

ETPrime

Covid-effect: Companies now hiring a mix of full-time, part-time workers

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Synopsis

A report on the state of the professional gig economy during Covid shows that the success of work-from-home is pushing companies to hire a mix of full-time, flexible and freelance workers, which is pushing the demand for white-collar gig workers.

New Delhi: Covid-19 perhaps has fundamentally changed the way Indian companies and employees look at work. According to data from Flexing It, a platform for on-demand jobs and business, the pandemic has resulted in increased acceptance of white-collar **gig workers**.

A Flexing It report on the state of the professional **gig** economy during Covid shows that the success of work-from-home is pushing companies to hire distributed teams — a mix of full-time, flexible and freelance workers — which is pushing the demand for white-collar gig workers. In an uncertain job market, the number of consultants registered on the platform in the second quarter of 2020 had doubled from the first three months of the year. Consulting, pharma, education and **FMCG** sectors lead in hiring professionals for flexible and freelance assignments.

More than 80% of all positions posted on Flexing It during April-June required consultants to work remotely, compared with about 40% the previous quarter.

The young workforce is driving the trend, with about 40% of these workers having less than five years of experience, said the report, 'Professional Gig Economy 2019-20 report card', which includes data from the April to June quarter of 2020-21. IT and technology professionals lead in taking these assignments. With fast-tracked digitisation and automation, there are new skill sets in demand.

“A much greater focus on skills/expertise, the realisation that great talent is choosing to work outside traditional employment constructs, the spread of collaboration technology and the emergence of quality gig platforms are all factors fuelling the demand and adoption of white-collar freelance talent at companies across sectors from startups to large organisations,” Flexing It founder and CEO Chandrika Pasricha said. “Covid is accelerating this trend, as companies look to keep costs variable while accessing the best talent.”

Ed-tech firm upGrad has inducted talent remotely for the security team and the recruitment ecosystem, cofounder Mayank Kumar said.

“Given Covid and work-from-home initiative, we are seeing that companies are now OK with employees remotely located and this will give a thrust to the gig working economy,” Kumar said. “I surely feel that the trend is definitely on the rise and is real.”

This increasing acceptance of white-collar gig workers is well-reflected in the numbers. About 90% of onsite projects on Flexing It transitioned to remote during the pandemic, while the number of purely remote assignments on the platform has doubled.

According to Rajeshwar Tripathi, the chief HR officer at **Mahindra & Mahindra**, the automobile and farm-equipment company had witnessed significant action in outsourcing and partnering. “Even though the gig economy in the context of a flexible or on-demand workforce has seen traction in recent times, we are likely to see a very major shift going forward,” he added.

A spokesperson at **Wipro** said the IT services company saw a huge uptrend in the gig economy. Wipro has witnessed a 60% month-on-month increase in new member registrations on the crowdsourcing business platform, **Topcoder**. “The demand for both full-time and temporary resources has risen significantly. Companies are realising the need for an agile workforce that will enhance the overall productivity of organisations,” said the spokesperson.