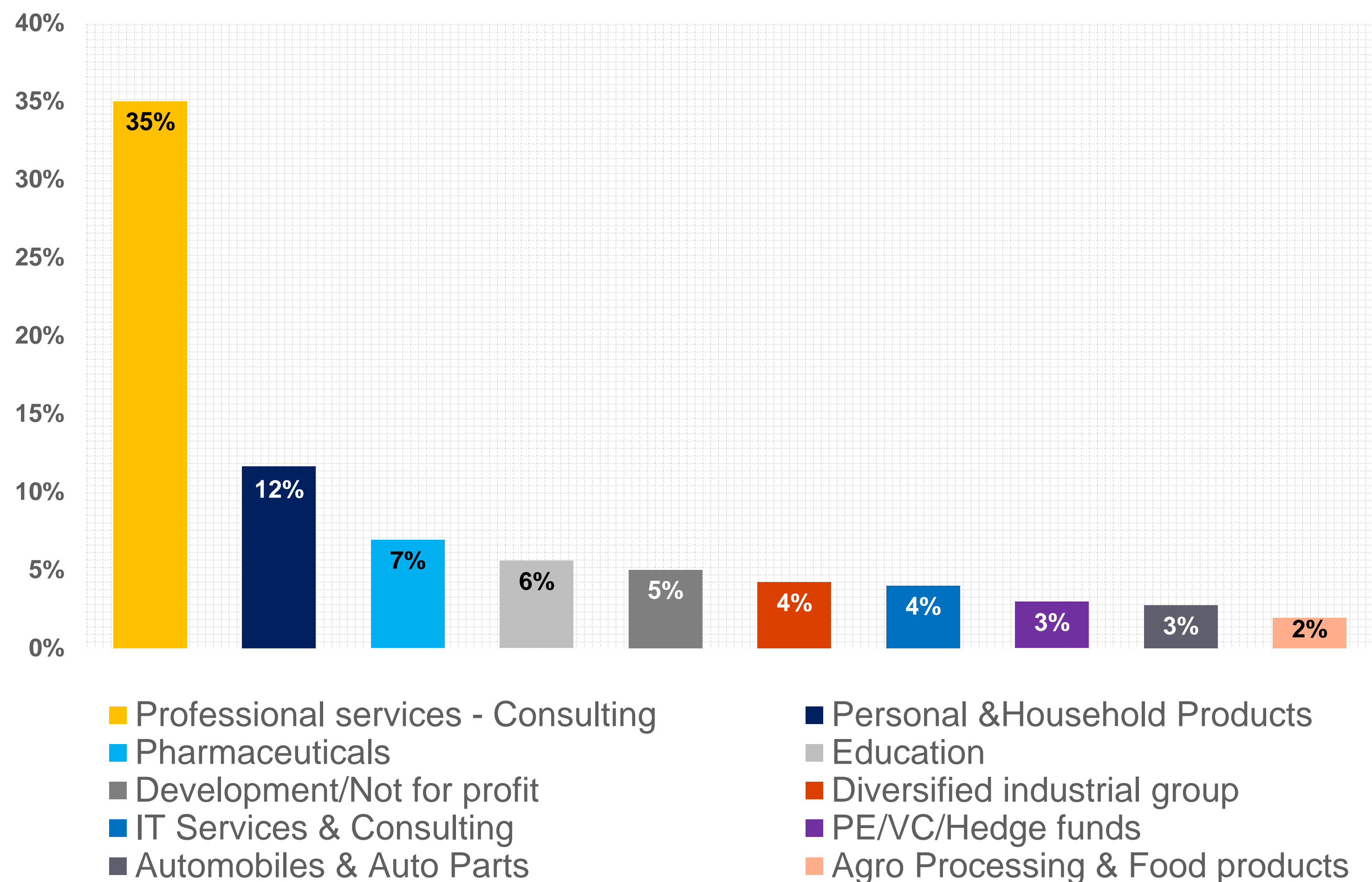


KEY TAKEAWAYS

- All client segments have shown strong **growth in demand for skilled consultants – 30%+ (CAGR)** in project over the last few years
- Flexing It saw a **4x increase in value of projects facilitated through the platform** in the last year
- **Consulting and large corporates are the main drivers of demand** accounting for 69% of total assignments
- **Large corporates** have shown the strongest growth, with a **growth rate of 75%** signalling rapid adoption of flexible talent
- Start-ups continue to rely on flexible talent as a strategic HR strategy - high-quality experienced consultants on a short –term basis is an attractive value proposition

Consulting, FMCG and Pharmaceuticals emerge as the top 3 industries using freelancers – 50%+ of all assignments in 2019-20

