

Freelance medical publications writing: perspectives of contractors and contractees

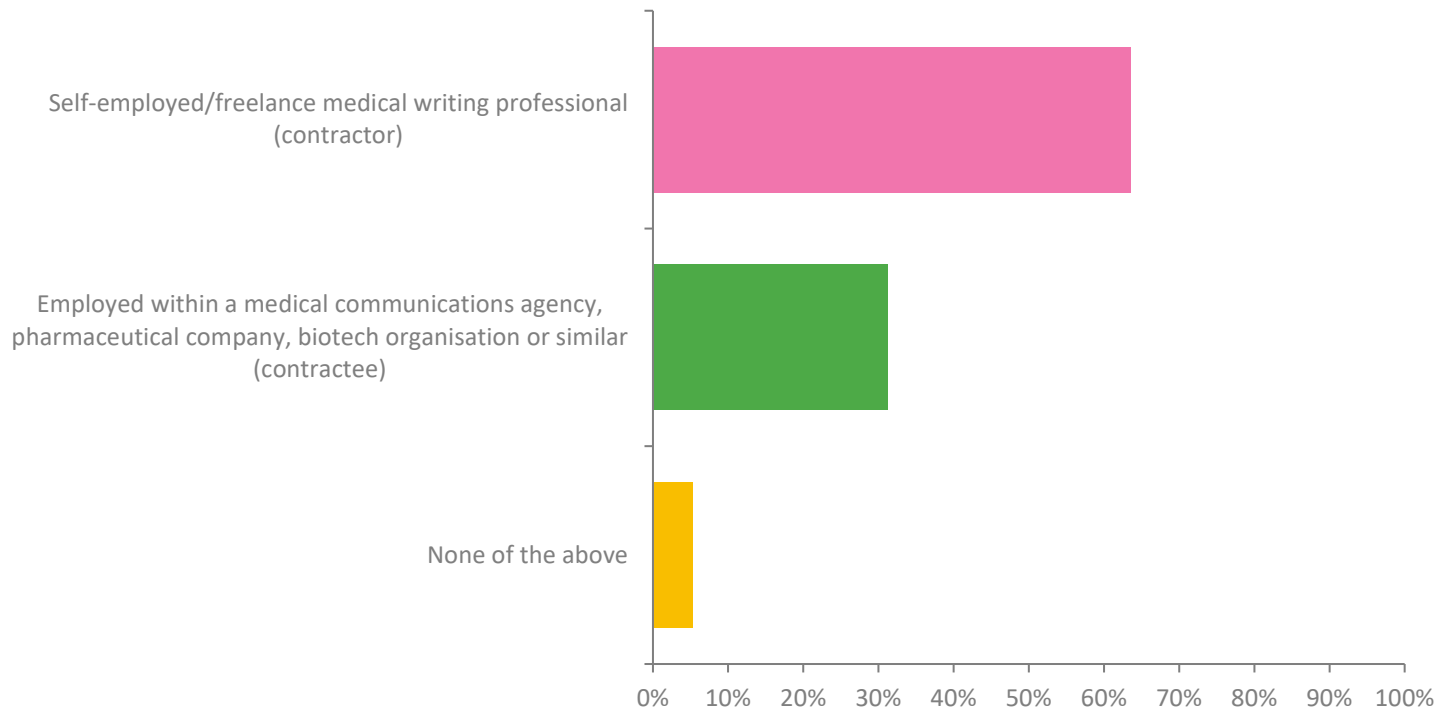
Survey results

Thursday, January 09, 2025

96
Total Responses
Date Created: Tuesday, December 03, 2024
Complete responses received: 96

Q1: Which of the following categories best describes your current employment status?

Answered: 96 Skipped: 0



Q1: Which of the following categories best describes your current employment status?

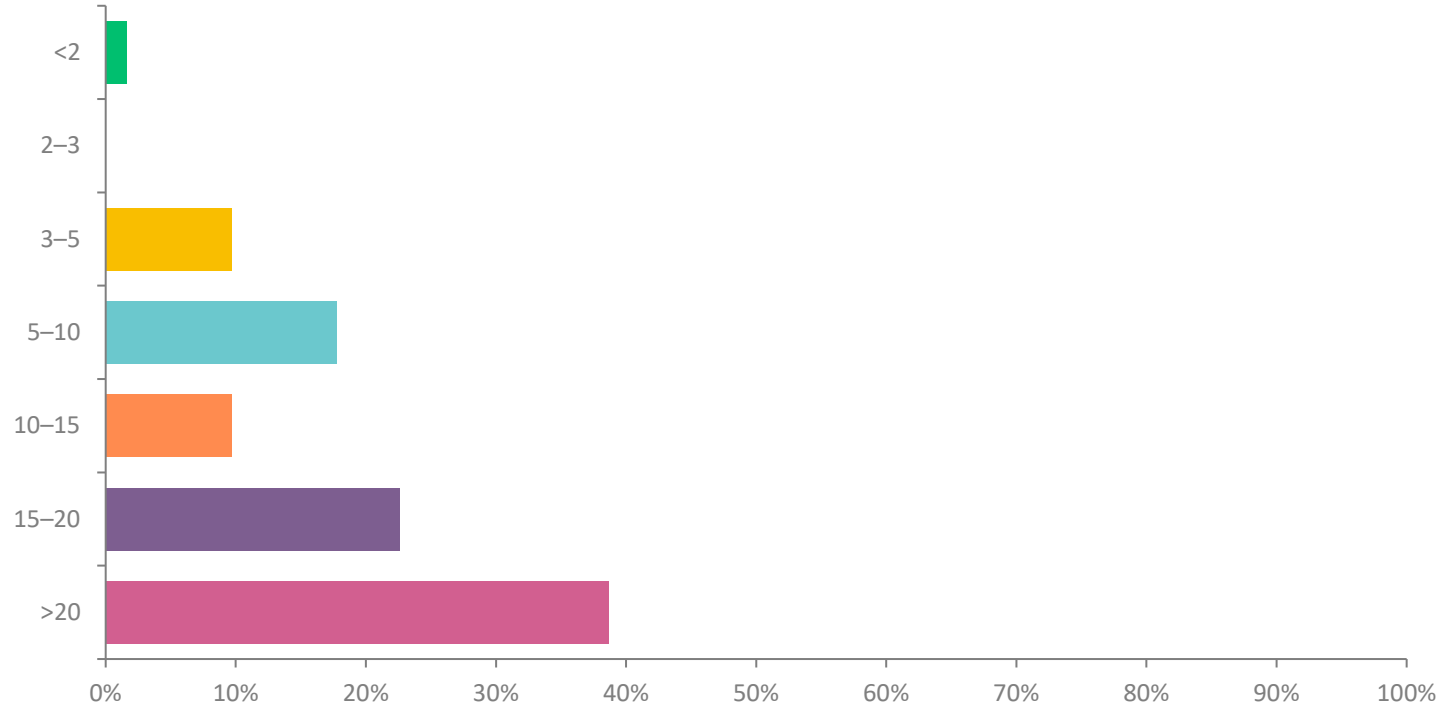
Answered: 96 Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Self-employed/freelance medical writing professional (contractor)	63.54%	61
Employed within a medical communications agency, pharmaceutical company, biotech organisation or similar (contractee)	31.25%	30
None of the above	5.21%	5
TOTAL		96

Questions for Contractors

Q2: How many years have you worked in medical communications?

Answered: 62 Skipped: 34



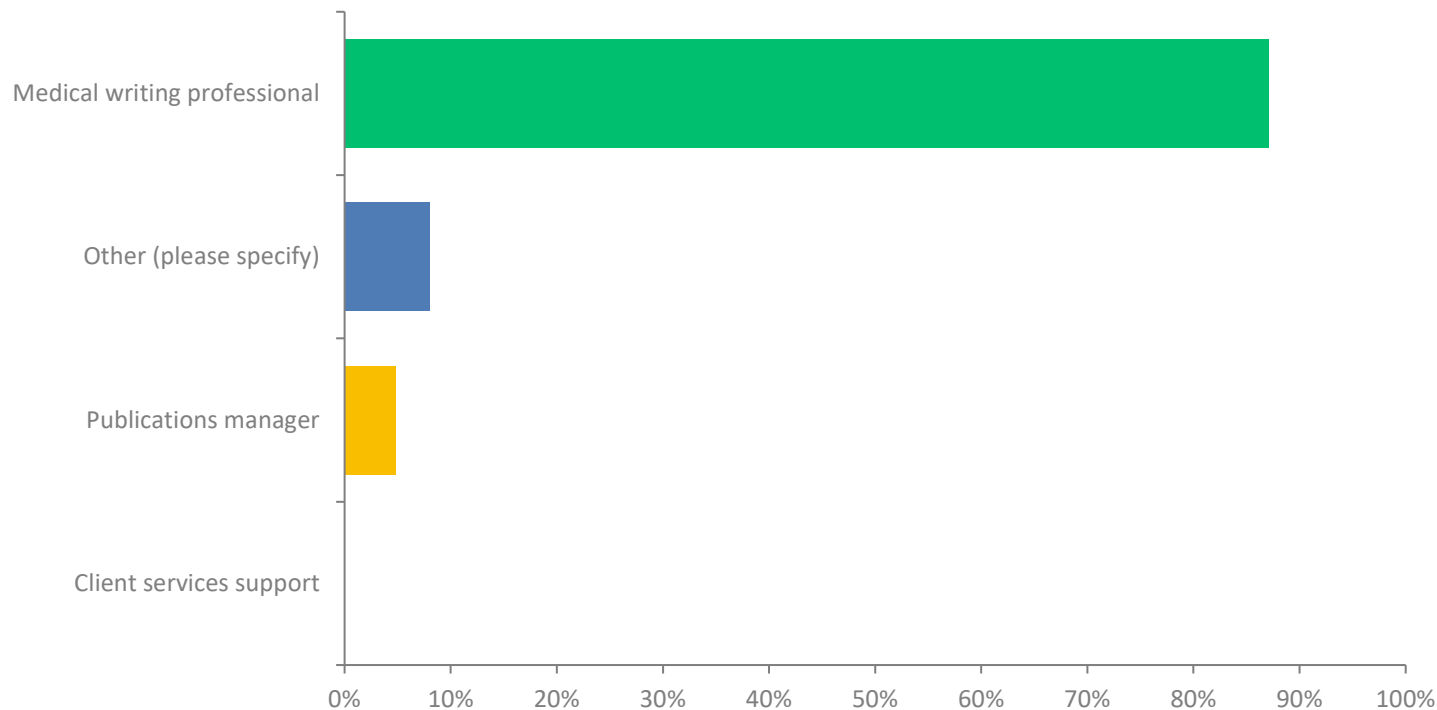
Q2: How many years have you worked in medical communications?

Answered: 62 Skipped: 34

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
<2	1.61%	1
2-3	0.00%	0
3-5	9.68%	6
5-10	17.74%	11
10-15	9.68%	6
15-20	22.58%	14
>20	38.71%	24
TOTAL		62

Q3: What's your current role?

