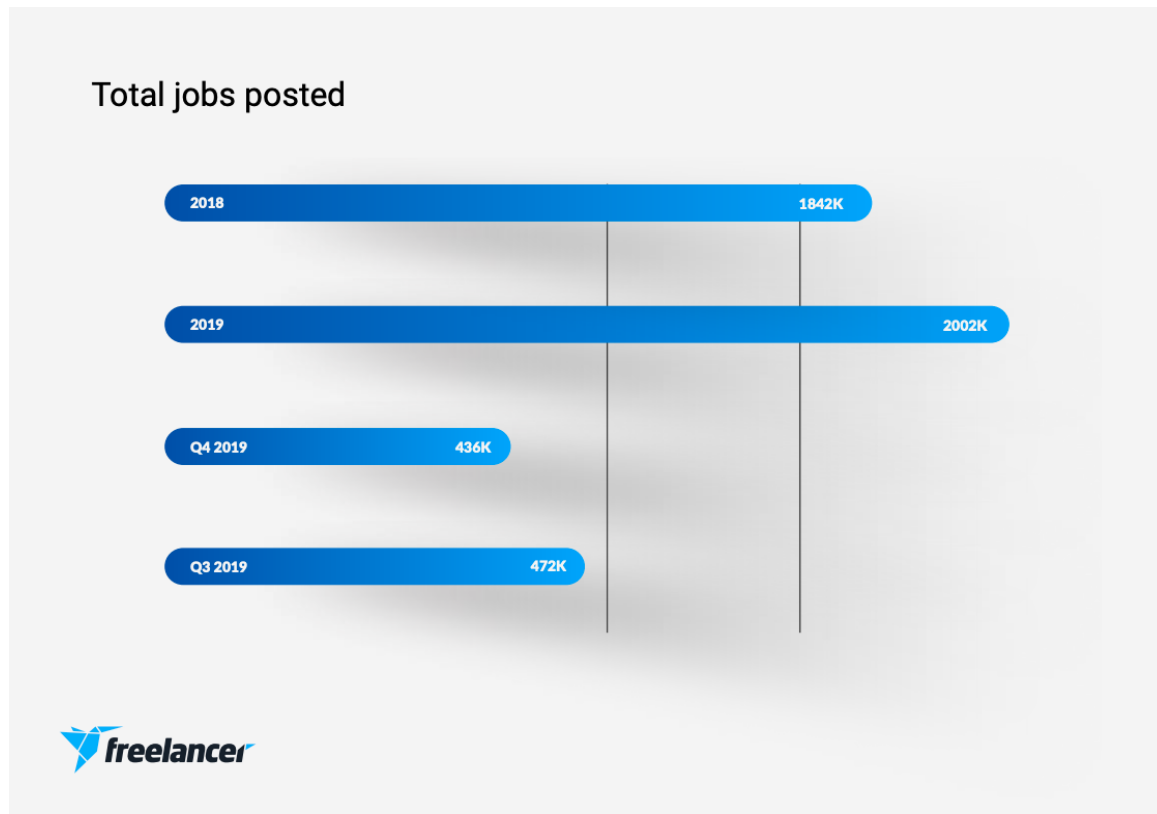


Crowdsourced labor the cure for rising workplace stress, shifting worker demands

5 February, 2020: Recent studies have found workplace stress is reaching epidemic proportions, with 94% of US employees¹ reporting stress at work. The most common cause, according to the American Stress Institute, is workload. At the same time, younger employees are demanding more flexible working arrangements. A recent survey from the Workforce Institute found 33% of Gen Z employees said they wouldn't tolerate inflexible working arrangements².

These trends are converging to see more and more employers easing their employees' workload by crowdsourcing administrative tasks, as is revealed in Freelancer.com's Q4 Fast 50. The Q4 Fast 50, a quarterly index of the most sought-after skills, found that employer demand grew the most for skills such as Excel VBA and business process outsourcing, which grew by 129.42% and 97.46% respectively.



¹ <https://www.stress.org/42-worrying-workplace-stress-statistics>

²

<https://workforceinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Meet-Gen-Z-Hopeful-Anxious-Hardworking-and-Searching-for-Inspiration.pdf>



Freelancer.com is the largest freelancing and crowdsourcing marketplace in the world by number of users and jobs posted.

