


How Much DO Freelancers Get Paid To Get Sh*t Done?

A mini investigation into the varying day rates of members of the wonderful network that is "Freelancers Get Sh*t Done"



A lil hello from me

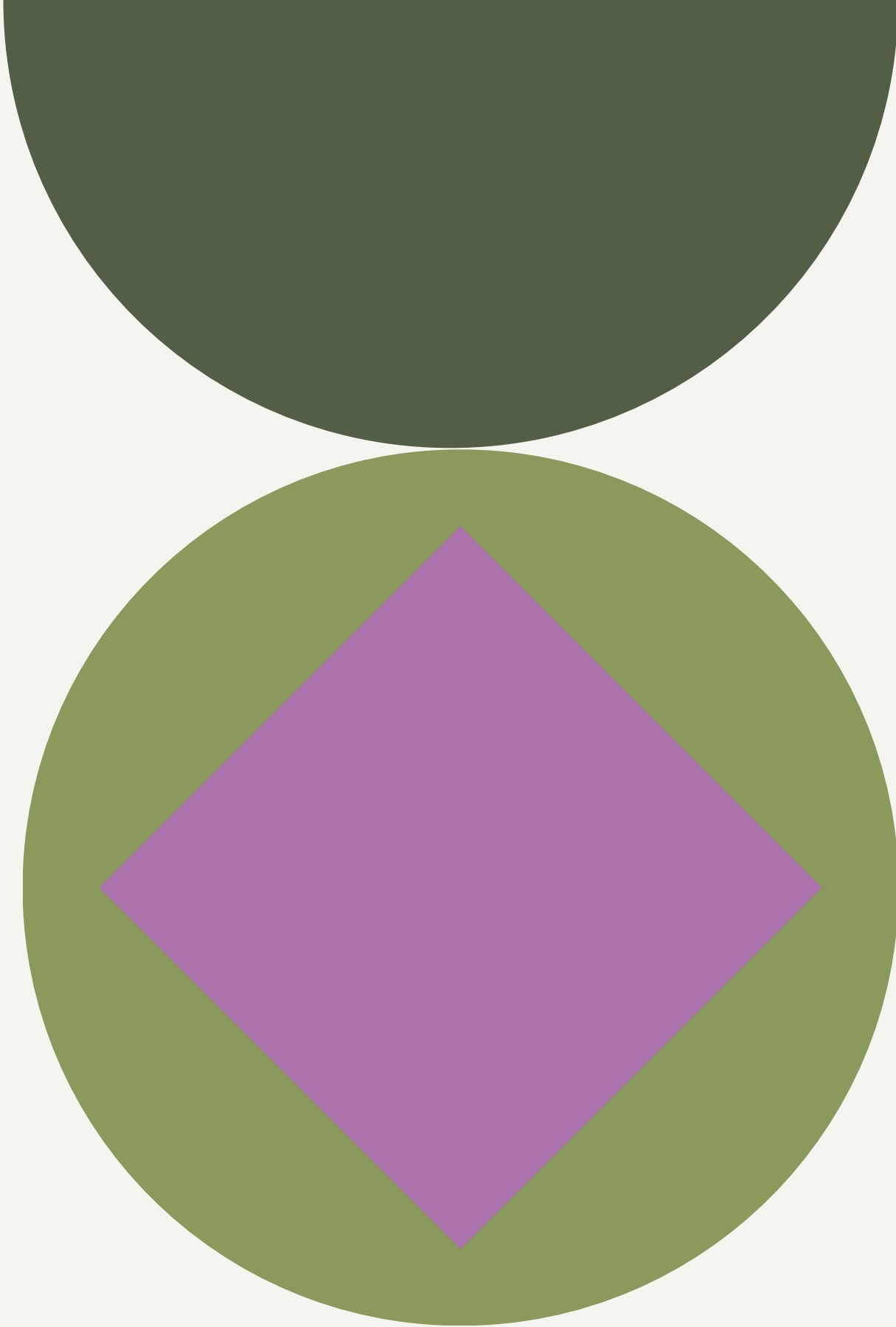
AND WAYS TO SAY HI BACK!

Hi! I'm Elodie. I've done this research totally for my own interest - it's not sponsored by anyone and I did all the research design, analysis, writing and report design myself (without the help of AI, if anyone is curious).