Answered: 62 Skipped: 34



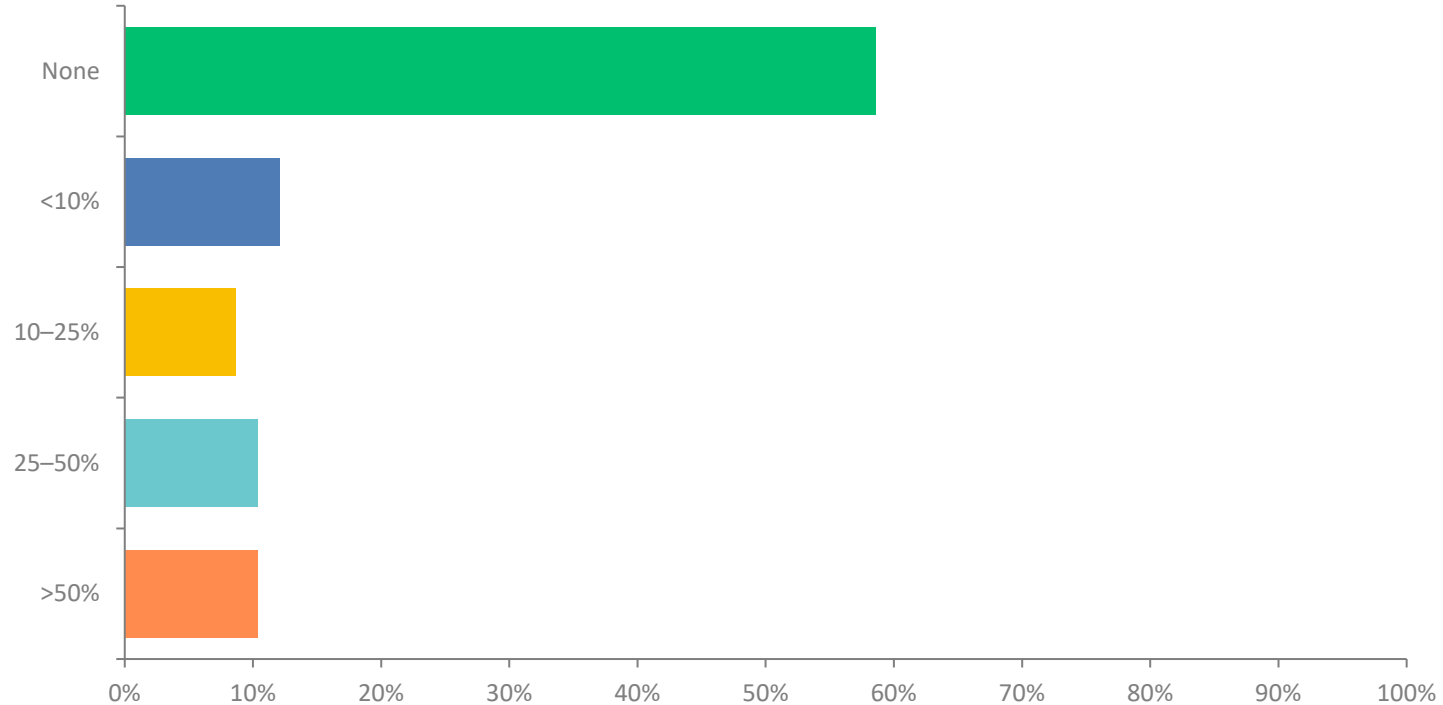
Q3: What's your current role?

Answered: 62 Skipped: 34

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Medical writing professional	87.10%	54
Other (please specify)	8.06%	5
Publications manager	4.84%	3
Client services support	0.00%	0
TOTAL		62

Q4: How much of your publications work do you currently receive direct from pharmaceutical companies (not via agency)?

Answered: 58 Skipped: 38



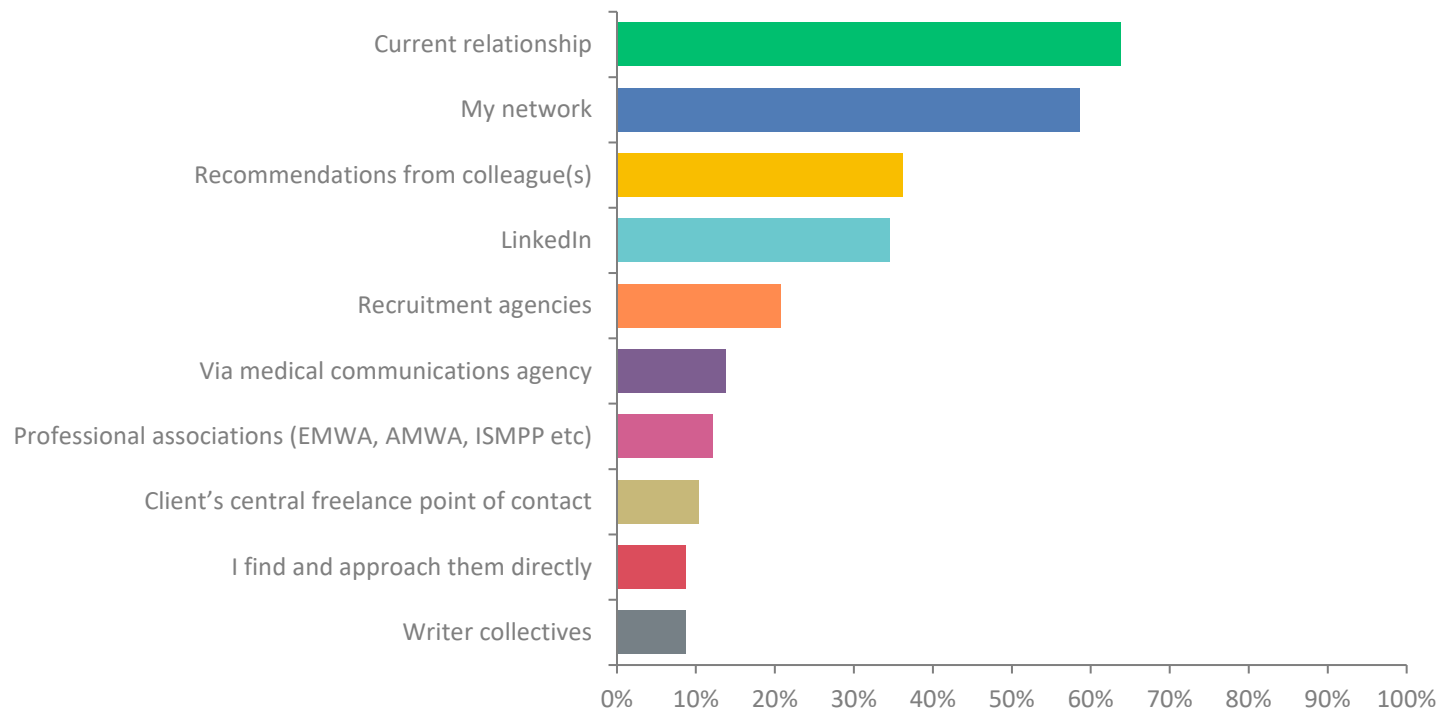
Q4: How much of your publications work do you currently receive direct from pharmaceutical companies (not via agency)?

Answered: 58 Skipped: 38

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
None	58.62%	34
<10%	12.07%	7
10–25%	8.62%	5
25–50%	10.34%	6
>50%	10.34%	6
TOTAL		58

Q5: How do clients find you? Please select up to three options

Answered: 58 Skipped: 38



Q5: How do clients find you? Please select up to three options

Answered: 58 Skipped: 38

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Current relationship	63.79%	37
My network	58.62%	34
Recommendations from colleague(s)	36.21%	21
LinkedIn	34.48%	20
Recruitment agencies	20.69%	12
Via medical communications agency	13.79%	8
Professional associations (EMWA, AMWA, ISMPP etc)	12.07%	7
Client's central freelance point of contact	10.34%	6
I find and approach them directly	8.62%	5
Writer collectives	8.62%	5
TOTAL		155

Q6: What do you see as being the benefits of using your services? Please check all that apply

Answered: 57 Skipped: 39



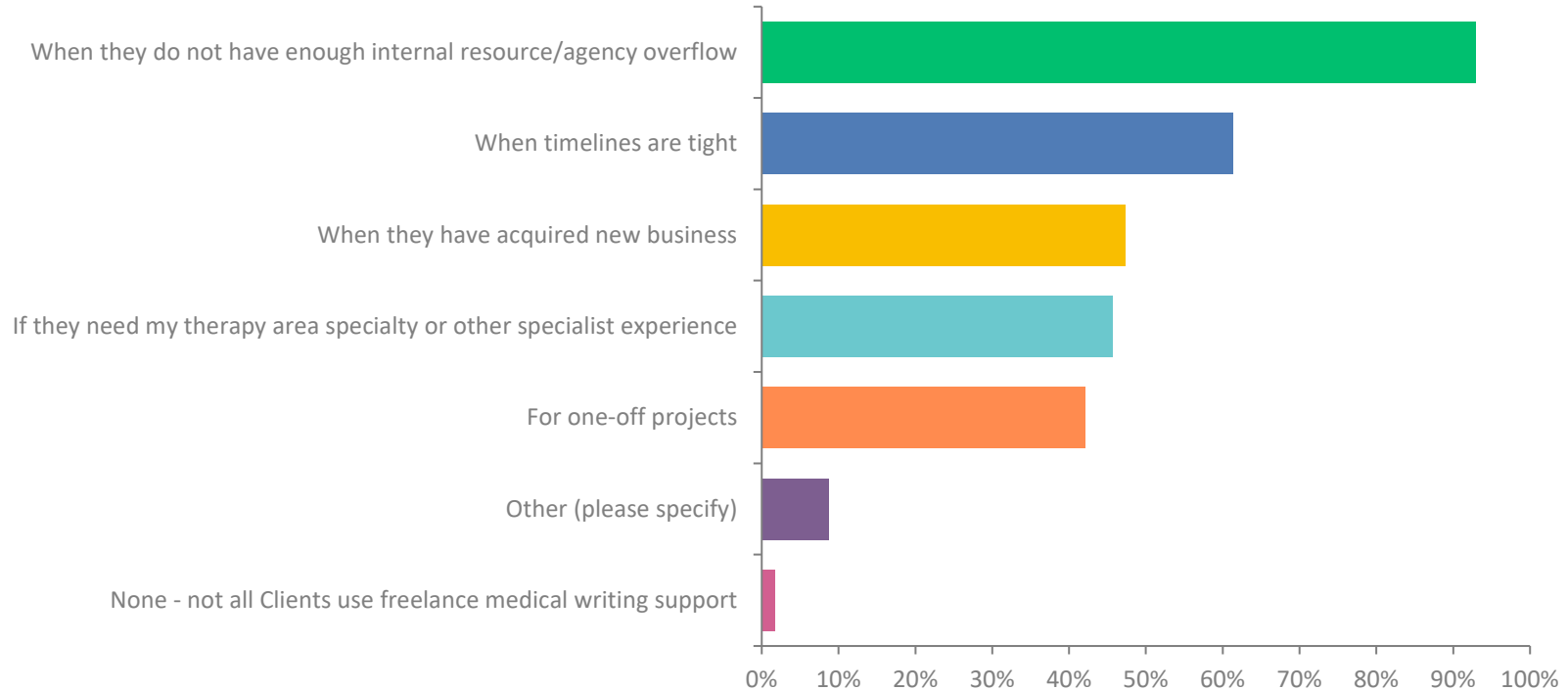
Q6: What do you see as being the benefits of using your services? Please check all that apply

Answered: 57 Skipped: 39

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Writing experience	85.96%	49
Dedicated time to focus on writing	59.65%	34
Flexibility to write when needed	57.89%	33
Short-term additional resource to cover recruitment, holidays, extra workload, or maternity/paternity leave	56.14%	32
Cost compared with agency	54.39%	31
Therapy area expertise	43.86%	25
Fast turnaround times	40.35%	23
Strategic support	38.60%	22
Other (please specify)	12.28%	7
TOTAL		256

Q7: In what situation do you think clients are most likely to consider utilizing freelance medical writers? Please check all that apply

Answered: 57 Skipped: 39



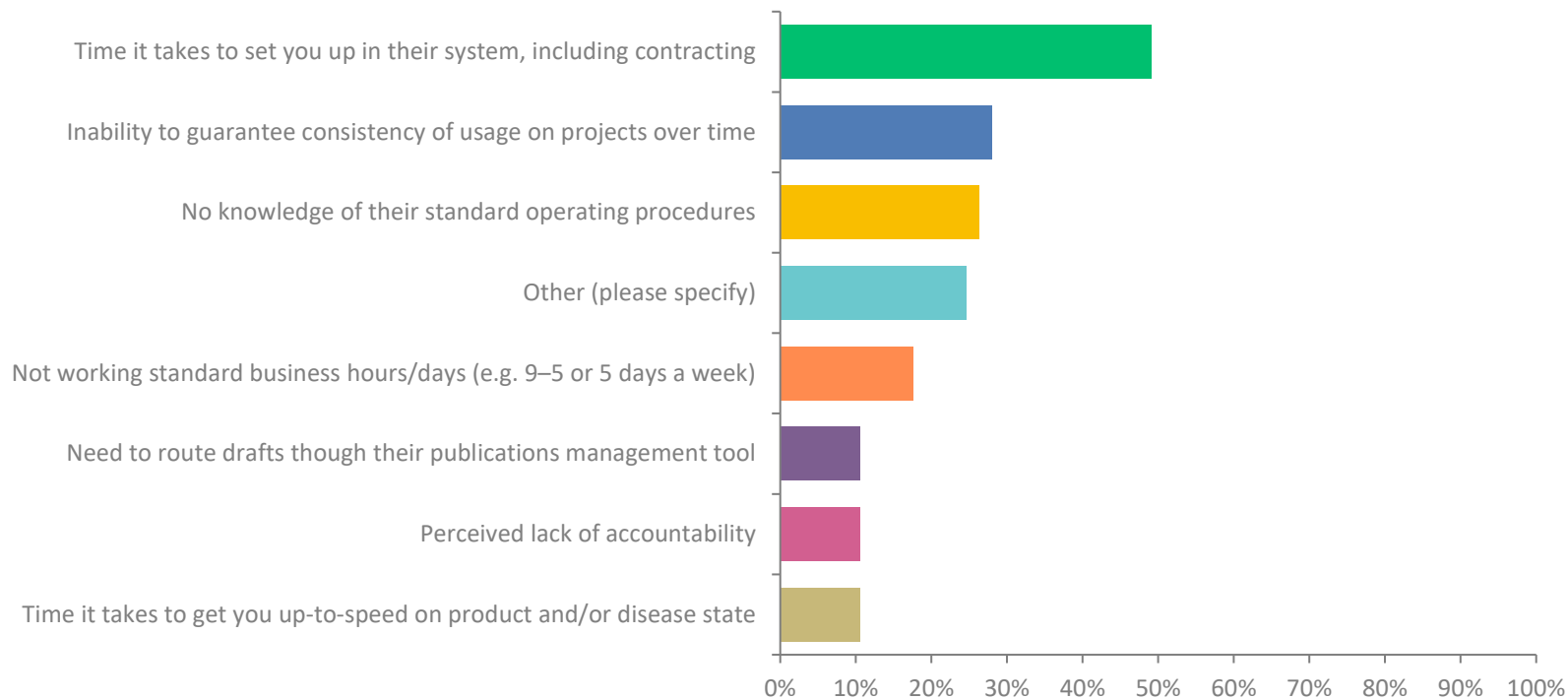
Q7: In what situation do you think clients are most likely to consider utilizing freelance medical writers? Please check all that apply