Top 10 Industries driving demand for Independent Consultants

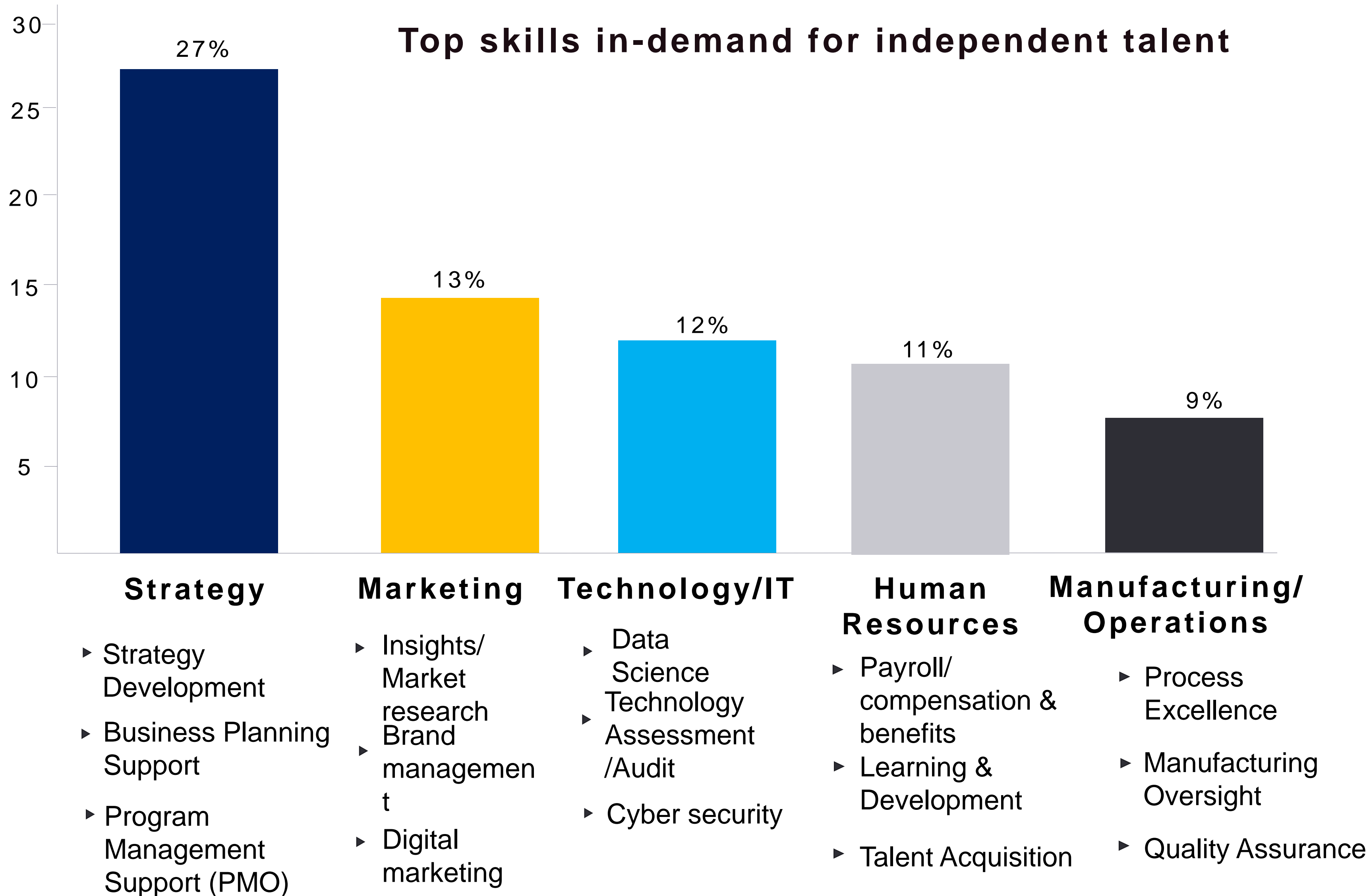


KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **Professional Services/Consulting** shows the highest demand for high quality independent talent
- **FMCG and Pharmaceutical Industries** have shown strong growth in 2019-20 over 2018-19 (300% and 200% respectively) and have led the adoption of flexible talent amongst large corporates
- **Education Sector and Development sector organizations** together account for 10% of the assignments posted on the platform

Companies are leveraging independent talent to drive growth - Strategy, Marketing & Technology, accounting for over 50% of assignments