I've enjoyed it and found it useful, so it's work I'm happy to share for free. I'd also love to connect with people off the back of this work, so... if you want to chat to me about it, offer something to say thanks, or support me doing it again in future you could:

- **Skill swap** - maybe you can offer me something that's in your skillset that might be helpful in my freelancing life? A coaching session, better website copy, some kind of cool thing I haven't thought of?
- **Message me** - tell me what you've used this information for (I'd love to hear!)
- **Read my website** and recommend me for any work you think I'd be good at, or chat to me about collaborating with you in future
- **Buy Me A Coffee** - easy, sweet, and caffienated. What's not to love?





Fellow freelancers!

This is a very unofficial research project, started because (probably like you if you're reading this) I was wondering what we freelancers charge for our work. Mostly because I'd like to know if I'm charging the "right" amount for my work.

This research could probably be done with more rigour, scientific method, statistical analysis etc. but I reckon it's good enough for a project mostly borne out of me procrastinating. That said, please let me know if you spot glaring errors, I don't want to be misrepresenting us all with willy nilly data/interpretations.

Enjoy!

If you hire freelancers...

Please use this information to consider if you are paying them well. Remember that they are covering their own sick days, holiday pay, training costs, office and equipment, new parent leave, pension, etc. etc. etc. They are also likely to be highly experienced and skillful in order to have set themselves up successfully as a freelancer.

If you (or they!) are undervaluing their work, see if you can increase their rate. Chat to them and acknowledge it either way. They'll love you for it.





The Results!

THE JUICY BIT EH?

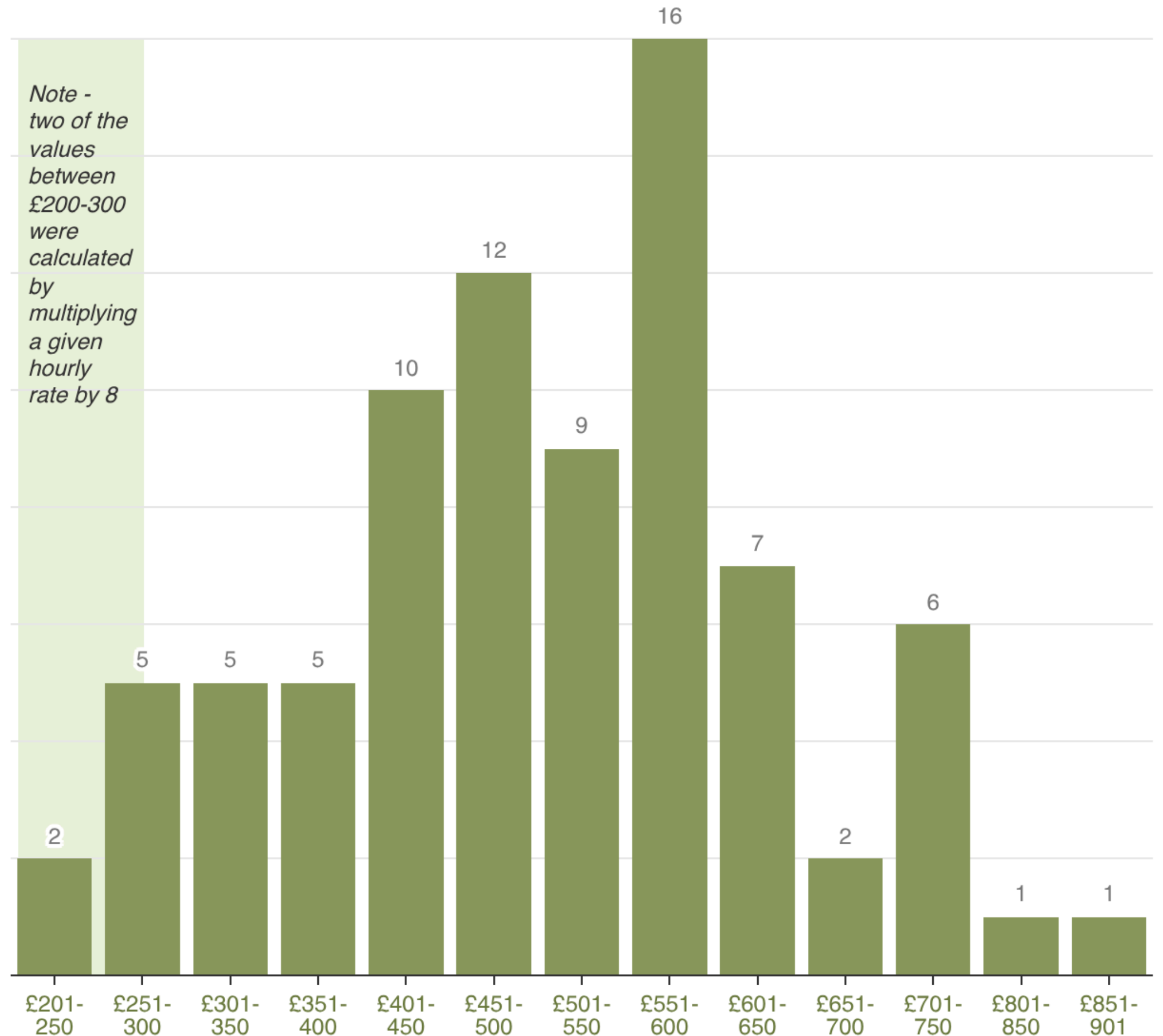
A bit of data context...

