

YouGov / Free Agent Micro Business

Fieldwork: 1st - 9th June 2015

Sample Size: 505 owners/ partners in micro-businesses

Total	Gender		Organisation size					Management level	
Base	Male	Female	1	2	3 to 5	6 to 9	2 to 5 [NET]	Owner/ Proprietor	Partner

Have you ever felt overwhelmed by any aspect of your day-to-day or wider business accounting (e.g. financial reporting, invoicing, payroll etc.)?

Unweighted base	505	344	161	279	108	49	69	157	439	66
Base: Owners/ partners in Micro-businesses	505	347	158	254	101	46	104	147	431	74
Yes, I have	34%	31%	41%	33%	32%	33%	39%	32%	35%	31%
No, I haven't	63%	67%	56%	65%	67%	67%	54%	67%	64%	59%
Don't know	3%	2%	3%	2%	1%	-	7%	1%	1%	9%

Do you have immediate access to ALL of the financial information (e.g. cash-flow, invoices, tax bills/ owed, National Insurance commitments, overheads, loans etc.) about your business (e.g. via digital/ hard copies that you can access personally)?

Unweighted base	505	344	161	279	108	49	69	157	439	66
Base: Owners/ partners in Micro-businesses	505	347	158	254	101	46	104	147	431	74
Yes, I do	81%	81%	81%	86%	81%	71%	74%	78%	84%	68%
No, I don't	17%	17%	15%	11%	19%	27%	25%	21%	14%	30%
Don't know	2%	1%	3%	3%	-	2%	1%	1%	2%	2%

Which ONE of the following would you say is the MAIN method that you/ your business uses to manage the business' day-to-day financial accounts (e.g. invoicing, payments, payroll, cashflow etc.)? (Please select the option that BEST applies)

Unweighted base	505	344	161	279	108	49	69	157	439	66
Base: Owners/ partners in Micro-businesses	505	347	158	254	101	46	104	147	431	74
Hand-written (e.g. via pen and paper/ ledger)	20%	20%	21%	29%	18%	10%	6%	15%	22%	12%
Digital spreadsheet(s) (e.g. Excel etc.)	34%	32%	37%	40%	43%	31%	12%	39%	35%	28%
Accounting specific desktop software (e.g. Sage One accounts, Avanti etc.)	24%	25%	20%	11%	18%	29%	59%	21%	22%	35%
Cloud accounting software	6%	7%	2%	4%	8%	2%	7%	6%	5%	7%
I/ we outsource all of my/ our financial accounting	10%	10%	11%	9%	10%	18%	9%	13%	10%	9%
Other	4%	4%	3%	4%	2%	4%	4%	3%	4%	5%
Don't know	3%	2%	5%	3%	2%	6%	3%	3%	3%	5%

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Total	Gender		Organisation size					Management level	
Base	Male	Female	1	2	3 to 5	6 to 9	2 to 5 [NET]	Owner/ Proprietor	Partner

Approximately how often, if at all, do you personally check the overall financial position (e.g. profitability, cash flow etc.) of your business?

	Unweighted base	505	344	161	279	108	49	69	157	439	66
Base: Owners/ partners in Micro-businesses	505	347	158	254	101	46	104	147	431	74	
Never	5%	5%	7%	3%	4%	8%	10%	5%	5%	7%	
Less often than once a year	2%	2%	2%	1%	2%	10%	3%	4%	2%	6%	
Once a year	8%	7%	10%	11%	8%	4%	4%	7%	8%	8%	
Once every 6 months	5%	5%	7%	7%	7%	2%	1%	6%	6%	3%	
Once every 3 months	10%	10%	11%	8%	9%	20%	13%	13%	8%	21%	
Once a month	27%	28%	26%	27%	33%	14%	28%	27%	28%	22%	
Once a week	25%	26%	24%	29%	19%	27%	22%	22%	26%	23%	
Once a day	12%	15%	7%	11%	14%	8%	16%	12%	14%	6%	
Once an hour or more often	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Don't know	4%	3%	6%	4%	3%	6%	3%	4%	4%	5%	

Approximately, how many hours in an average month, if any, would you say you personally spend dealing with the bills, accounting and financial administration of your business? (Please give your best estimate)