Top skills in-demand for independent talent



KEY TAKEAWAYS

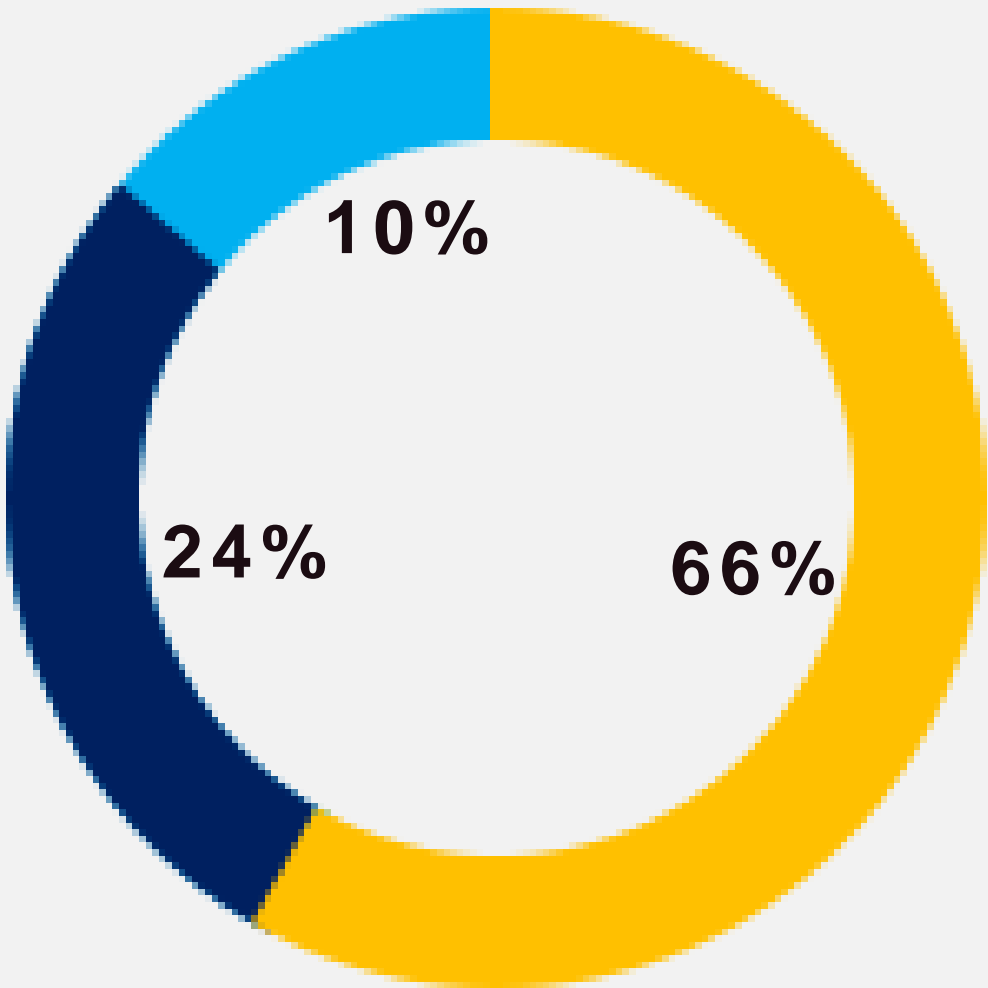
Companies primarily made use of Independent Consultants to drive growth - with **strategy, marketing, and digital (tech)** accounting for **50% of demand**

Recent Flexing It research has found that 90% of freelance consultants felt that the work they did was of strategic priority for the client organisation

Key trends pre-COVID include a growing acceptance for remote work, and higher demand for consultants on full-time capacity, with sharply defined projects

More than 1/3rd of projects have a remote component signaling the growing comfort in companies with remote work processes & systems pre-COVID