- During Q4, 436,000 jobs were posted on Freelancer.com, indicating a contraction of approximately 8% compared to Q3. This contraction can be attributed, in large part, to the winter holidays and the closing of the year, during which time work traditionally slows down.
- On an annual basis, Freelancer.com closed 2019 with a total of slightly over 2 million jobs. This is up by slightly over 8% versus 2018, when a total of 1.842 million jobs were posted. This is indicative of Freelancer.com's continued growth and success in the field.
- At the end of 2019, Freelancer.com had over 40 million users, compared to 31.4 million users in 2018.
 - 4.8+ million members in the USA
 - 1.17+ million UK users
 - Over 675k users in Australia

The Freelancer.com Fast 50 Report tracks the quarterly movement of the top 50 fastest growing and declining jobs on the site's global online marketplace that spans over 247 countries, regions and territories around the world. The Freelancer.com Fast 50 data is the leading indicator of trends in online jobs related to industries, technologies, products and companies.

The key takeaways from the Freelancer.com Q4 2019 Fast 50 Report include:

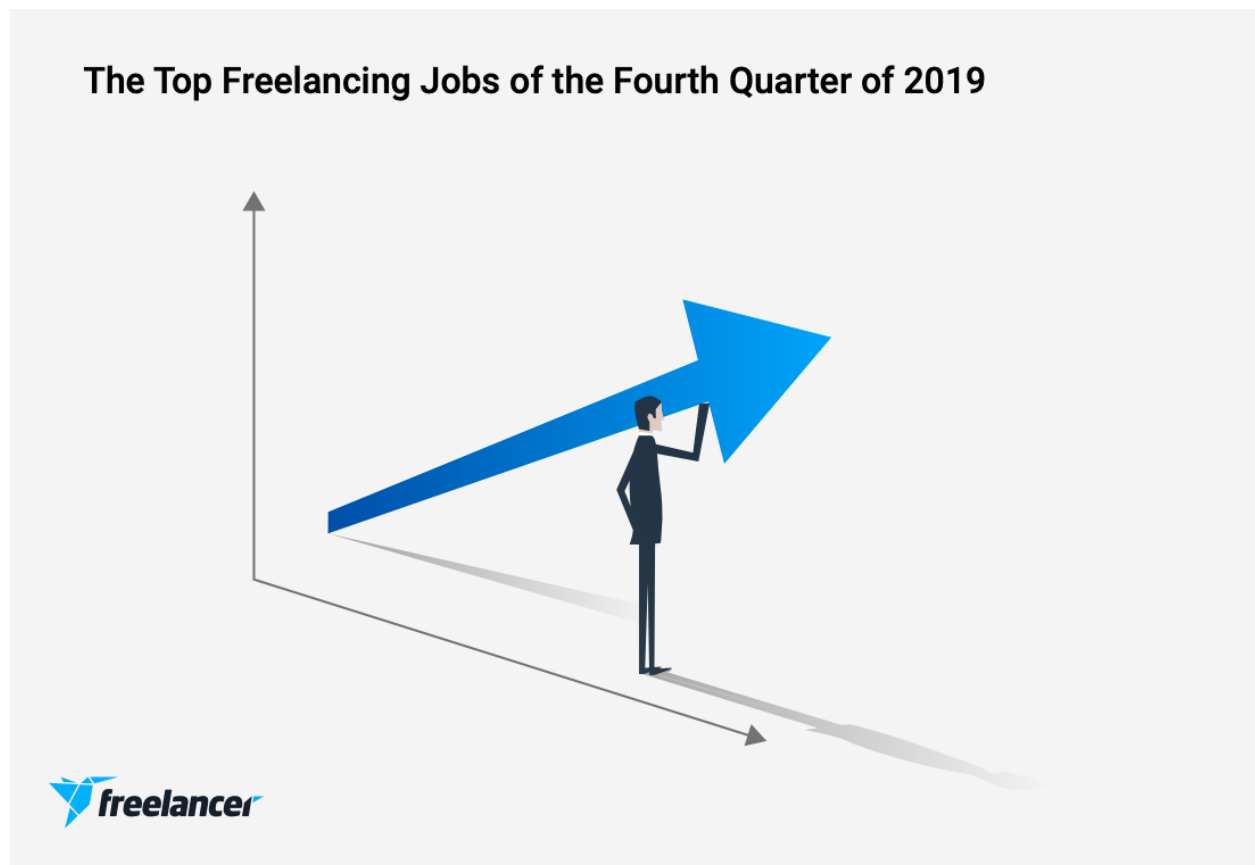
- 129.42% increase in demand for Excel VBA, from 1,363 jobs in Q3 to 3,127 jobs in Q4, indicates that an increasing number of employers require skilled workers to develop data analysis frameworks and to automate Excel processes.
 - Demand for Excel VBA capabilities was the fifth fastest growing job category on a year-over-year basis, going from 2,355 jobs in 2018 to 6,686 jobs in 2019, indicating a growth of 183.91%.
- Business process outsourcing jobs rose by 97.46%, from 1,811 to 3,576, in Q4, with jobs ranging from office admin work and sales to customer service and data entry.
 - BPO jobs experienced the most significant year-over-year growth with an increase of 374.5% in the number of jobs posted. In 2018, 1,616 jobs were posted in this category, while 2019 saw a total number of 7,668 jobs. This is a clear indicator that an increasing number of firms are using a distributed workforce for processes that were traditionally handled by in-house employees.
- Unlike Q3, during which Book Writing and Translation services were among the top 25 fastest growing job categories, in Q4, demand declined for these skills. However, on a year-over-year basis, Fiction Writing services shot up by 134.34%, making it the seventh fastest growing job category and the only creative arts skill to make it on to the top 25 list.