Answered: 57 Skipped: 39

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
When they do not have enough internal resource/agency overflow	92.98%	53
When timelines are tight	61.40%	35
When they have acquired new business	47.37%	27
If they need my therapy area specialty or other specialist experience	45.61%	26
For one-off projects	42.11%	24
Other (please specify)	8.77%	5
None - not all Clients use freelance medical writing support	1.75%	1
TOTAL		171

Q8: What do you believe a pharmaceutical company or agency client would consider to be the biggest potential drawbacks/barriers in using your services? Please select your top two options

Answered: 57 Skipped: 39



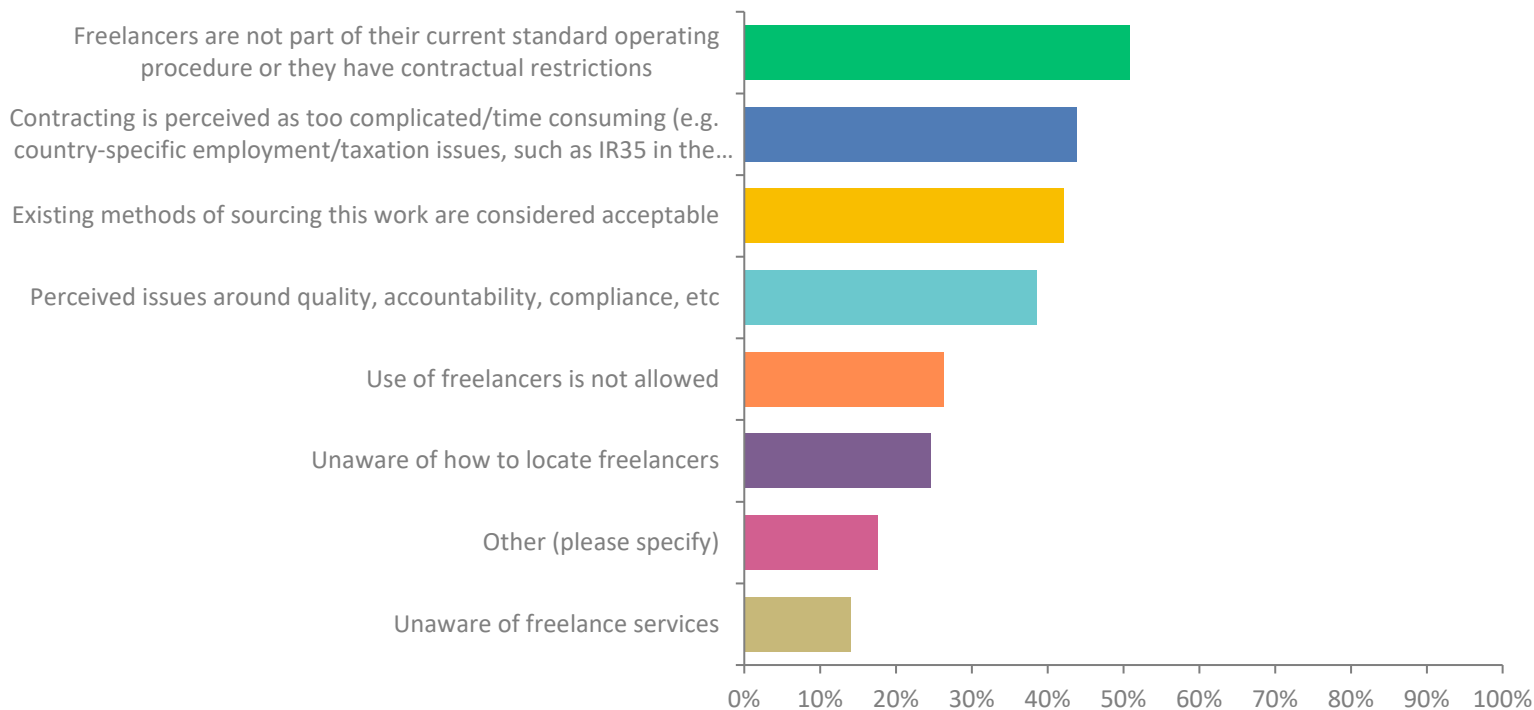
Q8: What do you believe a pharmaceutical company or agency client would consider to be the biggest potential drawbacks/barriers in using your services? Please select your top two options

Answered: 57 Skipped: 39

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Time it takes to set you up in their system, including contracting	49.12%	28
Inability to guarantee consistency of usage on projects over time	28.07%	16
No knowledge of their standard operating procedures	26.32%	15
Other (please specify)	24.56%	14
Not working standard business hours/days (e.g. 9–5 or 5 days a week)	17.54%	10
Need to route drafts through their publications management tool	10.53%	6
Perceived lack of accountability	10.53%	6
Time it takes to get you up-to-speed on product and/or disease state	10.53%	6
TOTAL		101

Q9: Why do you think pharmaceutical companies or medical communications agencies don't use more freelancer medical writers for publications? Please check all that apply

Answered: 57 Skipped: 39



Q9: Why do you think pharmaceutical companies or medical communications agencies don't use more freelancer medical writers for publications?

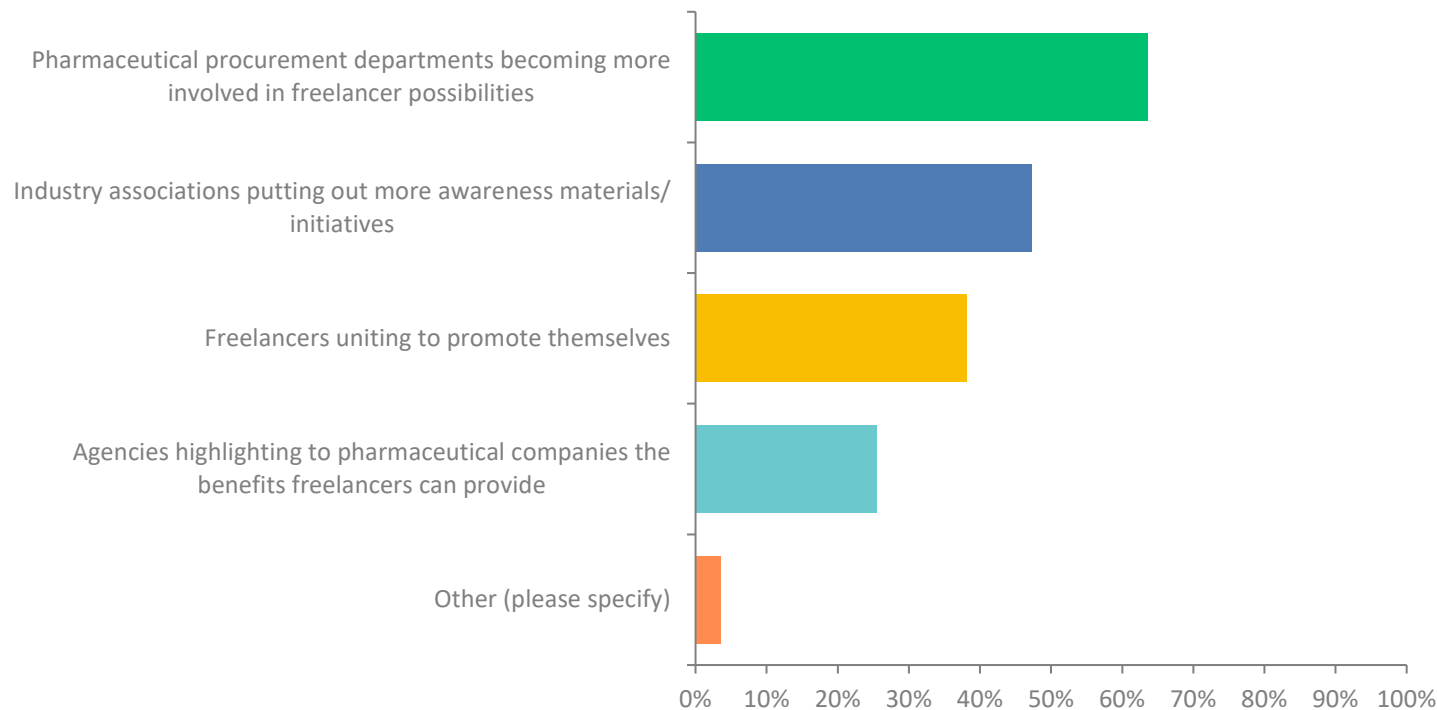
Please check all that apply

Answered: 57 Skipped: 39

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Freelancers are not part of their current standard operating procedure or they have contractual restrictions	50.88%	29
Contracting is perceived as too complicated/time consuming (e.g. country-specific employment/taxation issues, such as IR35 in the UK)	43.86%	25
Existing methods of sourcing this work are considered acceptable	42.11%	24
Perceived issues around quality, accountability, compliance, etc	38.60%	22
Use of freelancers is not allowed	26.32%	15
Unaware of how to locate freelancers	24.56%	14
Other (please specify)	17.54%	10
Unaware of freelance services	14.04%	8
TOTAL		147

Q10: What additional types of initiatives might be helpful to bring awareness and promote the benefits of freelance medical writing services? Please select up to two options

Answered: 55 Skipped: 41



Q10: What additional types of initiatives might be helpful to bring awareness and promote the benefits of freelance medical writing services?