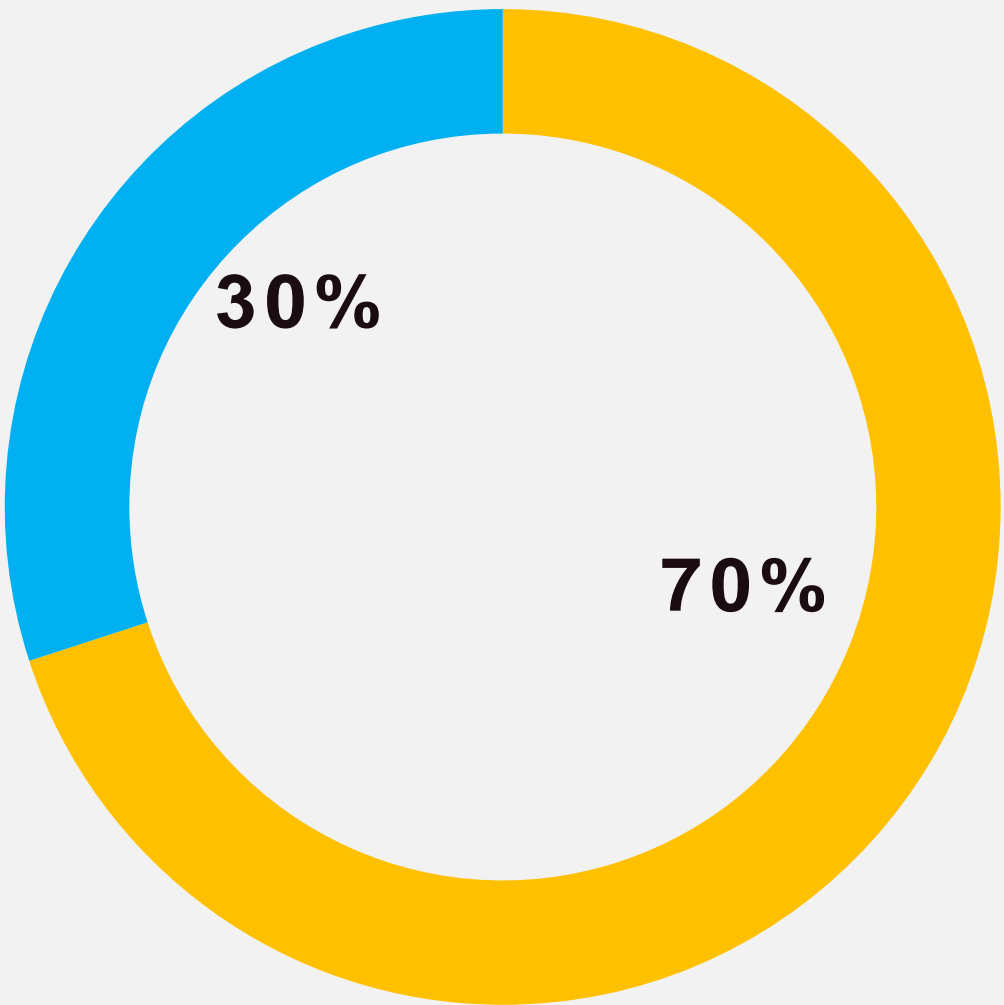
Onsite Both Remote



Demand by Project Location

70% of projects were full-time suggesting consultants are driving high intensity, critical projects

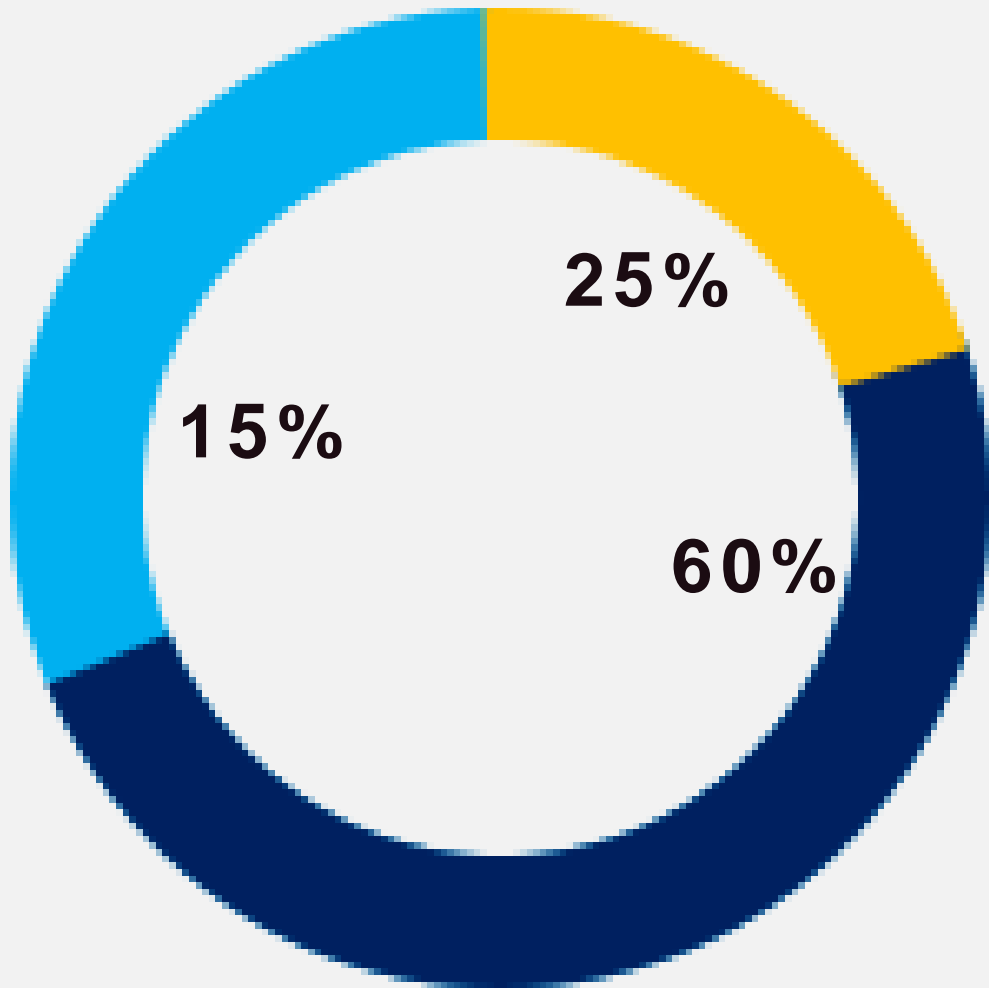
Full Time Part Time



Demand by Consultant Capacity

85% of the projects are up-to 6 months in duration indicating a preference for defined pieces of work delivered in a timely manner

1-2 Months 3-6 Months More than 6 Months



Demand by Project Duration

Consulting firms are increasingly leveraging independent talent to add deep domain expertise and drive results

How Consulting firms are leveraging flexible talent

Industry/sectoral expertise e.g. EPC, consumer goods, telecom, pharma, etc. to complement consulting teams

Deep subject matter experts to give inputs on specific topics for client development, active projects, proposals and RFPs

Functional expertise e.g. supply chain, six sigma, etc. as flexible capacity for clients who have urgent business priorities

Researchers from knowledge centres of consulting firms and top market research players for knowledge pieces and targeted research