- General Office and Call Center jobs rose by 262.9% and 209.19%, respectively, from 2018 to 2019, placing them second and third. This is further indication that more and more companies are choosing to streamline operations by using a distributed workforce to reduce costs, increase efficiencies, and improve the customer experience.

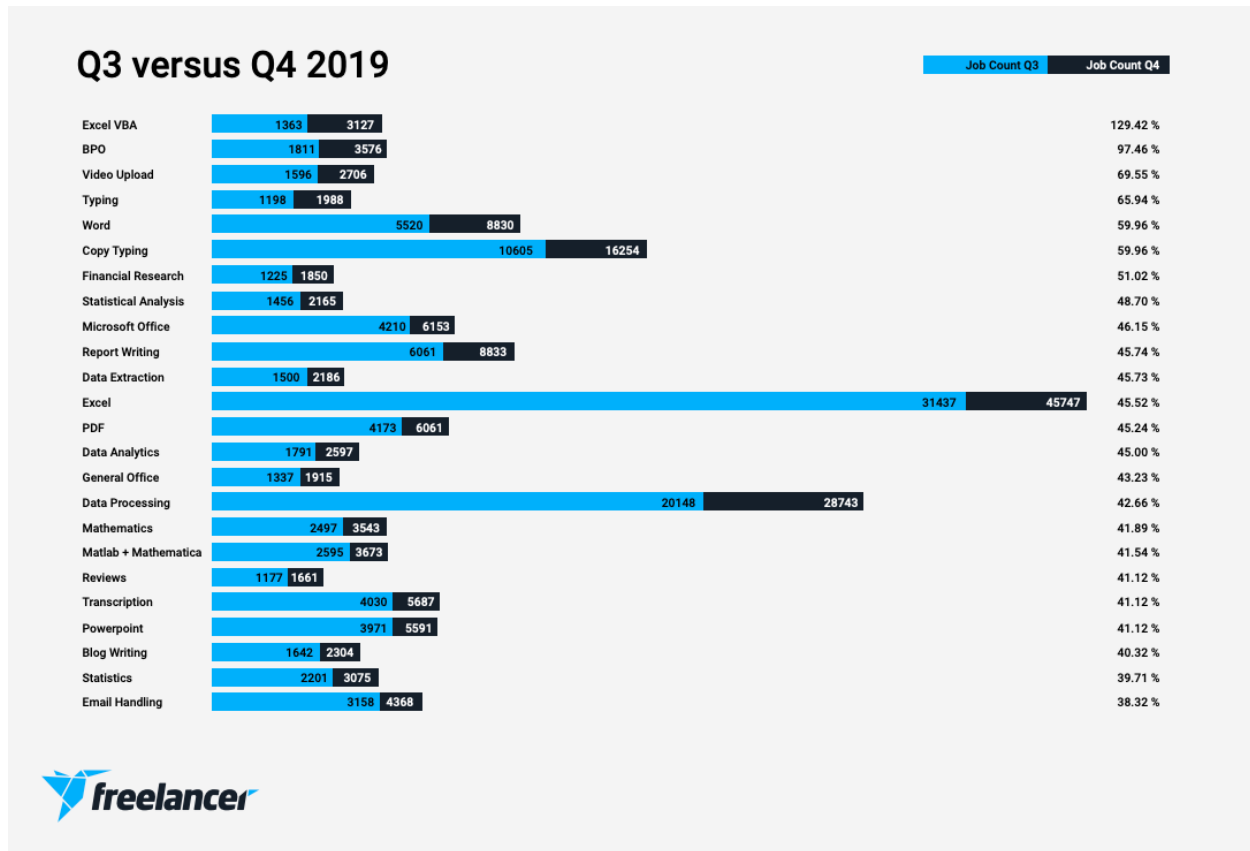
It's clear from the report that workplaces are choosing to ease the administrative burden on their in-house employees by outsourcing some of these tasks. At the same time, the growth in freelancers using the platform shows more workers choosing flexibility over a traditional in-house office role.