- 01 In total, **78** freelancers responded to the survey. They worked across a wide range of fields and had a range of rates.
- 02 Average day rate measured in different ways was fairly similar:
The **mean** (average value) rate was **£523.05**
The **median** (middle point) rate was **£525**
The **mode** (most common) rate was **£500**
- 03 The vast majority of freelancers who responded do scale their day rates in some way, both up and down (although down was more commonly mentioned).

Range of usual day rates

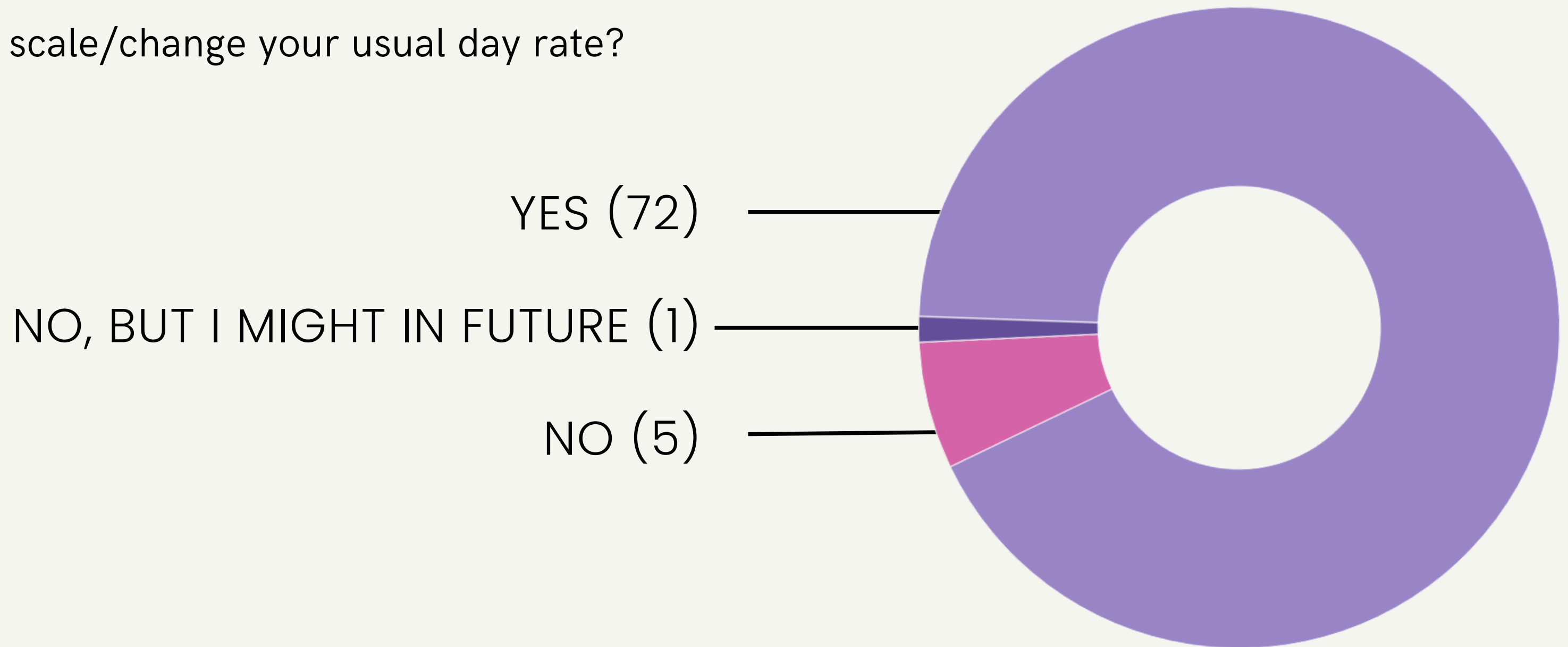
Count of rates given in answer to the question:

What is your usual day rate for your work? (the rate you usually charge per day of work, or the rate you start from when calculating discounts or project budgets)



The vast majority of us scale our rates, both up and down

Do you ever scale/change your usual day rate?