Top Tier, Strategy and Big 4 ex-consultants working independently to provide flexible capacity during surge period

EMERGING TRENDS FROM FY19-20 USAGE DATA



Top 2 skills in-demand by the Consulting Sector : Strategy & Manufacturing/Operations



High Demand for Deep Experience : 25% of the projects required consultants with 15+ years of industry specific experience and 20% required those with between 10-15 years of experience

“This is the key to being competitive in the future... Clients are also becoming more accepting of the ‘gig’ model - for some clients 65-70% of the staffing could be gig and floating resources”

Partner, People Advisory practice at an international professional services firm

Pharmaceutical & Healthcare firms have embraced flexible talent as a core strategy to meet the increased demand for niche skills

How the Pharmaceutical and Healthcare Sector is leveraging flexible talent

Adoption of digital technology including tele-health tools, advanced analytics, and IoT

Enhance marketing capabilities & portfolio management

Part-time support in support functions during surge periods e.g. senior talent acquisition experts

Manufacturing quality and operational excellence

Project management & strategy development expertise to support key strategic initiatives

EMERGING TRENDS FROM FY19-20 USAGE DATA



Top 2 skills in-demand by the Healthcare Industry: Strategy & Manufacturing/Operations



Blend of Mid-Senior Consultants:
50% of the projects require 'doers' with <10 years of experience while remaining projects demand senior consultants with 10+ years of experience for strategic advisory

FMCG companies are utilizing consultants across high priority areas such as marketing and supply chain

How the Consumer Goods Sector is leveraging flexible talent

Marketing/brand consultants to support surge periods or new initiatives and launches

Expertise in e-commerce and digital marketing strategy

Strategic sourcing, demand planning and category Management

Providing flex talent to cover for employees on sabbaticals or maternity leave

Advanced analytics support across functions

EMERGING TRENDS FROM FY19-20 USAGE DATA

 **Top 2 skills in-demand by the FMCG players :**
Marketing & Supply Management/ Logistics

 **Higher demand for mid level consultants:** 86% of the projects require consultants with <10 years of experience signalling more execution focussed demand across core functions

“The FMCG Sector is one of the top users of flexible talent and the demand for this talent is driven by the need for specific skill sets and the need to drive specific projects and surge priorities“

Senior HR Influencer

Development Sector firms were early adopters of flexible talent and show greatest ease to carve out defined pieces of critical work

How the Development Sector is leveraging flexible talent

Landscaping & strategy development including sector research e.g., education, family planning, etc.

Advocacy strategy & public policy including stakeholder analysis, drafting policy and advocacy material

Supporting fundraising & resource mobilization

Marketing & communications support including content strategy, digital marketing, internal communications, etc.

Program management, monitoring & evaluation support for key programs

EMERGING TRENDS FROM FY19-20 USAGE DATA



Top 2 skills in-demand by the Development Sector: Strategy & Business Development, Human Resources



High Focus and Greater Flexibility : Half of the projects offer the option to work remotely; Almost 2/3rds of the projects were for 3 months or less in duration

“We think about consultants and how we work with them very actively. We onboard senior resources on defined term contracts and they are offered the same terms as employees - all benefits are extended to them as well”

HR Lead at an International Foundation

The Education sector is increasingly leveraging independent talent

How the Education Sector is leveraging flexible talent

Strategy and business development to support growth and expansion plans, new business entry

Process optimization and transition management e.g. SOP planning, customer experience mapping, etc.

Academic writing and research support

Content creation and copywriting support to develop Scripts, online content

Technology skills to enable e-learning and adoption of educational technology tools

EMERGING TRENDS FROM FY19-20 USAGE DATA



Skills most in-demand by the Education Sector: Strategy & Business Development and Marketing