Interesting to note is the fact that there is an increasing focus on delivering an outstanding customer experience. For example, businesses that are expanding to new territories seek sales representatives fluent in the native language to better connect with local customers.

The Top Freelancing Jobs of the Q4 of 2019



The top 10 jobs in terms of growth in Q4 2019 are Excel VBA, BPO, Video Upload, Typing, Call Center, Word, Copy Typing, Research, Analysis and Office. Data Analytics also continued to see significant growth.



1. Excel VBA

Excel Visual Basic for Applications allows users to customize and automate various tasks in Excel. A few examples include developing new worksheet functions; creating large-scale, macro-driven applications; automating repetitive operations; developing special purpose add-ins and more.

Demand for Excel VBA developers has experienced massive growth, rising by 129.42% in Q4 versus Q3 (1,363 jobs to 3,127 jobs). Many of the job postings are geared towards building data analysis frameworks, indicating the continuing trend of companies shifting towards data-driven decision-making.

2. BPO

Over the past 20 years, business process outsourcing has become very popular among firms, from the largest to the smallest. The trend has been to outsource non-core processes, thereby allowing firms to channel more resources to their core business tasks. This trend is not just continuing, but accelerating.



Business Process Outsourcing jobs on Freelancer.com experienced a significant surge in Q4, rising by 97.46% compared to Q3 (3,576 jobs instead of 1,811 jobs), making it the second fastest growing job category.

BPO freelancers provide a wide range of services, with projects on Freelancer.com requiring expertise in everything from [telemarketing](#) to [data processing](#). As companies shift more and more of their non-core processes to external teams, freelancers in this space are likely to see demand increase for their services.

3. Video Upload

Demand has increased for freelancers with the Video Upload skill by 69.55% (1,596 jobs to 2,706 jobs). However, the projects posted on Freelancer.com seem to be more geared towards freelancers who can offer a complete videography service, including on-site filming or photography, simple video editing and uploading.

4. Typing

The number of typing jobs has also increased, going from 1,198 jobs in Q3 to 1,988 in Q4, equating to a growth of 65.94%. It's interesting to note that jobs span everything from simple data entry to article writing, indicating significant overlap with other job categories.

5. Call Center

Call Center jobs came in fifth in terms of growth, with an increase of 59.97% (2,316 jobs to 3,705 jobs). Besides cold calling to identify potential leads, employers are looking for skilled freelancers who can teach their teams how to [provide outstanding customer service](#).

