

The benefits (and drawbacks) of working on contract



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According to Statistic Canada, 13.3 per cent of Canadians worked on contract in 2016. This number, however, was much higher for younger workers, with 69.3 per cent making their living with temporary, contract work.

“The gig economy – that’s what it’s all about,” said Cissy Pau, principal consultant at [Clear HR Consulting](#). “People working these short-term gigs is becoming more commonplace.”

That might sound worrisome for job seekers on the hunt for full-time work, but there are reasons for optimism.

Here are some of the benefits – and yes, drawbacks – of



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Not the type to be tied down? A contract can help keep your career options open. Thinking of applying to a job that's just outside your career path? Considering a short-term move to a new city? Contract work gives you the chance to test these uncharted waters.

And, of course, many contractors can work from home, which is the ultimate when it comes to workplace flexibility.

Benefit: Expand your skill set

Hopping from one opportunity to the next will force you to be intellectually nimble, able to quickly pick up the unique demands of every job and workplace you walk into.

Even if you're building a tightly focused resume in a specific role, working at different companies for different people could open you to new training opportunities, new computer programs and operating systems, and new ways of approaching your work.

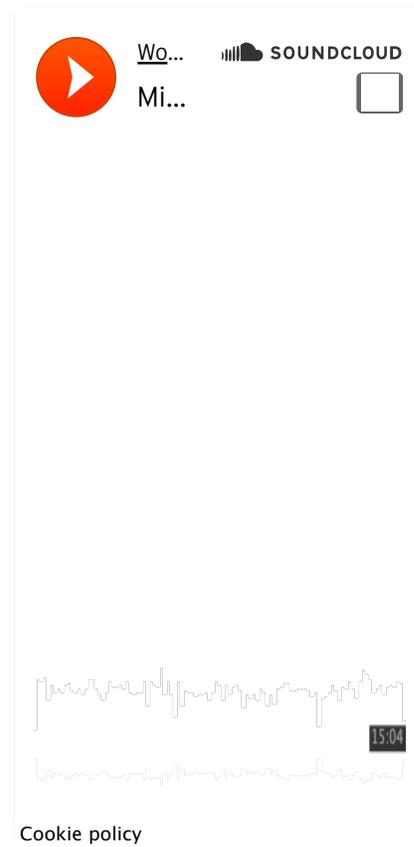
"It allows you to try something that maybe you wouldn't have otherwise have had the opportunity to try, and helps you figure out if you like them or not," Pau said.

Benefit: Build your network, no politicking necessary

One of the major benefits of temporary work? You're that much less likely to be dragged into the muck of office politics.

On the other hand...

Drawback: Feel left out of office culture



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in project planning or even social events.

“It may be harder to make friends and even harder to have your ideas taken seriously,” warned Lee Weisser, career counsellor and life coach at [Careers by Design](#). “The thinking might be: ‘That person’s not here very long. Why should we bother listening to them?’”

Benefit: Stave off boredom

Let’s face it: after a certain amount of time in some jobs, the clock feels like it’s crawling backwards.

Contract employees are less susceptible to those ruts. Feeling trapped by a dead-end gig? Time to start looking for your next opportunity.

“I see a lot of people who get bored once they’ve mastered their job and they’re doing the same thing over and over again,” Weisser said. “With contracts, once you learn it, you can execute and you can leave and try something else.”

Benefit/Drawback: No defined salary/benefits package

In many ways, contractors are working for themselves. Depending on the way you’re wired, this could be an opportunity for a ceiling-free income – or an unsettlingly uncertain situation.

“If you’re a contractor, you’re a little bit like an entrepreneur,” Pau said. “If you take on more projects, you can make more money. You have a little bit more control over your earning potential.”

Still, contract workers rarely have access to company

employees – especially those with families – it could be a deal-breaker.

Drawback: Stability and security

Ultimately, some people simply value constancy and cohesion over freedom and flexibility.

If that's you, there's nothing wrong with seeking out security above all else.

"Not every personality can become a contract worker," Pau said. "You can be out of work with no notice. You need to always be on the lookout for your next opportunity, so if you're not the kind of person who enjoys business development and networking, it could be really hard."

Still, experts stress that if you have faith in your ability, you shouldn't fret too much about stability.

"Most people are looking for job security, but it's harder and harder to come by," Weisser said. "So the real security comes from knowing yourself, knowing your skills and strengths and knowing how you can help a company grow and move forward."

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