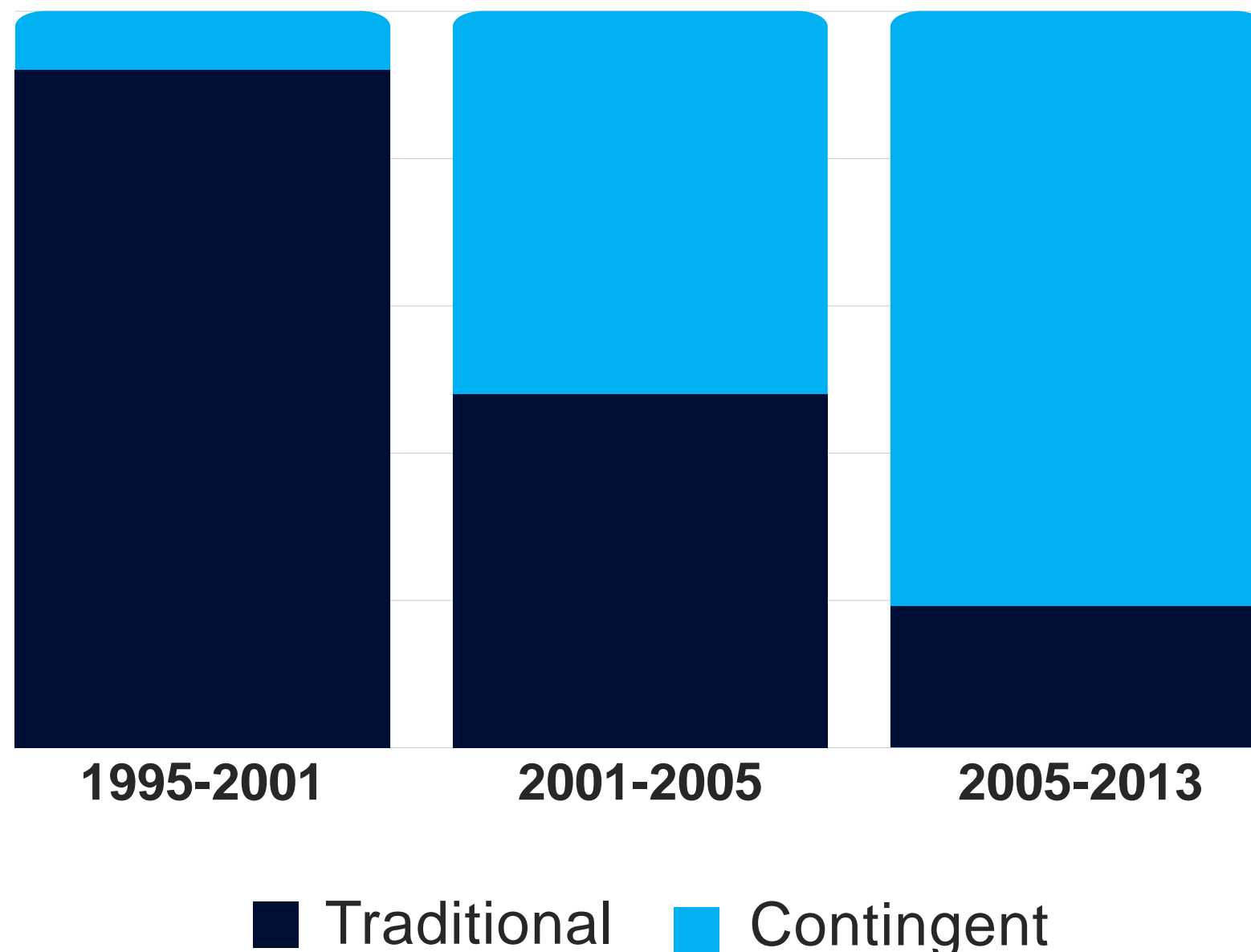


Higher Demand for Junior to Mid-Level Consultants with Newer skills : 65% of the projects require consultants with between <10 years of experience signaling that the nature of projects requires consultants who possess new age skills

The economic uncertainty caused by the pandemic will accelerate the demand for freelance talent as organizations look to keep costs variable & access top expertise

Post the economic crises of 2001 and 2008, the gig economy surged; share of workers in alternative work arrangements increased by nearly 50%, gig platforms emerged globally, and flexible talent was increasingly adopted by large corporations

New Jobs: Traditional vs Contingent (USA)



➤ COVID 19 is expected to have a far more severe impact on jobs and the economy with the IMF predicting a 4.9% decline in the global economy

➤ McKinsey & Co is projecting India's GDP growth to be between -8% and -10%

There is already an increase in demand and clear signs of the market turning bullish on companies serving the gig economy

➤ Upwork- the world's largest freelance platform saw its stock grow by 125% over the past 3 months