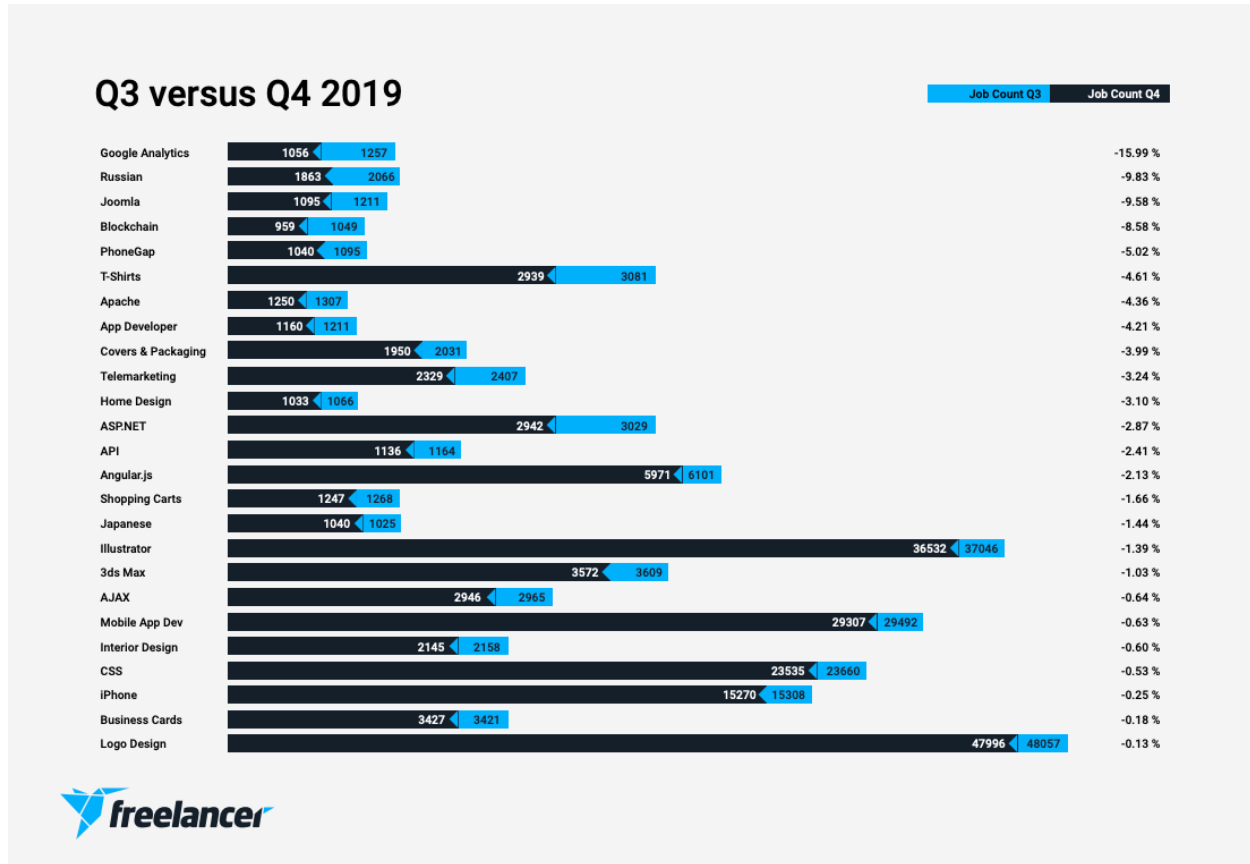
Closely connected to BPO, freelancers skilled in Call Center will likely see demand increase for their services. The trend towards providing better customer experiences is a contributing factor, especially seeing as [58% of customers](#) find customer service to be very important in choosing the brand they will work with, and 61% of consumers say they have stopped dealing with a business after a poor experience.

The Freelance Jobs That Saw Demand Decline in Q4 2019



A number of skills in the Freelancer Fast 50 experienced a decline in Q4, including Google Analytics, Russian, Joomla, and Blockchain. On a year-over-year basis, from 2018 to 2019, the skills that declined include Design, Bitcoin, Ethereum and Writing.

The decline in Blockchain, Ethereum, and Bitcoin could be indicative of a declining interest in the cryptocurrencies. It could also mean, though, that employers are expanding into other cryptocurrencies and are narrowing their requirements to more niche yet related skills.



1. Google Analytics

Projects looking for Google Analytics skills declined by 15.99%, going from 1,257 jobs in Q3 to 1,056 in Q4. The decline is not necessarily an indication of a drop in demand for this skill.