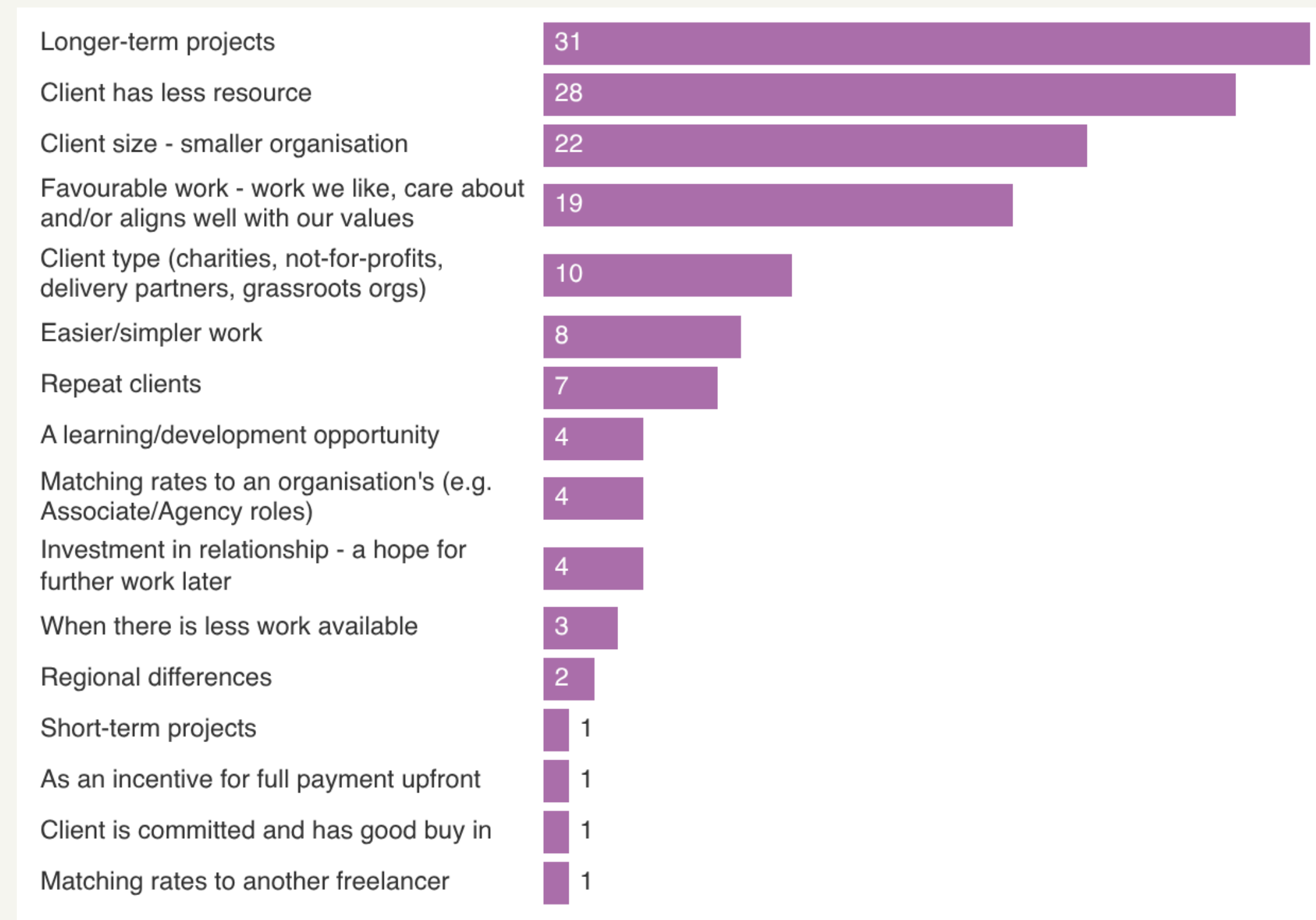
Why we scale our rates up

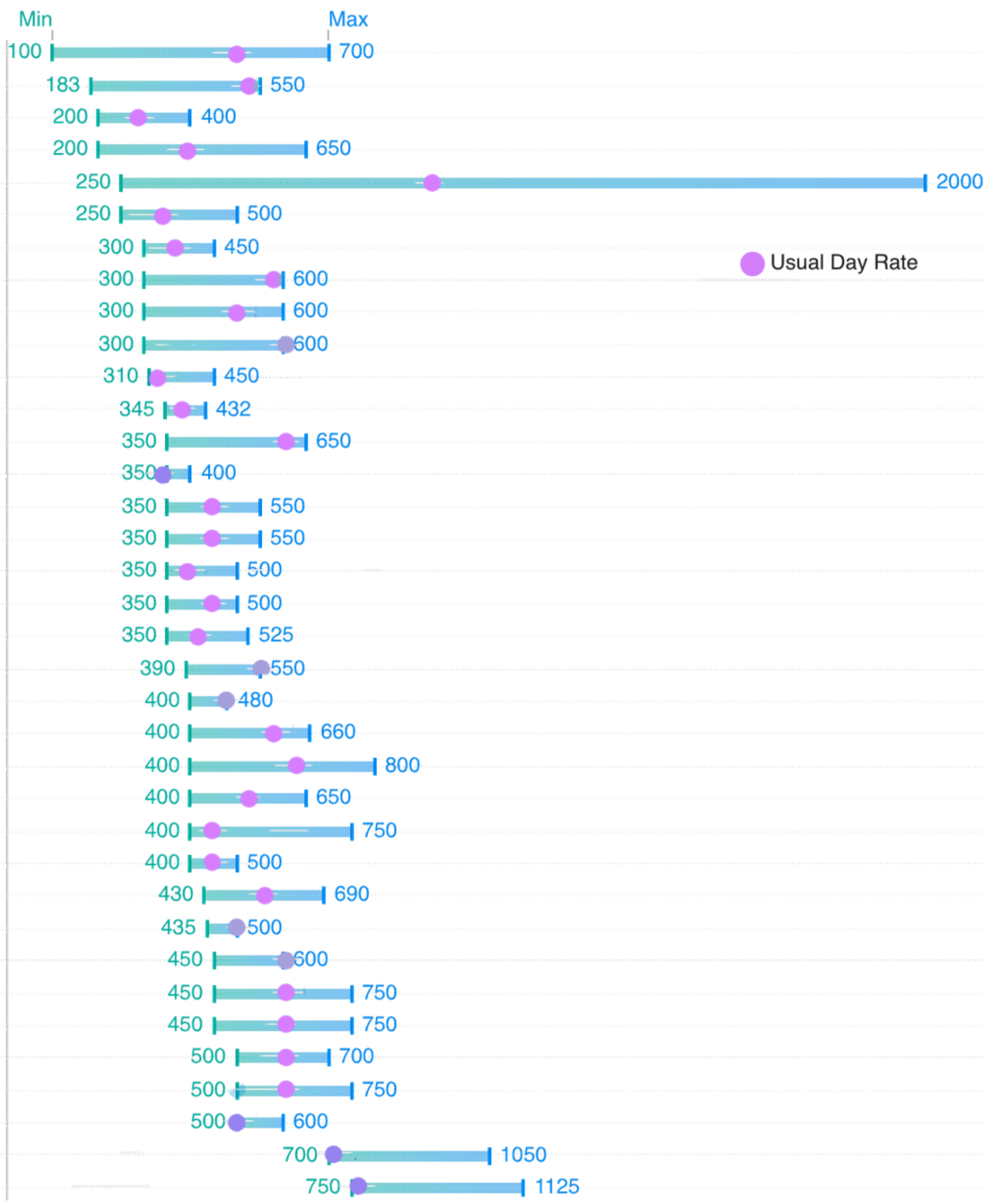
Why might you scale your rate up? (bars indicate count of participants that mentioned this reason)



Why we scale our rates down

Why might you scale your rate down? (bars indicate count of participants that mentioned this reason)





When we scale, how much do we scale up/down by?

NOTE - NOT ALL PARTICIPANTS PROVIDED THIS INFORMATION

The ranges are pretty variable - shown by the horizontal bars on the left. The pink/purple dots show that person's usual day rate. Some people only scale their rates one way (up or down, but not both).

Rates by Sector

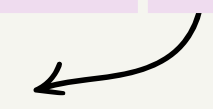
(THEMATICALLY GROUPED TO KEEP THINGS ANONYMOUS AND MORE CONCISE)

WHERE THERE ARE FEWER PEOPLE IN A GROUP THIS MAY BE LESS REPRESENTATIVE AS THERE IS LESS DATA TO RELY ON

CATEGORY	MEAN	MEDIAN	RANGE	NUMBER IN GROUP
STRATEGY & LEADERSHIP	£605	£588	£375-£900	36
FACILITATION & TRAINING	£576	£575	£352-£900	25
DIGITAL & CREATIVE	£540	£560	£250-£750	21
LEARNING, RESEARCH & EVALUATION	£536	£525	£280-£850	32
PROJECT & PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT	£485	£450	£300-£650	5
COMMUNICATIONS & WRITING	£454	£450	£216-£650	25
ADMIN, OPERATIONS & SUPPORT	£337	£300	£250-£575	7



TOTAL NUMBER IS HIGHER THAN TOTAL RESPONDENTS, AS MANY PEOPLE WORK ACROSS MULTIPLE CATEGORIES



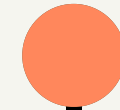
INTERESTING HOW CONSISTENTLY WIDE THE RANGES ARE ACROSS ALL CATEGORIES!