Please select up to two options

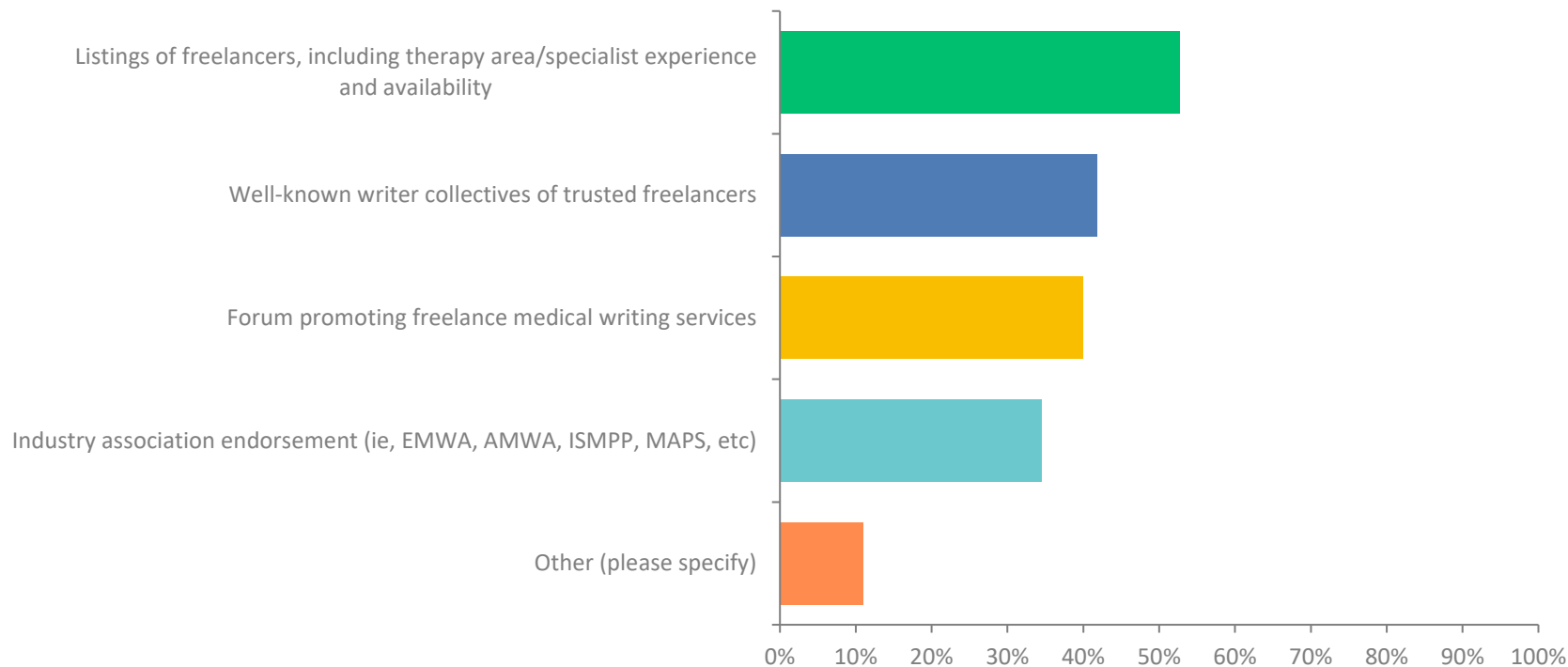
Answered: 55 Skipped: 41

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Pharmaceutical procurement departments becoming more involved in freelancer possibilities	63.64%	35
Industry associations putting out more awareness materials/initiatives	47.27%	26
Freelancers uniting to promote themselves	38.18%	21
Agencies highlighting to pharmaceutical companies the benefits freelancers can provide	25.45%	14
Other (please specify)	3.64%	2
TOTAL		98

Q11: What could help pharmaceutical clients find your services?

Please select up to two options

Answered: 55 Skipped: 41



Q11: What could help pharmaceutical clients find your services?

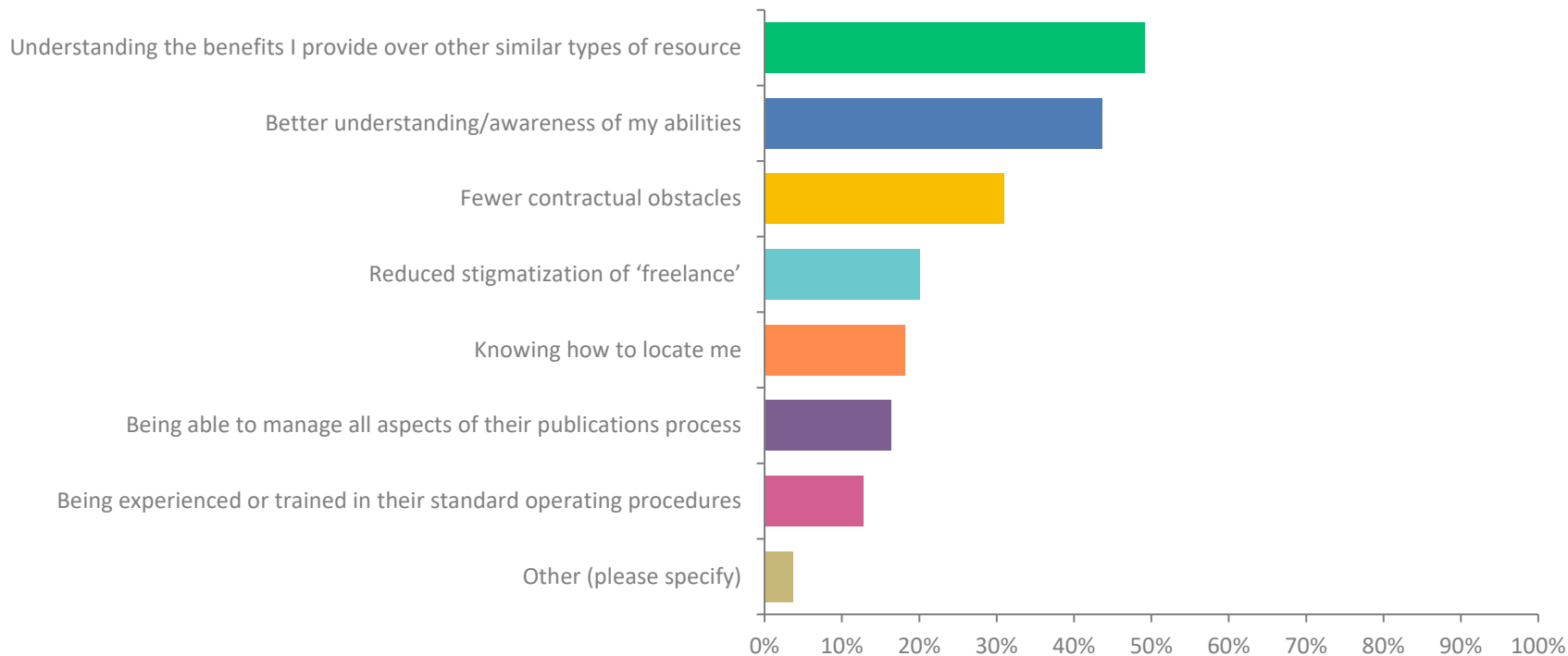
Please select up to two options

Answered: 55 Skipped: 41

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Listings of freelancers, including therapy area/specialist experience and availability	52.73%	29
Well-known writer collectives of trusted freelancers	41.82%	23
Forum promoting freelance medical writing services	40.00%	22
Industry association endorsement (ie, EMWA, AMWA, ISMPP, MAPS, etc)	34.55%	19
Other (please specify)	10.91%	6
TOTAL		99

Q12: What do you think would cause Clients to consider utilizing more of your services in the future? Please select up to two options

Answered: 55 Skipped: 41



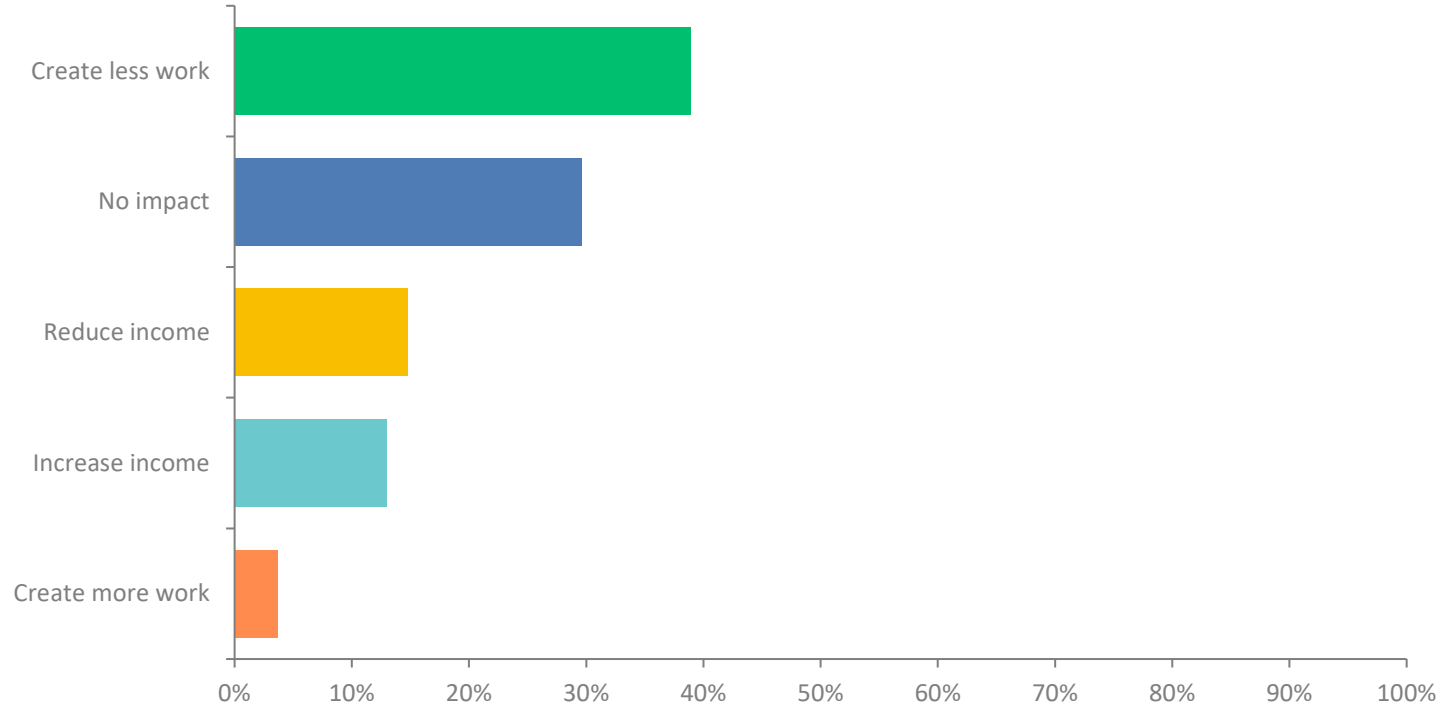
Q12: What do you think would cause Clients to consider utilizing more of your services in the future? Please select up to two options

Answered: 55 Skipped: 41

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Understanding the benefits I provide over other similar types of resource	49.09%	27
Better understanding/awareness of my abilities	43.64%	24
Fewer contractual obstacles	30.91%	17
Reduced stigmatization of 'freelance'	20.00%	11
Knowing how to locate me	18.18%	10
Being able to manage all aspects of their publications process	16.36%	9
Being experienced or trained in their standard operating procedures	12.73%	7
Other (please specify)	3.64%	2
TOTAL		107

Q13: What impact do you think GenAI will have on your ability to provide medical writing services for publications in the future?

Answered: 54 Skipped: 42



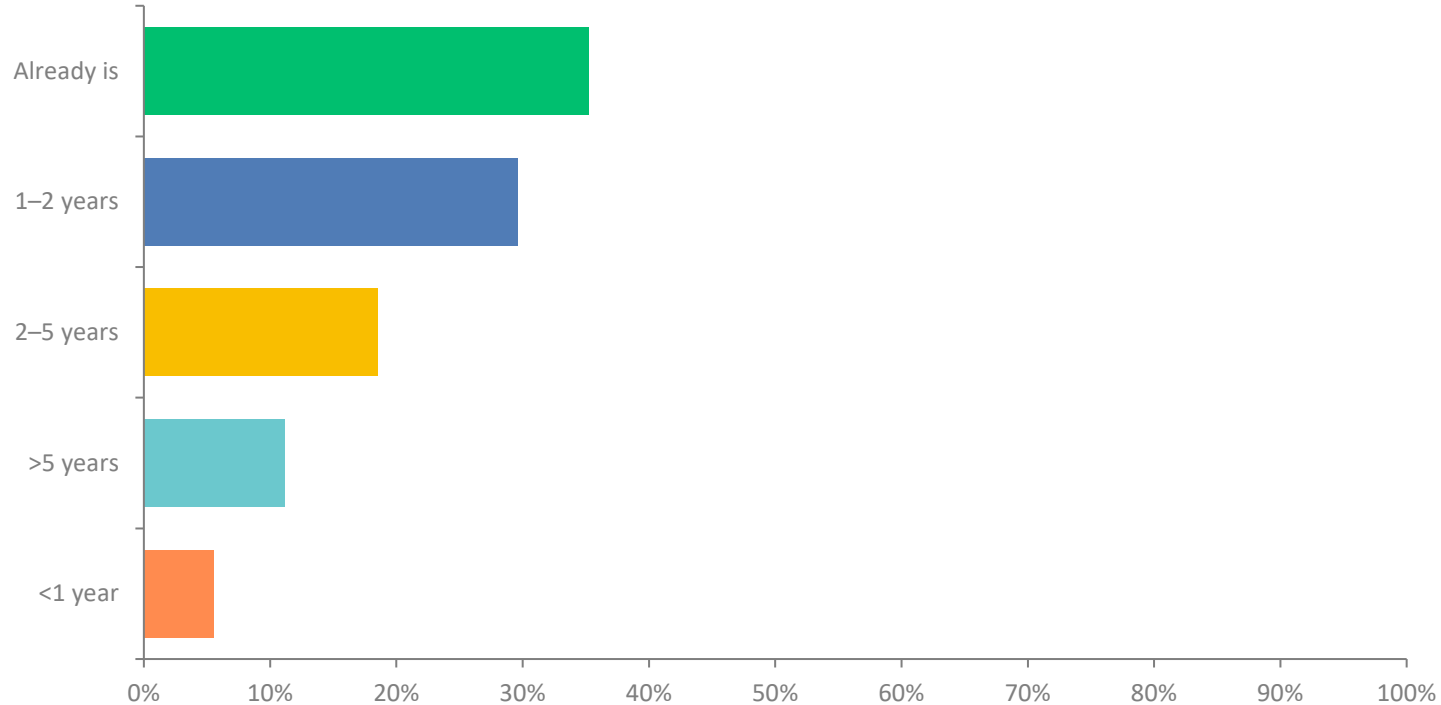
Q13: What impact do you think GenAI will have on your ability to provide medical writing services for publications in the future?