As a skill, Google Analytics is often sought alongside a variety of other skills, including marketing, social media management, Google Adwords and more. Thus, the decline could also be attributed, in part, to how employers are categorizing their projects.

2. Russian

Russian jobs declined by 9.83%, going from 2,066 jobs to 1,863. Projects requiring Russian as a skill include translation, and Russian translations experienced a significant boost in Q3. Thus, this decline might simply represent the trend stabilizing.

3. Joomla

Joomla jobs declined by 9.58%, going from 1,211 to 1,095 jobs. Joomla continues to be a popular CMS, which is why the decline is unlikely to be attributed solely to a drop in demand for this skill. There is a strong likelihood that the contraction is due to timing, with the winter holidays representing a slower period overall.

4. Blockchain

Blockchain jobs fell by 8.58%, going from 1,049 to 959 jobs. Projects requiring the Blockchain skill are extremely varied, ranging from [writing about Blockchain](#) and [creating cryptocurrency-based websites](#) to creating [token smart contracts](#) and [web-based trading bots](#).

Once again, this is not necessarily indicative of a decline in interest in Blockchain as a skill. In fact, it's quite likely demand will increase as Blockchain gains more widespread adoption.

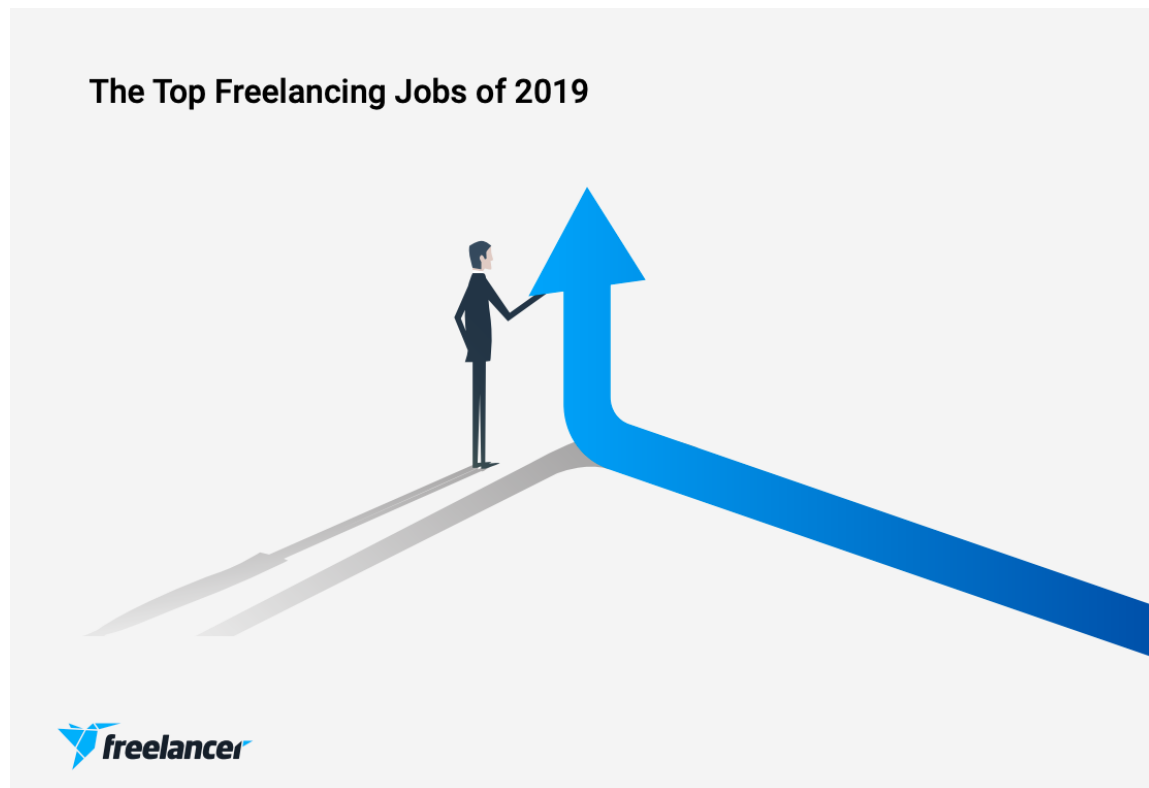
5. PhoneGap

PhoneGap development skills declined by 5.02%, going from 1049 jobs to 959 jobs. While PhoneGap is a popular cross-platform mobile app development framework, it isn't the only one available.