Questions and advice

Things we wish we knew then
or could know now about day
rates from fellow freelancers

Questions and challenges we have...



ACCOUNTING FOR COSTS

How do others charge for e.g. overnight stays, travel, thinking time, preparation time, the value of the work to the client, confidence and experience.



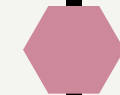
HOLDING THE LINE

Many people reflected they wished they had charged more for certain work, and found it hard to have the confidence to do this. Especially when there is less work available!



DEFINING A "DAY"

How many hours do we consider a day? How do we track the days we spend on a project? What about more productive/less productive time?



INCREASING PRICES WITH INCREASING COSTS

How and when to increase rates with e.g. inflation, experience, confidence, etc.



DIFFERENT SECTORS

How do we build an understanding of what different sectors expect and can afford?

BUILDING YOUR RATE BACKWARDS

Start from the salary you want to earn, add a percentage for all your costs, have a clear lower limit, add a buffer for things to take longer.

KNOW YOUR WORTH

Charge for the value of your expertise as much as the time taken. Acceptable rates are largely in your head - some of us have been told our rates are too low! Coaching may help. Ultimately, do what works for you.

PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

Put a percentage of every invoice into savings to cover your tax when it comes round (you'll need extra in your first year!), pension, sick days, and fallow periods. Remind clients that your take home rate is minus this percentage!

INCREASING PRICES

Consider increasing prices yearly with inflation - most businesses do the same so it will make sense to most clients.

TRANSPARENCY!

Tell your clients if you are offering them a discounted rate, and why. Be upfront about your rates and any schedule to increase them (e.g. yearly), share & benchmark our rates.



**Advice we
can offer
each other...**

Specific interesting examples



TRUST-BASED SLIDING SCALES

A few people mentioned sliding scales, but some also use trust-based scales - e.g. an organisation picks their own rate to reflect their budget and the value of the work.



APPROACH TO A BILLABLE DAY

"8 hours of quality work is not comparable to a normal working day - it's probably more like 6 hours. You may need 1.5-2 calendar days for 1 billable day!"



NEGOTIATING TO A BUDGET

If you are negotiating to fit a client's budget, instead of starting by lowering your rate, reduce the *scope* to fit what you could achieve in that many days at your usual rate. This has the added benefit of reminding clients what is reasonable on a certain budget!



ACCOUNTING FOR EXTRA COSTS

Adding a standard amount (e.g. a half day) for travel, an overnight stay, or prep per day delivered.



'ROBIN HOOD' METHOD

Charging enough to allow for a percentage of pro bono work, & considering this part of the cost for paying clients.

Useful Resources

TOOLS PEOPLE RECOMMEND

DAY RATE CALCULATOR

[This calculator from Landolio](#) gives you a day rate based on your desired salary, working days, holiday, sickness, etc. It has an adjustable profit margin which might be useful for scaling up/down!

Bear in mind - your working days per year is a big variable. Don't rely on being fully booked. It also doesn't include student loan repayments or more complex tax.

BENCHMARKING

A few people mentioned benchmarking against others, particularly [Fair Collective](#) who publish their sliding scale on their website.

YunoJuno also publish [reports](#) on rates of freelancers on their platform. They can be separated by sector and have additional insights e.g. project lengths, hourly rates, rates by experience level. NB these rates are global and the current report is 2022-24.