Answered: 54 Skipped: 42

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Create less work	38.89%	21
No impact	29.63%	16
Reduce income	14.81%	8
Increase income	12.96%	7
Create more work	3.70%	2
TOTAL		54

Q14: How long before you believe GenAI will create an impact on medical writing services?

Answered: 54 Skipped: 42



Q14: How long before you believe GenAI will create an impact on medical writing services?

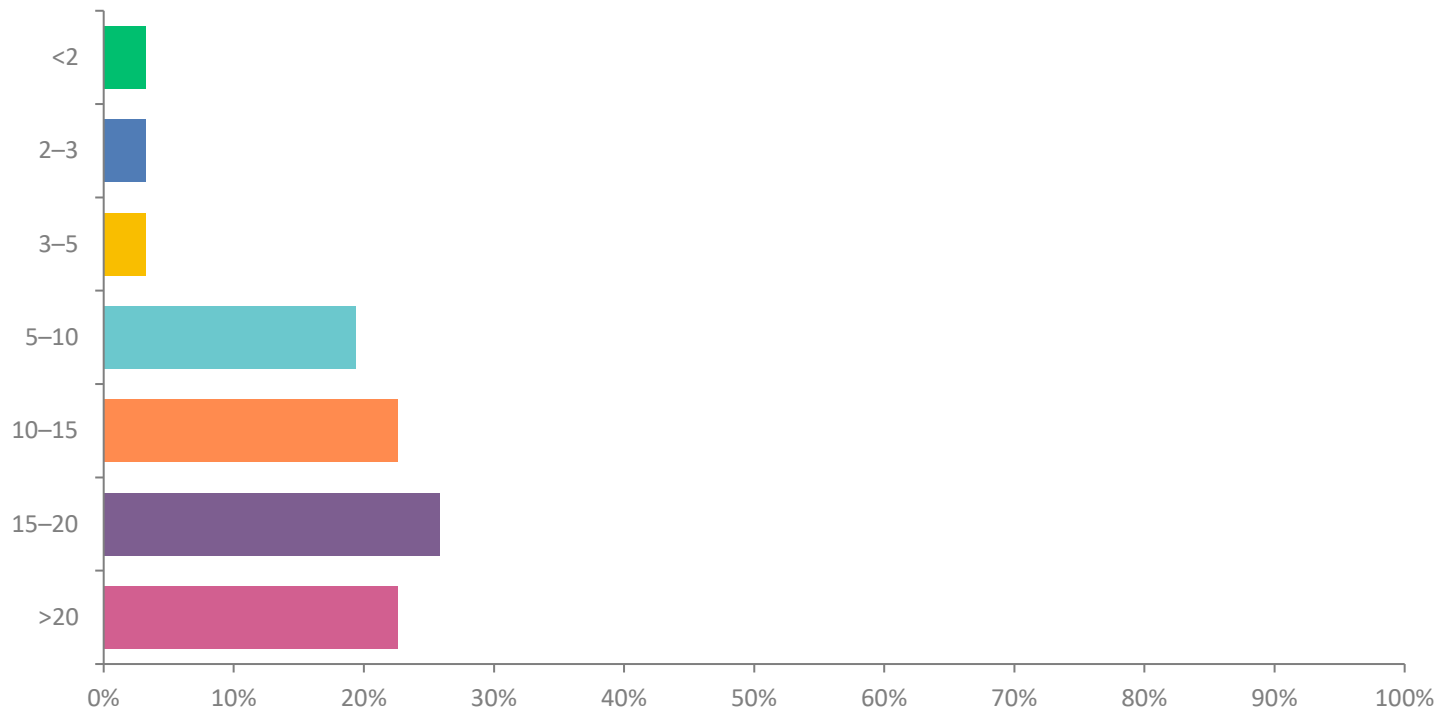
Answered: 54 Skipped: 42

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Already is	35.19%	19
1–2 years	29.63%	16
2–5 years	18.52%	10
>5 years	11.11%	6
<1 year	5.56%	3
TOTAL		54

Questions for Contractees

Q15: How many years have you worked in medical communications?

Answered: 31 Skipped: 65



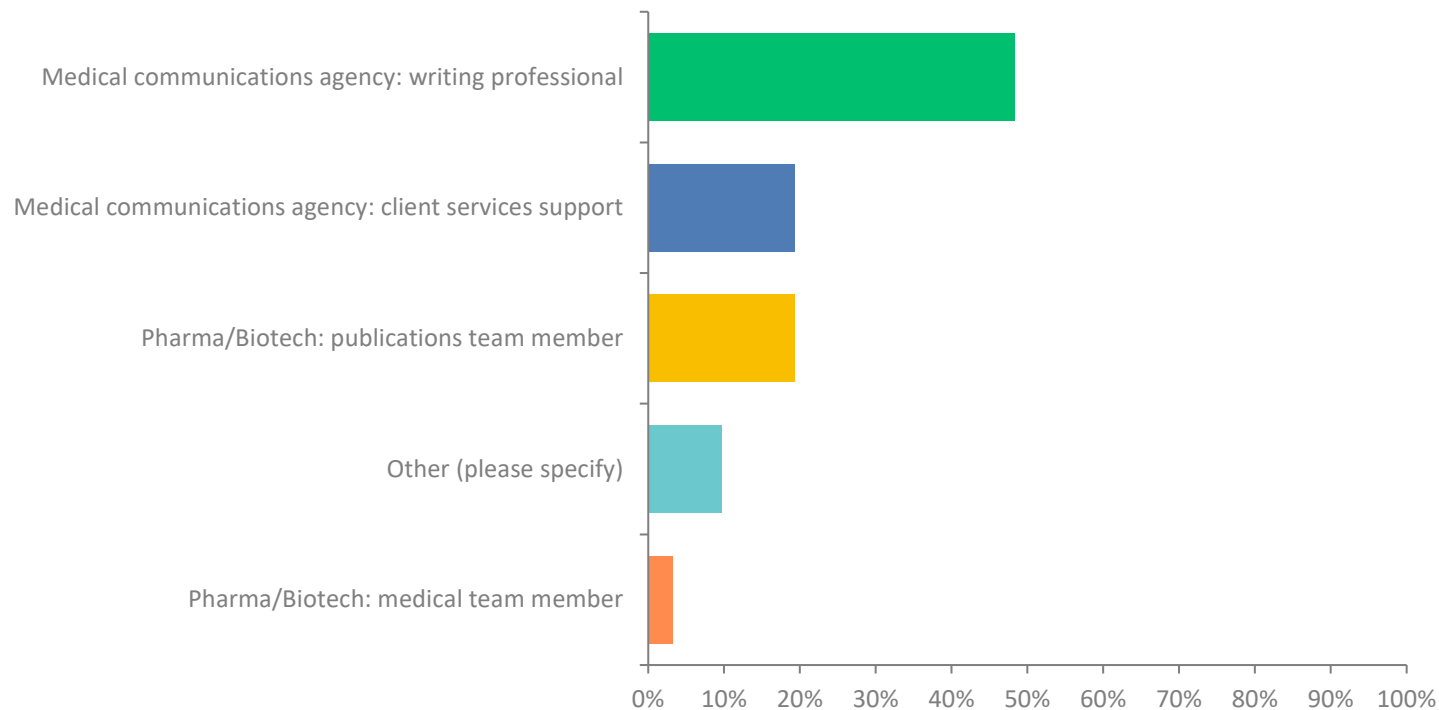
Q15: How many years have you worked in medical communications?

Answered: 31 Skipped: 65

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
<2	3.23%	1
2-3	3.23%	1
3-5	3.23%	1
5-10	19.35%	6
10-15	22.58%	7
15-20	25.81%	8
>20	22.58%	7
TOTAL		31

Q16: What's your current role?

Answered: 31 Skipped: 65



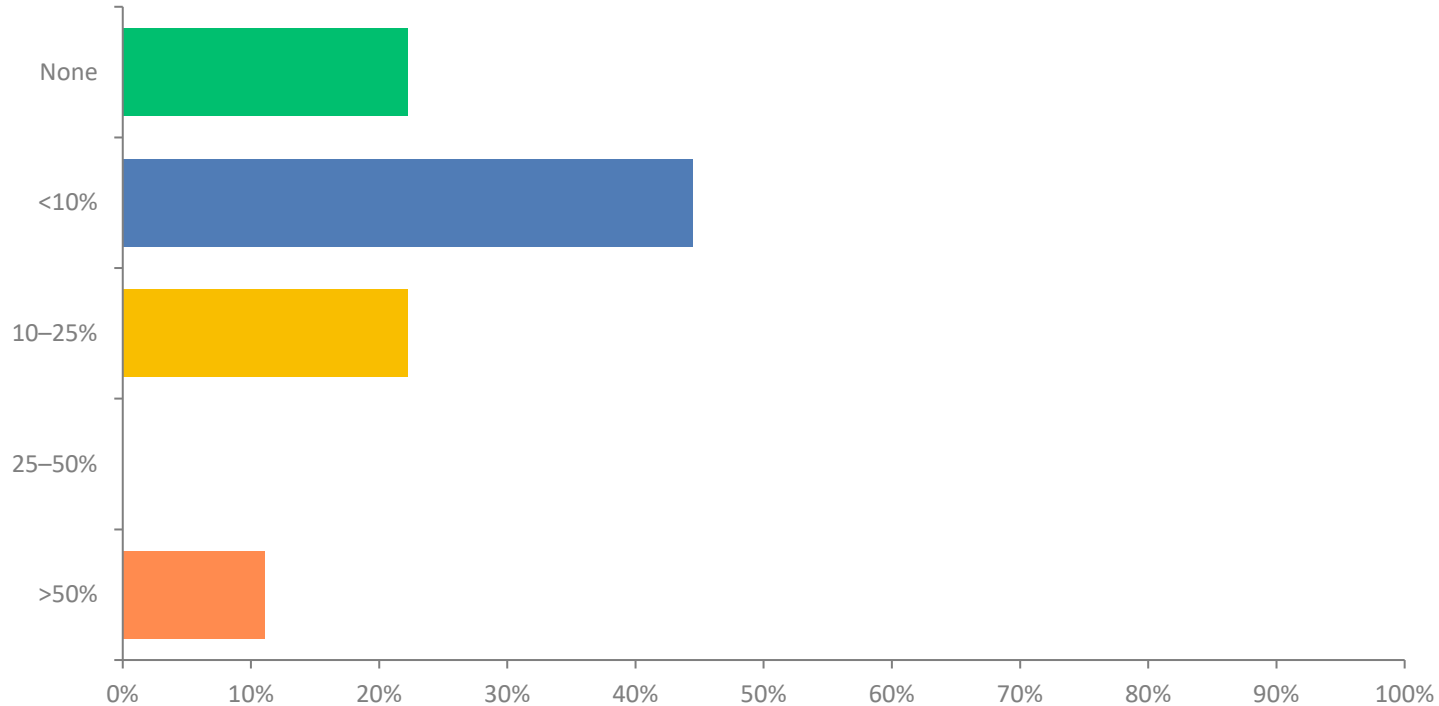
Q16: What's your current role?

Answered: 31 Skipped: 65

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Medical communications agency: writing professional	48.39%	15
Medical communications agency: client services support	19.35%	6
Pharma/Biotech: publications team member	19.35%	6
Other (please specify)	9.68%	3
Pharma/Biotech: medical team member	3.23%	1
TOTAL		31

Q17: How much of your publications medical writing do you currently freelance (not via in-agency medical writers)?