Thus, the decline isn't necessarily indicative of a decline in demand. It could simply be a matter of employers not having any specific demands in terms of the framework used in the development of their mobile apps.

In fact, seeing as PhoneGap doesn't require developers to know mobile programming language to create apps and they can use just web-development languages, demand will likely increase.

The Top Freelancing Jobs of 2019



The top 10 freelancing jobs that experienced the most growth in 2019 are BPO, General Office, Call Center, Vue.js, Excel VBA, Video Upload, Fiction, Outlook, Service and Copy Editing.

1. BPO

Business Process Outsourcing jobs also ranked first in terms of year-over-year growth, surging by an impressive 374.5% (1,616 jobs to 7,668 jobs). This fact further cements the idea that an increasing number of firms are choosing to outsource their non-core processes.

It's interesting to note that some processes are being outsourced with an eye towards providing a better customer experience. For example, this project is looking for [tele-calling executives who are fluent in Hindi](#) to better connect with their customers.

2. General Office

General Office jobs spiked by 262.9%, going from 1,407 jobs in 2018 to 5,106 jobs in 2019. Projects posted under this category could also be considered as part of BPO seeing as it also involves outsourcing various business processes.

Employers posting projects in this category are looking for everything from virtual assistants and merchandise inspectors to project coordinators and music producers.

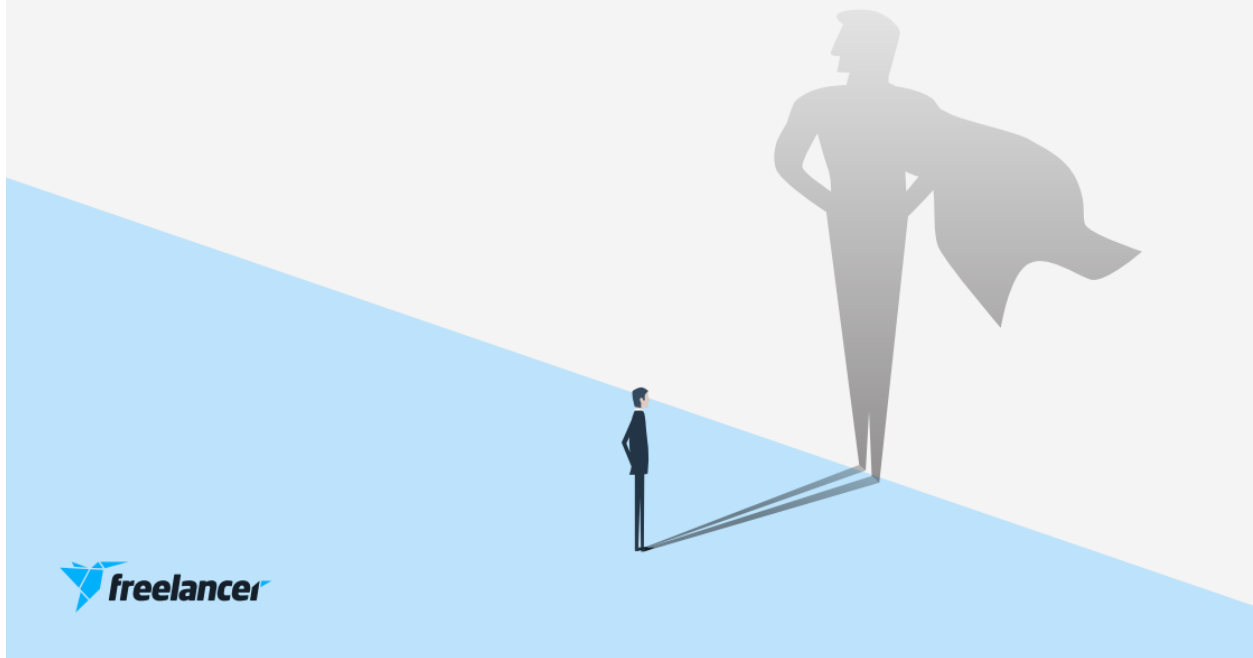
It's interesting to note that some of the projects posted in this category are looking for local help in other countries, such as this employer looking for a freelancer to [inspect their supplier's merchandise in Wuhu, Anhui, China](#) or this posting looking for help with [setting up a business in the United States](#).