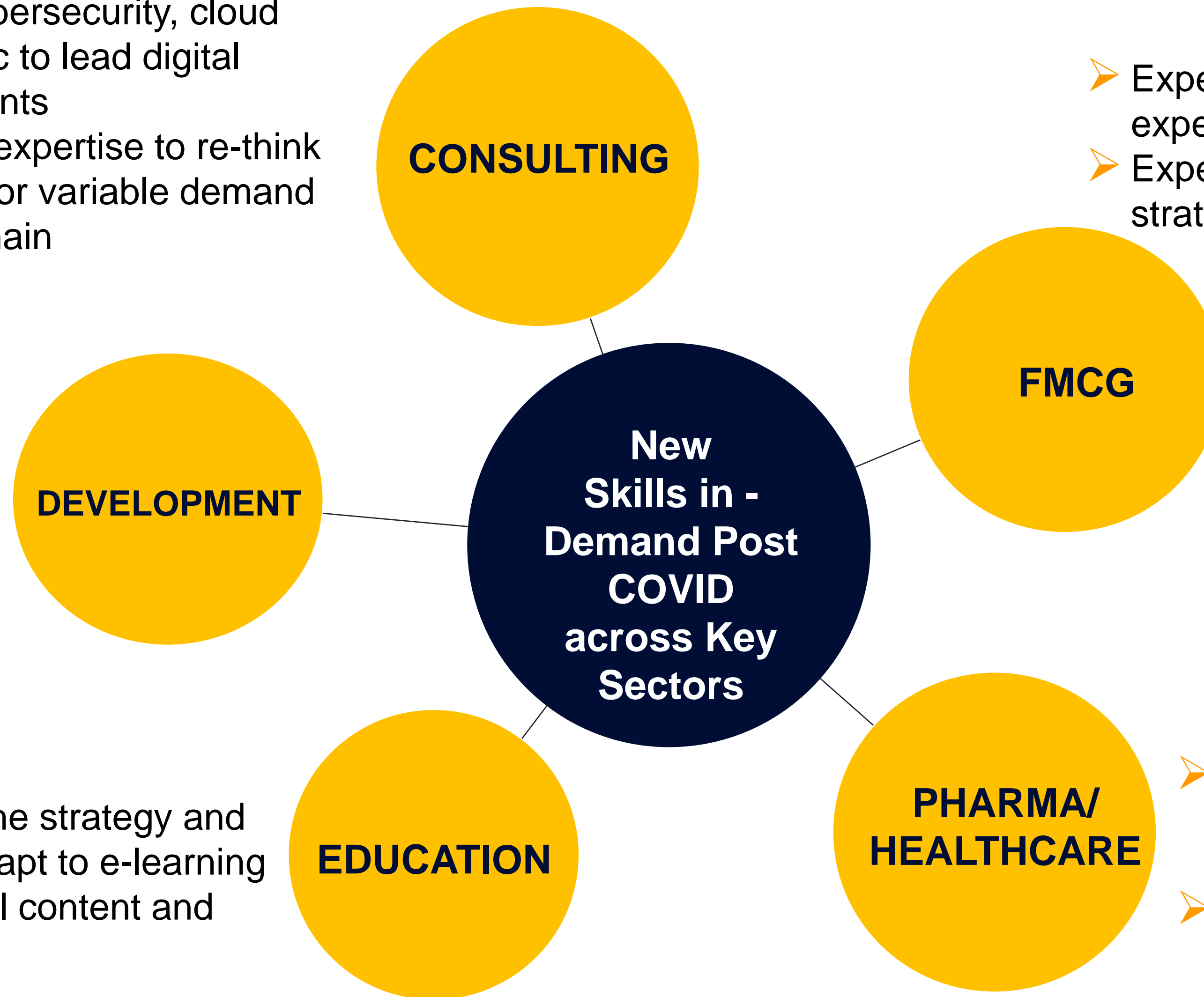
➤ Shares of Fiverr, a freelance service marketplace, more than tripled in the first six months of 2020, and continue to show strong growth in the second half of the year- with a 15% growth in July 2020

We are seeing demand for a new set of skills with a strong shift to digital skills across the value chain

- Digital skills in the areas of cybersecurity, cloud technologies, data science, etc to lead digital transformation projects for clients
- Operational and supply chain expertise to re-think traditional models to account for variable demand and disruption in the supply chain

- Program development to solve for jobs and livelihoods, especially for migrant labour
- Behaviour change skills with a focus on public health, sanitation

- Business experts to refine the strategy and operational processes to adapt to e-learning
- Rapid development of digital content and tools across platforms



- Expertise in defining online customer experiences and journeys
- Experts to develop digital commerce strategies

- Strategic advisory to pivot to tele-health, and app-based ecosystems
- Consultants to support deployment of digital and analytics tools and automation

The overwhelming success of WFH for many organizations has led to longer term planning to leverage distributed global teams and a mix of full-time, flexible and freelance talent

90%

Of on-site projects on Flexing It have successfully transitioned to remote

40+

New inquiries from companies in the last month, many from larger companies, looking to pilot new ways of working

80%

% Of all positions posted on Flexing It in Q2 2020 require consultants to work remotely vs 40% in Q1

PERSPECTIVES

“

We are looking at engaging our lower utilized workforce to address new opportunities – offline focused resources have been converted to online teams e.g. for our events. Post COVID, video-conference calls, flexible work weeks and remote recruiting will survive well into the future

VISHAL GUPTA, CO-FOUNDER & CEO – MYMONEY, MOMSPRESSO

The ability to effectively function in remote working situations & deliver results will be valued. There will be a focus on work life balance & effective collaboration

ASHWIN RAMASWAMY - BUSINESS HEAD - STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS AT ACKO

Clients are increasingly open to remote projects & I am emphasizing my remote work experience. Short term, freelancers can deliver more value to projects as they are comfortable working remotely - which is a skill most professionals are only learning now

TUSHAR S - STRATEGY CONSULTANT

We see an undeniable mindset shift amongst professionals who are now looking at freelancing as a long-term strategy and a solid alternative in an uncertain job market

2x

Increase in consultant registrations in Q2 over Q1 of 2020

40%

Of consultants who have registered post March have <5 years of experience

IT/Technology

Is the most common industry of expertise of consultants registering post march 2020

CONSULTANT PERSPECTIVES

“

The future of freelancing is very bright. The work from home experiment has established a sense of comfort with digital and remote working. - it has swiftly increased trust and has moved us to a deliverables driven approach to consulting work

MAANSI G - BUSINESS STRATEGY, BRAND MARKETING & BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT EXPERT

I find my gigs far more rewarding than a full-time job from a professional learning point-of-view. The scope to learn, build on existing skill, expand one's network and grow as a professional is unlimited