	Unweighted base	505	344	161	279	108	49	69	157	439	66
Base: Owners/ partners in Micro-businesses	505	347	158	254	101	46	104	147	431	74	
More than 48 hours (i.e. more than 6 working days)	3%	3%	3%	1%	1%	6%	7%	3%	2%	3%	
24 to 48 hours (i.e. 3 to 6 working days)	5%	4%	8%	3%	7%	6%	9%	7%	5%	10%	
9 to 23 hours (i.e. 1 to 2 working days)	15%	12%	20%	13%	16%	14%	17%	15%	16%	6%	
5 to 8 hours	21%	25%	14%	19%	24%	20%	23%	23%	21%	20%	
1 to 4 hours	33%	34%	30%	40%	27%	29%	23%	27%	33%	34%	
Up to 1 hour	15%	15%	15%	19%	18%	10%	4%	15%	16%	11%	
0 hours - none	4%	4%	5%	1%	3%	8%	12%	4%	3%	11%	
Don't know	4%	3%	6%	3%	5%	6%	4%	5%	4%	5%	

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Base	Male	Female	1	2	3 to 5	6 to 9	2 to 5 [NET]	Owner/ Proprietor	Partner

Approximately, do you know what your business' current profit margin is? (If you don't know what a profit margin is, please select the "Not applicable" option)

Unweighted base	505	344	161	279	108	49	69	157	439	66
Base: Owners/ partners in Micro-businesses	505	347	158	254	101	46	104	147	431	74
Yes, I do	67%	73%	54%	65%	61%	65%	80%	62%	67%	67%
No, I don't	25%	19%	37%	23%	33%	31%	19%	32%	24%	31%
Not applicable - I don't know what a profit margin is	8%	8%	9%	12%	6%	4%	1%	5%	9%	3%

Thinking about expenses incurred by you on behalf of your business...

Approximately what percentage, if any, would you say you claim back of all of your expenses?

Unweighted base	226	156	70	-	108	49	69	157	167	59
Base: Owners/ partners in Micro-businesses (excluding sole traders)	251	176	75	-	101	46	104	147	184	67
All of them - 100%	22%	24%	18%	-	23%	31%	17%	25%	22%	23%
Nearly all - 75 to 99%	34%	39%	21%	-	37%	16%	38%	31%	33%	34%
More than half - 50% to 74%	14%	14%	14%	-	11%	22%	13%	15%	12%	18%
Some but less than half -25% to 49%	11%	9%	15%	-	10%	6%	13%	9%	11%	10%
Hardly any of them - 1% to 24%	8%	8%	9%	-	6%	8%	10%	7%	10%	5%
None of them - 0%	2%	1%	4%	-	1%	2%	3%	1%	3%	-
Not applicable - I never personally incur any expenses	9%	6%	17%	-	11%	14%	6%	12%	9%	10%

Thinking about the expenses you have not claimed back...

Which, if any, of the following are reasons for this? (Please select all that apply)

Unweighted base	203	145	58	-	96	42	65	138	150	53
Base: Owners/ partners in Micro-businesses (excluding sole traders) who incur expenses	227	165	62	-	90	39	98	129	167	60
I lose or forget about the receipts	30%	30%	29%	-	19%	31%	40%	22%	32%	26%
I can't stand the admin involved	12%	13%	7%	-	7%	12%	15%	9%	13%	9%
I'm embarrassed because I leave it so long	3%	4%	-	-	3%	-	5%	2%	4%	2%
I don't think they're worth claiming	37%	39%	33%	-	28%	43%	43%	33%	35%	43%
I worry I'll claim the wrong amount	7%	5%	12%	-	6%	2%	9%	5%	7%	7%
I worry that HMRC will challenge me	11%	10%	13%	-	14%	10%	9%	12%	13%	6%
Other	14%	13%	18%	-	18%	19%	9%	18%	16%	10%
Don't know/ can't recall	20%	20%	21%	-	27%	17%	15%	24%	19%	25%

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Which ONE of the following is the HIGHEST amount of money that you could incur in expenses on behalf of your business that you think is NOT worth claiming back? (If you have never claimed expenses before, please imagine that were to)

Unweighted base	226	156	70	-	108	49	69	157	167	59
Base: Owners/ partners in Micro-businesses (excluding sole traders)	251	176	75	-	101	46	104	147	184	67
Anything up to £5	25%	27%	19%	-	29%	24%	22%	27%	22%	32%
Anything up to £10	19%	19%	19%	-	19%	18%	20%	18%	22%	11%
Anything up to £20	9%	9%	11%	-	1%	10%	17%	4%	7%	17%
Anything up to £30	3%	3%	2%	-	3%	2%	3%	3%	3%	2%
Anything up to £40	2%	1%	2%	-	2%	2%	1%	2%	2%	1%
Anything up to £50	7%	6%	8%	-	8%	2%	7%	6%	6%	8%
More than £50	5%	6%	3%	-	7%	2%	4%	6%	7%	1%
Not applicable - I would always claim back all of my expenses, no matter how small	30%	28%	35%	-	31%	39%	25%	34%	31%	27%

On average, how soon after you have received a receipt for a business expense would you say you record it in your business accounts in order to claim it back?