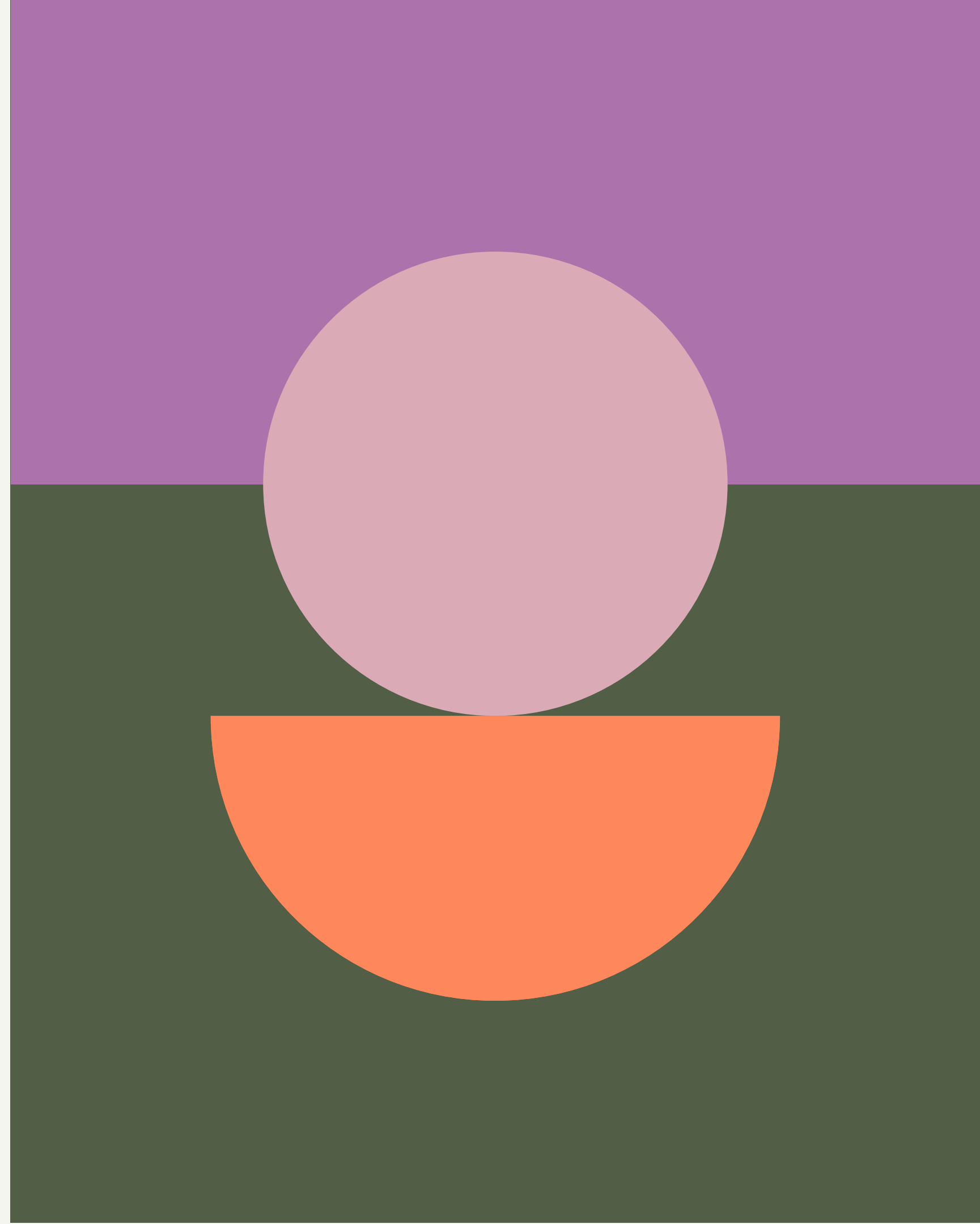
BACKING OURSELVES

I've recommended it before and I'll do it again - [this article](#) written by [Ray](#) is a very useful explanation of how a day rate can translate to overall pay as a freelancer.

I've previously sent it to clients but also to people looking to hire a freelancer at a low rate - it's been a super helpful conversation starter. There's lots of similar writing around if you look.

Methodology & Future Questions

A VERY BRIEF SUMMARY



Method Choice Points

DATA COLLECTION

This data was collected by anonymous survey via [this Google Form](#).

Participants self-selected and the survey was posted in the FGSD network three times, over a period of just over a month.

QUANTITATIVE DATA

Where a range was given for usual day rate, I took a mean of the two values and used this value instead.

Where an hourly rate was given, I multiplied it by 8 (this was only twice).

Where people gave different rates for different work, I treated them as separate responses.

QUALITATIVE DATA

I used thematic analysis to identify the groups and categories of reasons to scale rates up/down, and types of work.

All questions and advice given by respondents have been included (paraphrased) - repetitions have been omitted.