Answered: 27 Skipped: 69



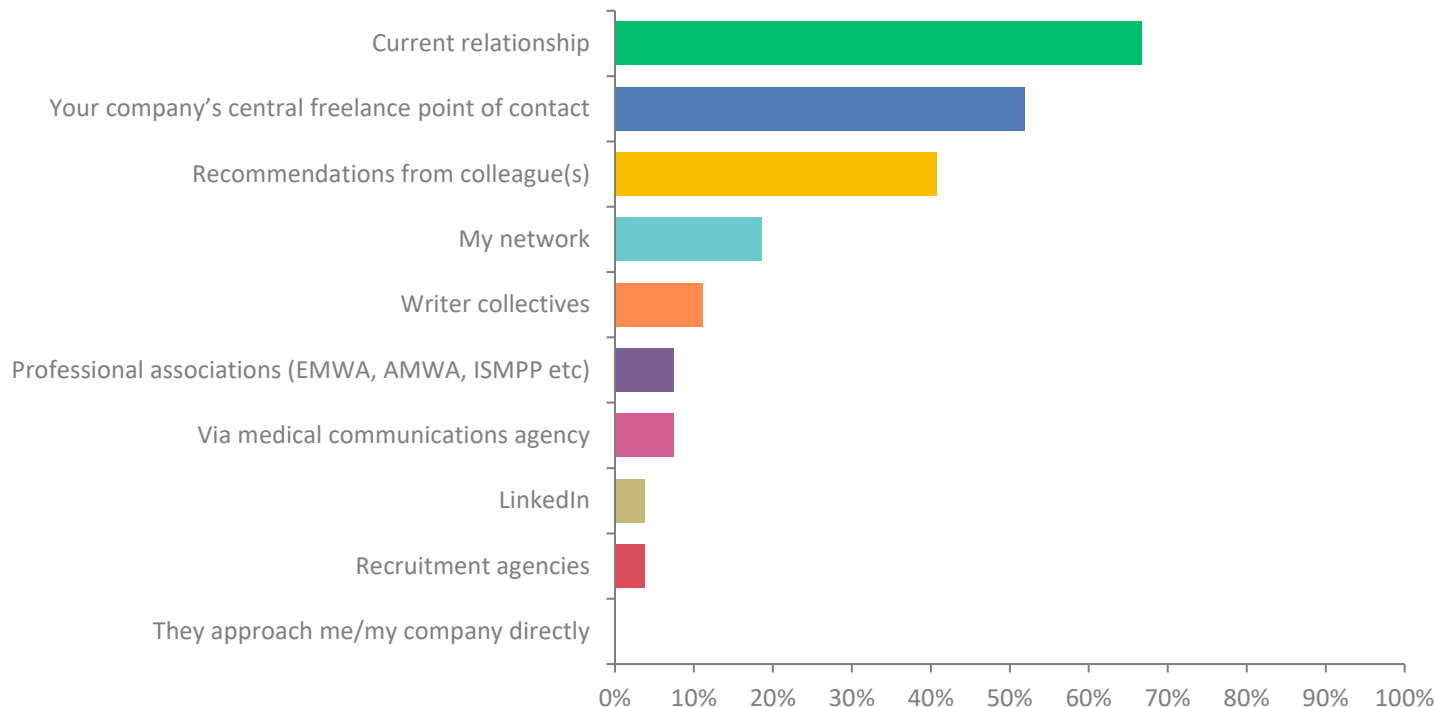
Q17: How much of your publications medical writing do you currently freelance (not via in-agency medical writers)?

Answered: 27 Skipped: 69

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
None	22.22%	6
<10%	44.44%	12
10–25%	22.22%	6
25–50%	0.00%	0
>50%	11.11%	3
TOTAL		27

Q18: When you're interested in utilizing external support, how do you find freelancer medical writers? Please select up to three options

Answered: 27 Skipped: 69



Q18: When you're interested in utilizing external support, how do you find freelancer medical writers? Please select up to three options

Answered: 27 Skipped: 69

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Current relationship	66.67%	18
Your company's central freelance point of contact	51.85%	14
Recommendations from colleague(s)	40.74%	11
My network	18.52%	5
Writer collectives	11.11%	3
Professional associations (EMWA, AMWA, ISMPP etc)	7.41%	2
Via medical communications agency	7.41%	2
LinkedIn	3.70%	1
Recruitment agencies	3.70%	1
They approach me/my company directly	0.00%	0
TOTAL		57

Q19: What do you see as being the benefits of using freelance medical writers for publications? Please check all that apply

Answered: 23 Skipped: 73



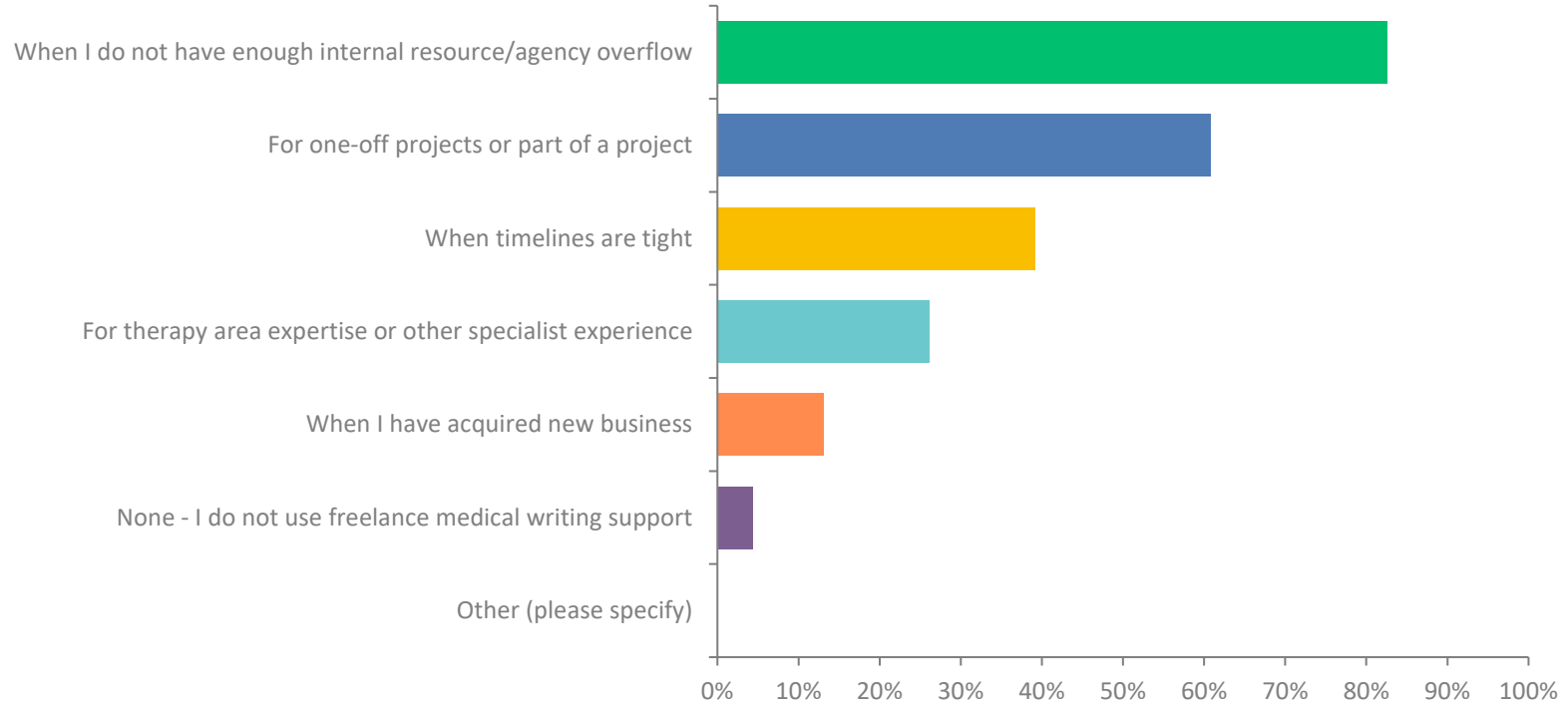
Q19: What do you see as being the benefits of using freelance medical writers for publications? Please check all that apply

Answered: 23 Skipped: 73

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Short-term additional resource to cover recruitment, holidays, extra workload, or maternity/paternity leave	65.22%	15
Dedicated time to focus on writing	47.83%	11
Fast turnaround times	43.48%	10
Writing experience	43.48%	10
Cost compared with agency	39.13%	9
Flexibility to write when needed	34.78%	8
Therapy area expertise	30.43%	7
Strategic support	17.39%	4
Other (please specify)	8.70%	2
TOTAL		76

Q20: In what situation are you most likely to consider utilizing freelance medical writers for publications? Please check all that apply

Answered: 23 Skipped: 73



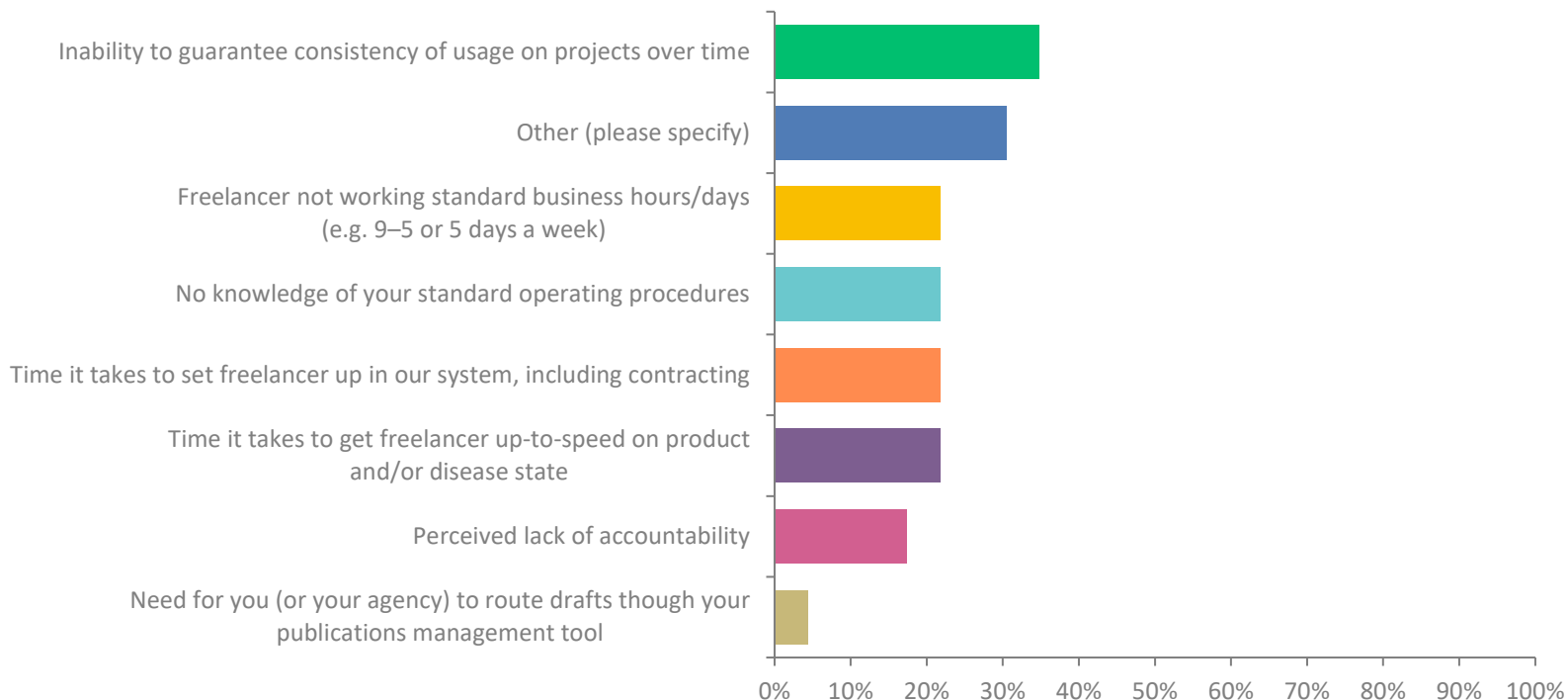
Q20: In what situation are you most likely to consider utilizing freelance medical writers for publications? Please check all that apply