VIDHI K - INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN SPECIALIST AND HR PROFESSIONAL

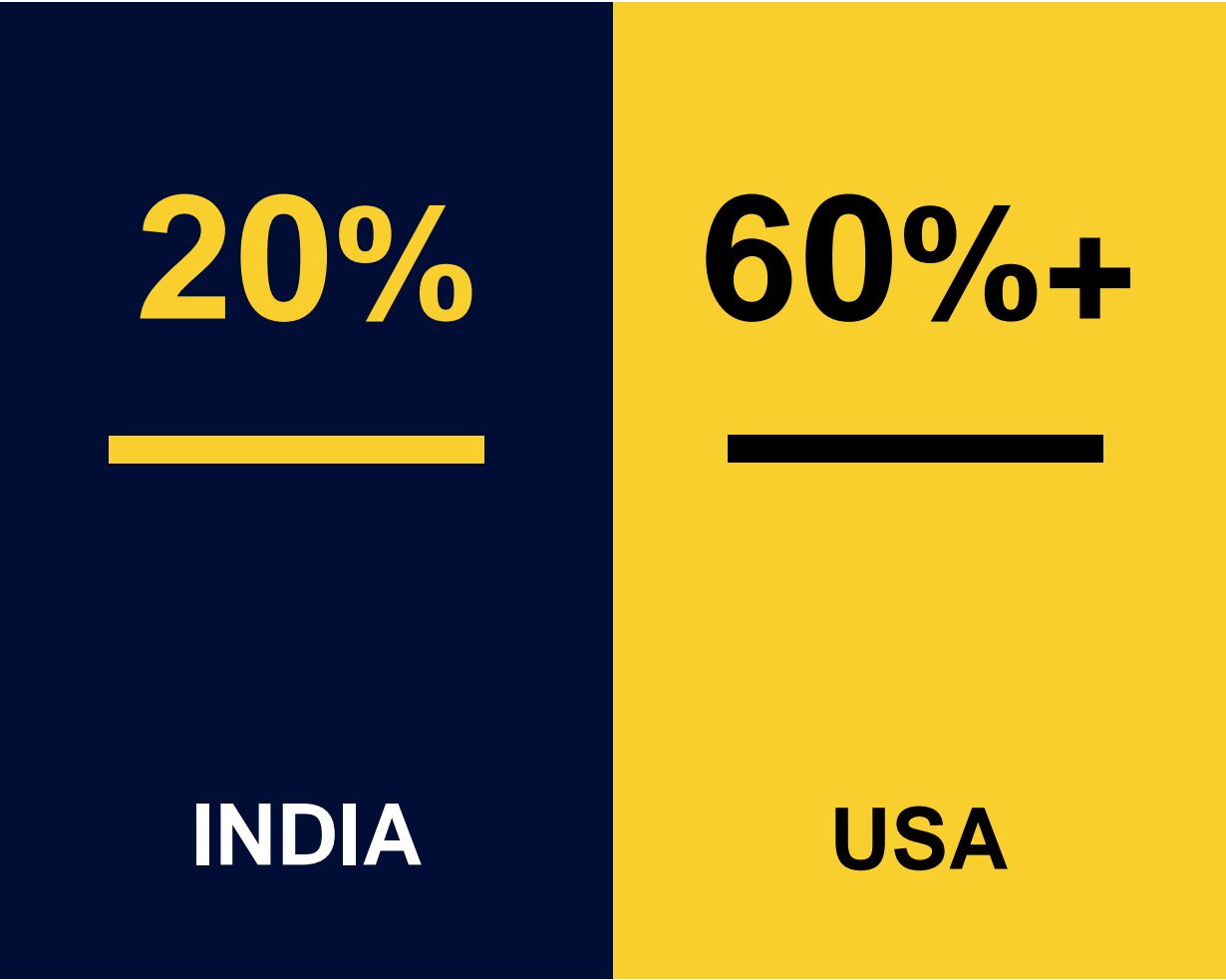
The way we work is changing. Whether you're an employer or an employee, mastering the gig economy is the key to survival. There will be many new and interesting opportunities for freelancers

CHHAVI M - HR STRATEGY & PEOPLE MANAGEMENT CONSULTANT

Data suggests women will be more economically impacted in the pandemic & that freelancing remains an under leveraged strategy for financial stability & flexibility

- UN projects that the COVID-19 recession will result in a prolonged dip in women’s incomes and labor force participation. A McKinsey Global Institute study estimates that **women’s jobs are 1.8 times more vulnerable** to this crisis
- Flexing It believes freelancing is currently an underleveraged opportunity for women in India and a key strategy for addressing India’s poor Labor Force Participation Rate (LFPR) for women
- Our research shows that women freelancers are able to benefit from flexible work with 41% working remotely & 71% on a part-time basis
- Post COVID, **Flexing It saw an 8 percentage point increase in registrations of women freelancers** on the platform – but a lot more needs to be done

Percentage of Women Freelancers



Data on Capacity & Location of the Projects Delivered by Women Freelancers