3. Call Center

Call Center jobs increased by 209.19% in 2019 vs 2018, going from 2,917 jobs to 9,019 jobs. This is not only indicative of an increase in outsourcing call center services, but also shows an increased focus on freelancers. It also shows that more and more companies are looking to improve the customer experience.

Projects posted in this category range from [full-time sales and marketing positions](#) to cold calling for lead generation in various industries such as [real estate](#) and [tech](#). Employers are also looking for customer service representatives.

Rising Stars: The Emerging Jobs to Watch



BPO and related skills, such as Call Center and General Office, have seen a significant rise not only in Q4 vs Q3 but also in 2019 compared to 2018. This is a clear indicator that an increasing number of companies are outsourcing non-core processes and turning to freelancers for their needs.

While business process outsourcing has been gaining increasing popularity over the past two decades, this trend has been accelerating over the past few years. Furthermore, as more and more startups and small businesses expand their operations geographically, they are looking for local help, which also indicates that freelancers in this space will see demand for their skills continue to increase.

The increase in demand for Excel VBA developers is further proof that an increasing number of companies are adopting data-driven decision-making, but also attempting to streamline their operations through automation. Thus, related skills, including Data Analytics and Data Processing, will likely continue to grow.

	Name	Job Count Q3	Job Count Q4	% Increase / Decrease
1	Excel VBA	1363	3127	129.42 %
2	BPO	1811	3576	97.46 %
3	Video Upload	1596	2706	69.55 %
4	Typing	1198	1988	65.94 %
5	Call Center	2316	3705	59.97 %
6	Word	5520	8830	59.96 %
7	Copy Typing	10605	16254	53.27 %
8	Financial Research	1225	1850	51.02 %
9	Statistical Analysis	1456	2165	48.70 %
10	Microsoft Office	4210	6153	46.15 %
11	Report Writing	6061	8833	45.74 %
12	Data Extraction	1500	2186	45.73 %
13	Excel	31437	45747	45.52 %
14	PDF	4173	6061	45.24 %
15	Data Analytics	1791	2597	45.00 %
16	General Office	1337	1915	43.23 %
17	Data Processing	20148	28743	42.66 %
18	Mathematics	2497	3543	41.89 %
19	Matlab and Mathematica	2595	3673	41.54 %
20	Reviews	1177	1661	41.12 %
21	Transcription	4030	5687	41.12 %
22	Powerpoint	3971	5591	40.80 %
23	Blog Writing	1642	2304	40.32 %
24	Statistics	2201	3075	39.71 %
25	Email Handling	3158	4368	38.32 %
1	Google Analytics	1257	1056	-15.99 %
2	Russian	2066	1863	-9.83 %
3	Joomla	1211	1095	-9.58 %
4	Blockchain	1049	959	-8.58 %

5	PhoneGap	1095	1040	-5.02 %
6	T-Shirts	3081	2939	-4.61 %
7	Apache	1307	1250	-4.36 %
8	App Developer	1211	1160	-4.21 %
9	Covers & Packaging	2031	1950	-3.99 %
10	Telemarketing	2407	2329	-3.24 %
11	Home Design	1066	1033	-3.10 %
12	ASP.NET	3029	2942	-2.87 %
13	API	1164	1136	-2.41 %
14	Angular.js	6101	5971	-2.13 %
15	Shopping Carts	1268	1247	-1.66 %
16	Japanese	1040	1025	-1.44 %
17	Illustrator	37046	36532	-1.39 %
18	3ds Max	3609	3572	-1.03 %
19	AJAX	2965	2946	-0.64 %
20	Mobile App Development	29492	29307	-0.63 %
21	Interior Design	2158	2145	-0.60 %
22	CSS	23660	23535	-0.53 %
23	iPhone	15308	15270	-0.25 %
24	Business Cards	3427	3421	-0.18 %
25	Logo Design	48057	47996	-0.13 %