Answered: 23 Skipped: 73

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
When I do not have enough internal resource/agency overflow	82.61%	19
For one-off projects or part of a project	60.87%	14
When timelines are tight	39.13%	9
For therapy area expertise or other specialist experience	26.09%	6
When I have acquired new business	13.04%	3
None - I do not use freelance medical writing support	4.35%	1
Other (please specify)	0.00%	0
TOTAL		52

Q21: What do you see as being the biggest potential drawbacks/barriers in using freelance medical writing services? Please select your top two options

Answered: 23 Skipped: 73



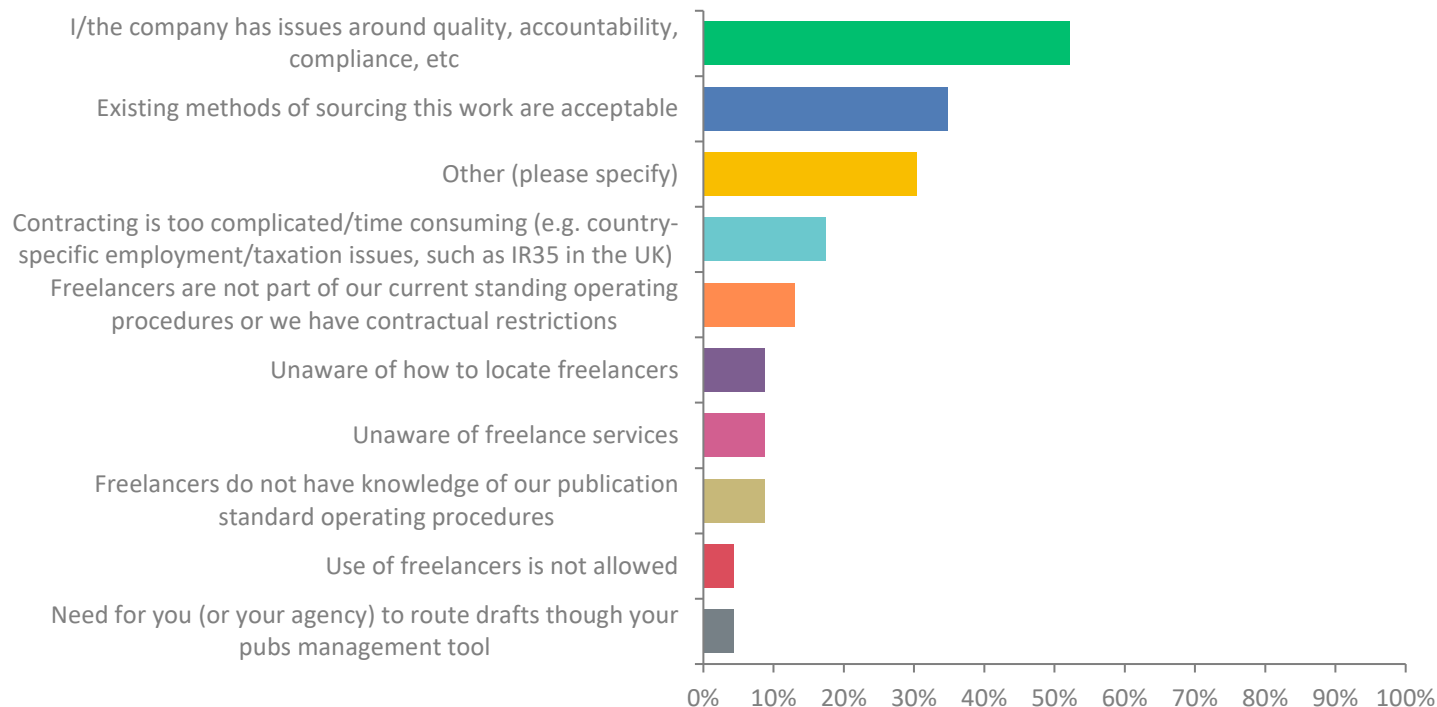
Q21: What do you see as being the biggest potential drawbacks/barriers in using freelance medical writing services? Please select your top two options

Answered: 23 Skipped: 73

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Inability to guarantee consistency of usage on projects over time	34.78%	8
Other (please specify)	30.43%	7
Freelancer not working standard business hours/days (e.g. 9–5 or 5 days a week)	21.74%	5
No knowledge of your standard operating procedures	21.74%	5
Time it takes to set freelancer up in our system, including contracting	21.74%	5
Time it takes to get freelancer up-to-speed on product and/or disease state	21.74%	5
Perceived lack of accountability	17.39%	4
Need for you (or your agency) to route drafts through your publications management tool	4.35%	1
TOTAL		40

Q22: Why don't you use more freelance medical writers for publications? Please check all that apply

Answered: 23 Skipped: 73



Q22: Why don't you use more freelance medical writers for publications? Please check all that apply

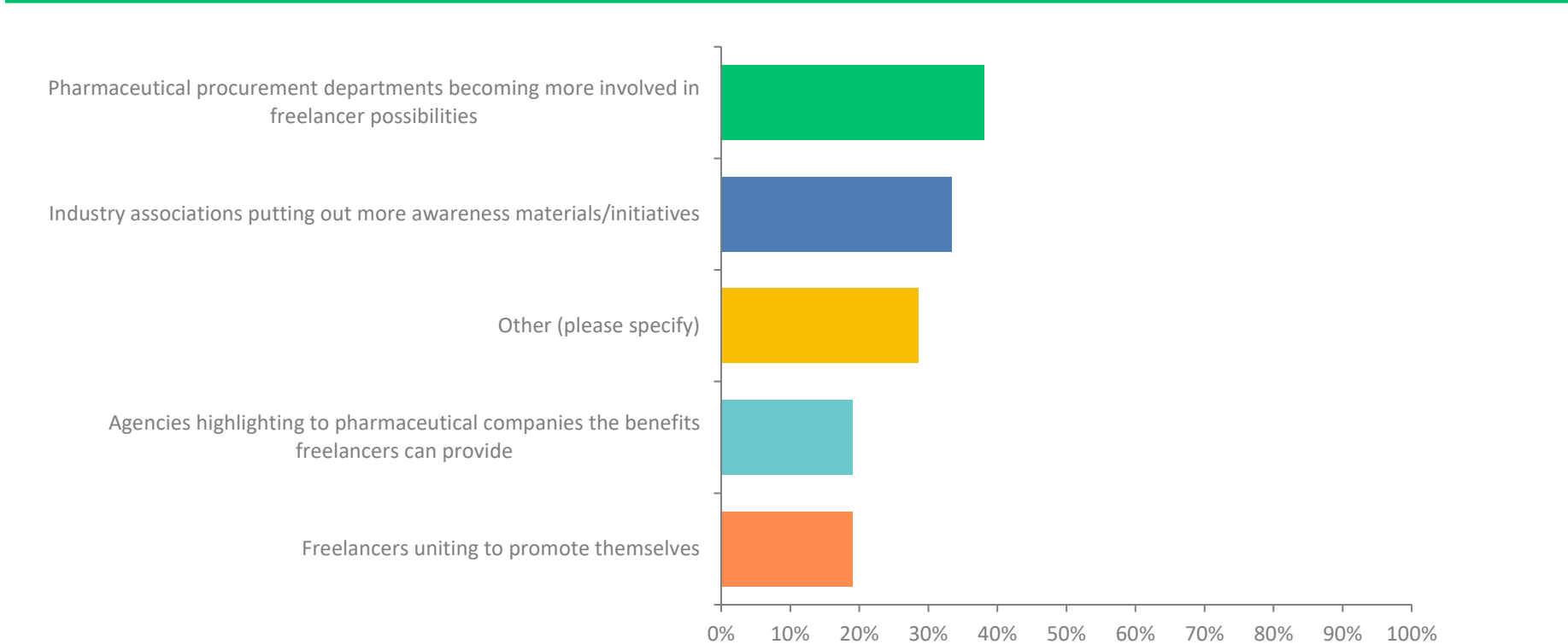
Answered: 23 Skipped: 73

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
I/the company has issues around quality, accountability, compliance, etc	52.17%	12
Existing methods of sourcing this work are acceptable	34.78%	8
Other (please specify)	30.43%	7
Contracting is too complicated/time consuming (e.g. country-specific employment/taxation issues, such as IR35 in the UK)	17.39%	4
Freelancers are not part of our current standing operating procedures or we have contractual restrictions	13.04%	3
Unaware of how to locate freelancers	8.70%	2
Unaware of freelance services	8.70%	2
Freelancers do not have knowledge of our publication standard operating procedures	8.70%	2
Use of freelancers is not allowed	4.35%	1
Need for you (or your agency) to route drafts through your pubs management tool	4.35%	1
TOTAL		42

Q23: What additional types of initiatives might you find helpful in furthering your understanding as to the benefits of freelance medical writing services?

Please select up to two options

Answered: 21 Skipped: 75



Q23: What additional types of initiatives might you find helpful in furthering your understanding as to the benefits of freelance medical writing services?

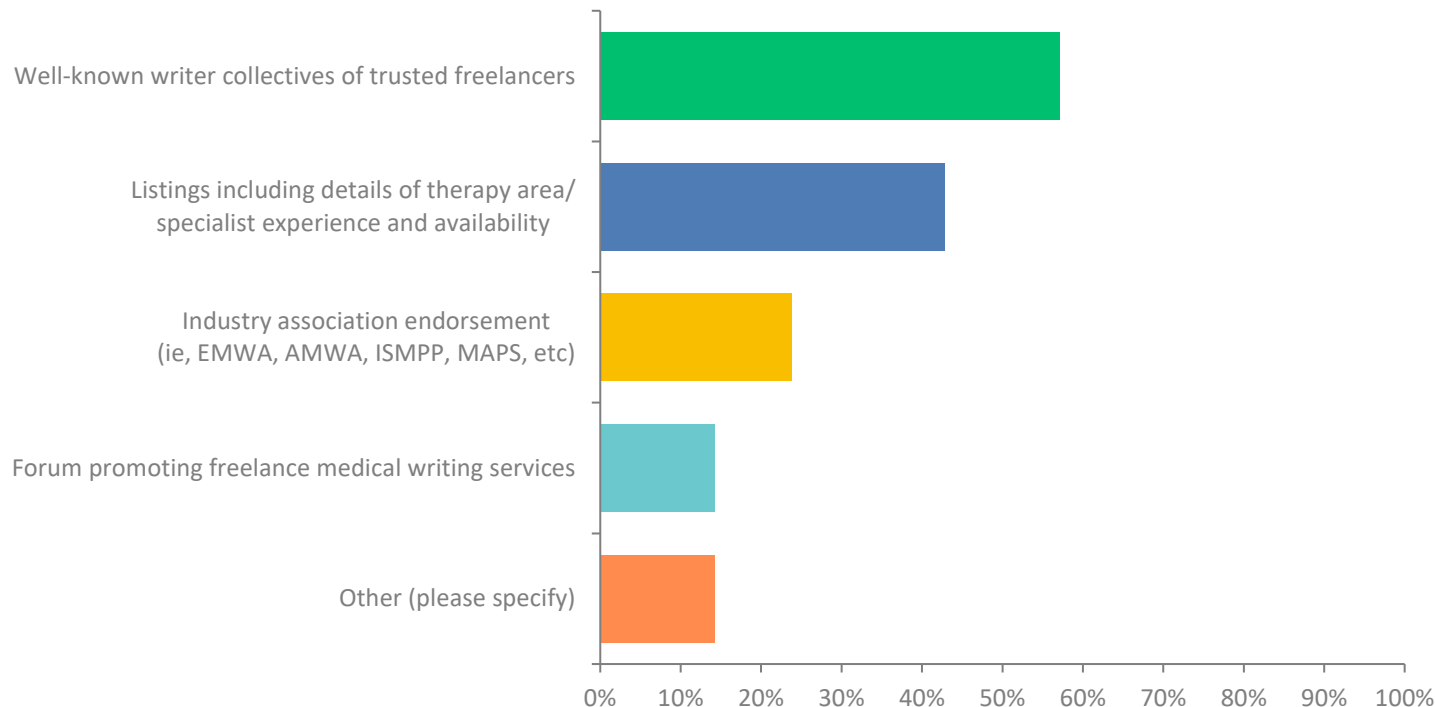
Please select up to two options

Answered: 21 Skipped: 75

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Pharmaceutical procurement departments becoming more involved in freelancer possibilities	38.10%	8
Industry associations putting out more awareness materials/initiatives	33.33%	7
Other (please specify)	28.57%	6
Agencies highlighting to pharmaceutical companies the benefits freelancers can provide	19.05%	4
Freelancers uniting to promote themselves	19.05%	4
TOTAL		29