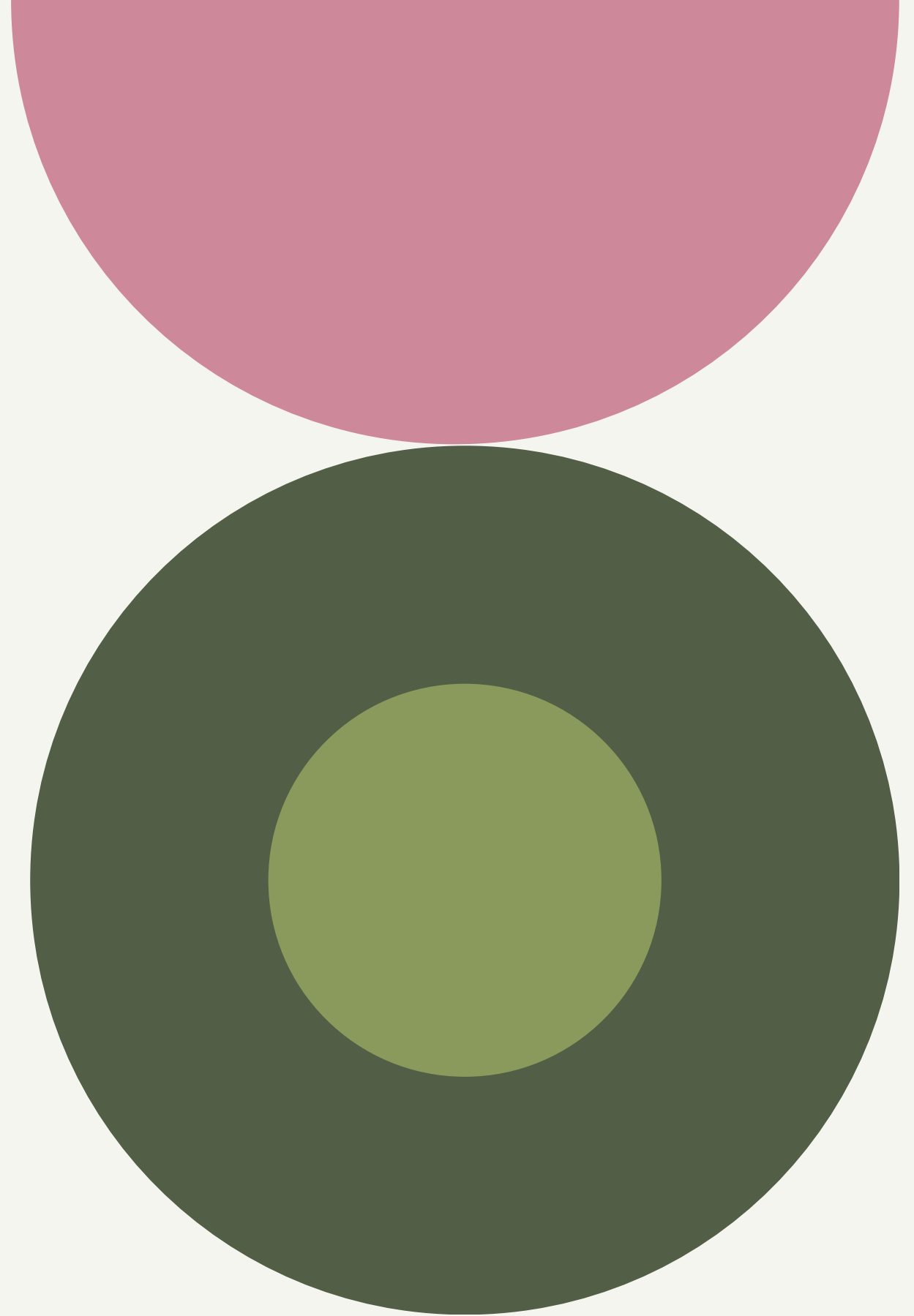
Future questions to explore

SEE YOU AGAIN NEXT YEAR?

A big question that came up was around how different *client* sectors (rather than our own work categories) can impact budget and therefore our own rates. And how we can get a better understanding of typical rates in different sectors.

A few respondents suggested differences in rates for rural vs city clients, and UK vs Europe vs Global - this would be great to explore further.

And big thanks to Doug for suggesting collecting demographic data next time to see how rates are impacted by our own backgrounds e.g. age/seniority, gender, location, etc. Another angle for future research!



Thanks team!

WELL DONE, YOU MADE IT TO THE END

Firstly, my thanks to the lovely [Katherine Perrin](#) who I first shared this idea with, and she was (as always) super encouraging. Also to everyone who responded to the survey and expressed their excitement about seeing the results. Big gratitude to you all!

And as a reminder from the first page: I'd love to connect with people off the back of this work, so... if you've found this useful and you want to chat to me about it, offer something to say thanks, or support me doing it again in future you could:

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