Q24: What else can be done to help you find freelance medical writers? Please select up to two options

Answered: 21 Skipped: 75



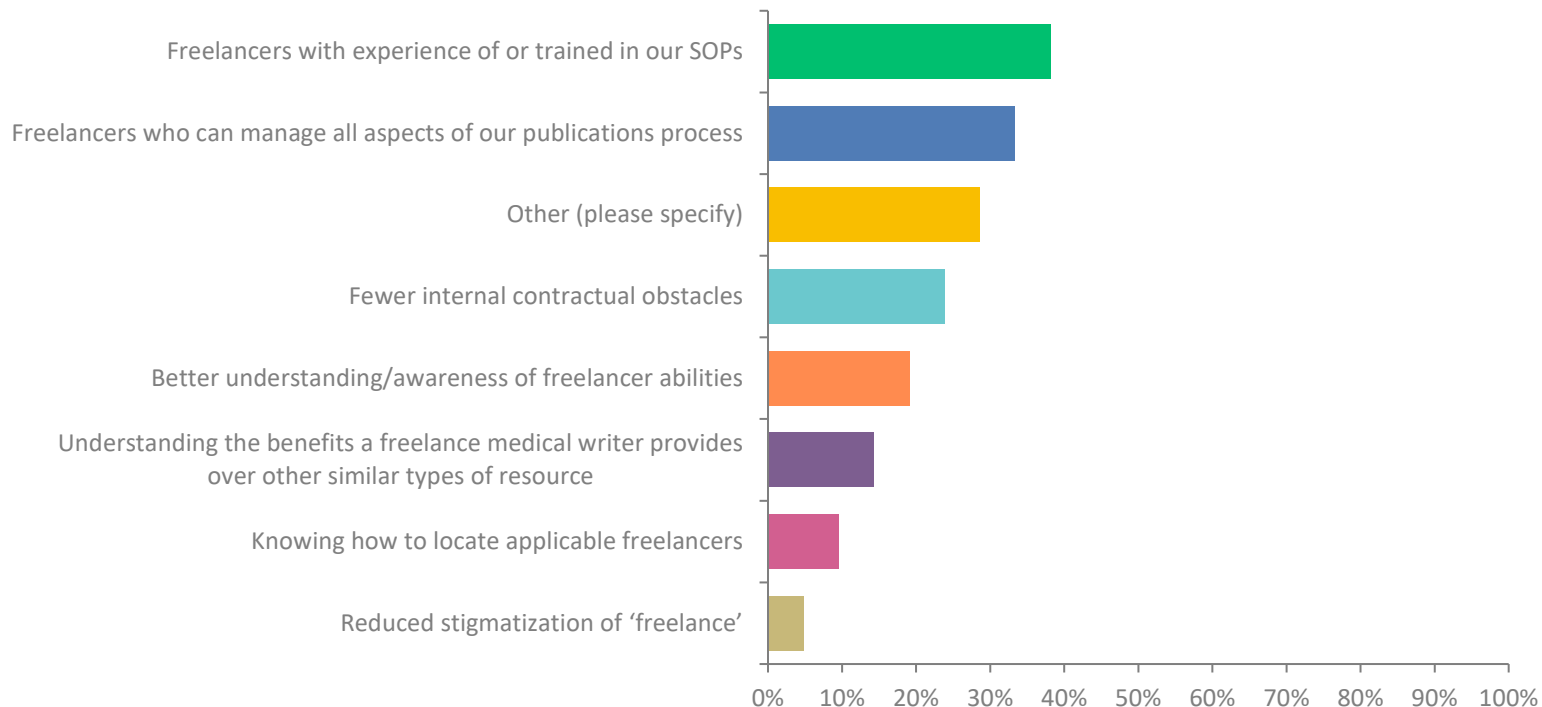
Q24: What else can be done to help you find freelance medical writers? Please select up to two options

Answered: 21 Skipped: 75

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Well-known writer collectives of trusted freelancers	57.14%	12
Listings including details of therapy area/specialist experience and availability	42.86%	9
Industry association endorsement (ie, EMWA, AMWA, ISMPP, MAPS, etc)	23.81%	5
Forum promoting freelance medical writing services	14.29%	3
Other (please specify)	14.29%	3
TOTAL		32

Q25: What would cause you to consider utilizing more freelance medical writing for publications in the future? Please select up to two options

Answered: 21 Skipped: 75



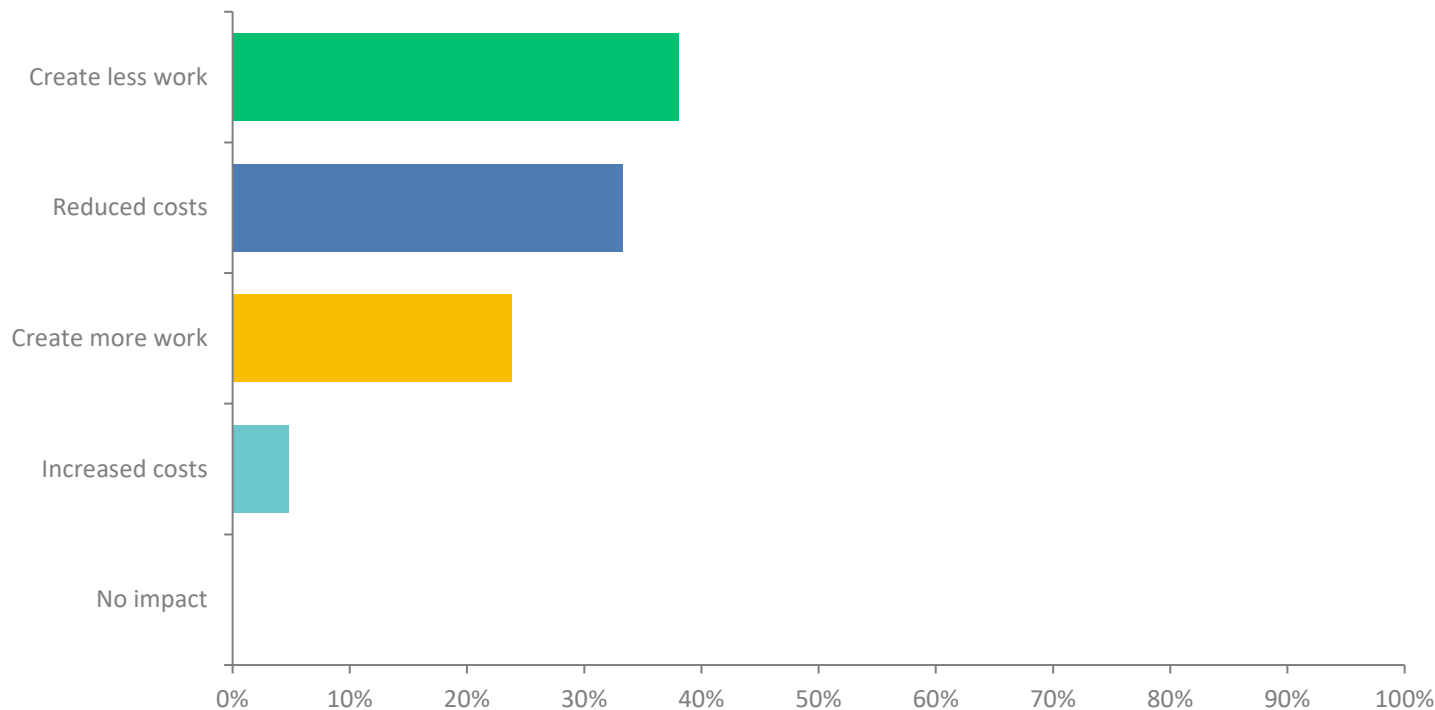
Q25: What would cause you to consider utilizing more freelance medical writing for publications in the future? Please select up to two options

Answered: 21 Skipped: 75

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Freelancers with experience of or trained in our SOPs	38.10%	8
Freelancers who can manage all aspects of our publications process	33.33%	7
Other (please specify)	28.57%	6
Fewer internal contractual obstacles	23.81%	5
Better understanding/awareness of freelancer abilities	19.05%	4
Understanding the benefits a freelance medical writer provides over other similar types of resource	14.29%	3
Knowing how to locate applicable freelancers	9.52%	2
Reduced stigmatization of 'freelance'	4.76%	1
TOTAL		36

Q26: What impact do you think GenAI will have for medical publication creation and management in the future?

Answered: 21 Skipped: 75



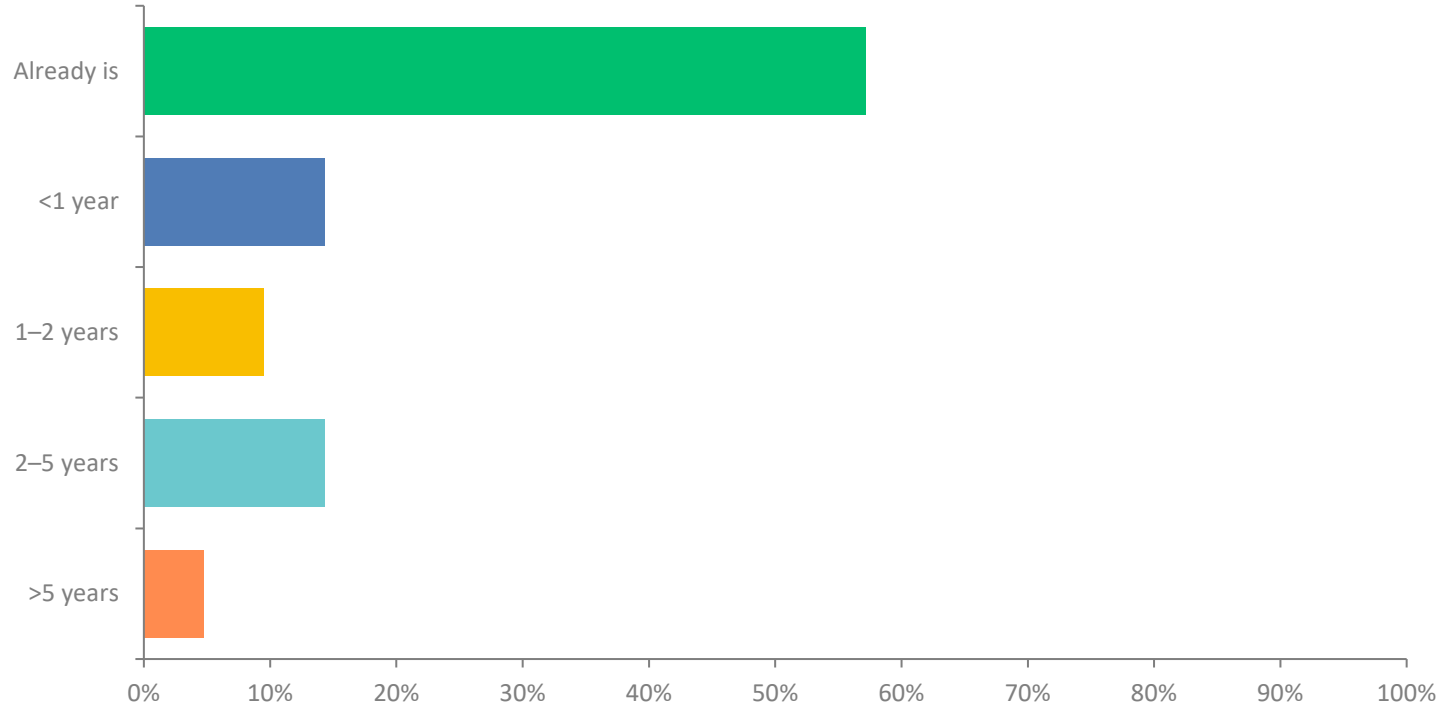
Q26: What impact do you think GenAI will have for medical publication creation and management in the future?

Answered: 21 Skipped: 75

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Create less work	38.10%	8
Reduced costs	33.33%	7
Create more work	23.81%	5
Increased costs	4.76%	1
No impact	0.00%	0
TOTAL		21

Q27: How long before you believe GenAI will create an impact on medical writing services?

Answered: 21 Skipped: 75



Q27: How long before you believe GenAI will create an impact on medical writing services?

Answered: 21 Skipped: 75

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Already is	57.14%	12
<1 year	14.29%	3
1–2 years	9.52%	2
2–5 years	14.29%	3
>5 years	4.76%	1
TOTAL		21