Unweighted base	203	145	58	-	96	42	65	138	150	53
Base: Owners/ partners in Micro-businesses (excluding sole traders) who incur expenses	227	165	62	-	90	39	98	129	167	60
Straight away/ the same day	13%	10%	21%	-	17%	12%	11%	15%	12%	17%
Within 1 to 2 days	17%	17%	16%	-	20%	12%	15%	17%	18%	11%
Within a week	19%	20%	15%	-	17%	24%	18%	19%	20%	14%
Within a month	29%	30%	27%	-	24%	29%	34%	25%	27%	35%
Within 3 months	12%	13%	11%	-	13%	12%	12%	12%	12%	14%
Longer than 3 months	6%	6%	5%	-	6%	10%	5%	7%	7%	5%
Don't know	4%	4%	4%	-	4%	2%	5%	4%	4%	4%

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Thinking about overdue payments from clients/
customers that your business receives via invoices (i.e.
payments that are made after the invoice deadline)...

Approximately, what is the longest amount of time you/
your business has ever had to wait to receive payment
from a client/ customer?
(If you don't issue invoices, or you have never received a
payment after the invoice deadline, please select the
relevant "Not applicable" option)

	Unweighted base	505	344	161	279	108	49	69	157	439	66
Base: Owners/ partners in Micro-businesses	505	344	158	254	101	46	104	147	431	74	
Up to 2 weeks after the deadline	8%	8%	7%	10%	8%	8%	3%	8%	8%	7%	
Over 2 weeks, up to 1 month after the deadline	10%	9%	11%	9%	9%	10%	10%	10%	10%	7%	
Over 1 month, up to 2 months after the deadline	9%	10%	9%	8%	15%	6%	10%	12%	9%	11%	
Over 2 months, up to 4 months after the deadline	15%	15%	14%	16%	16%	18%	9%	17%	15%	14%	
Over 4 months, up to 6 months after the deadline	8%	9%	8%	7%	7%	4%	14%	6%	8%	8%	
Over 6 months, up to 12 months after the deadline	10%	9%	12%	6%	9%	18%	16%	12%	9%	15%	
Over 12 months after the deadline	13%	15%	10%	10%	13%	20%	17%	15%	12%	17%	
Don't know	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	-	-	1%	1%	1%	
Not applicable - I/ we have never received a payment after the deadline	12%	13%	11%	16%	7%	6%	12%	7%	13%	7%	
Not applicable - I/ we don't issue invoices	14%	13%	17%	17%	14%	8%	9%	12%	14%	13%	

Approximately, how long do you/ your business usually
wait before you actively chase an unpaid invoice that is
overdue (i.e. email or phone call with the client/
customer)?

(Please select one option on each row. If you don't
actively chase unpaid invoices, please select the "Not
applicable" option)

	Unweighted base	369	253	116	187	85	42	55	127	316	53
Base: Owners/ partners in Micro-businesses who receive late payments	372	258	114	170	80	39	83	119	313	59	
Up to a week after the deadline	28%	28%	26%	30%	24%	24%	27%	24%	29%	22%	
Over 1 week, up to 2 weeks after the deadline	19%	18%	20%	17%	22%	17%	20%	20%	20%	15%	
Over 2 week, up to 1 month after the deadline	16%	16%	17%	17%	20%	5%	18%	15%	16%	19%	
Over 1 month, up to 2 months after the deadline	20%	22%	17%	19%	19%	31%	20%	23%	19%	26%	
Over 2 month, up to 3 months after the deadline	6%	6%	5%	4%	5%	14%	5%	8%	5%	8%	
More than 3 months after the deadline	5%	4%	8%	7%	5%	-	5%	3%	5%	6%	
Don't know	2%	2%	3%	2%	5%	-	2%	3%	2%	3%	
Not applicable - I/ we don't actively chase unpaid invoices	3%	3%	5%	4%	1%	10%	2%	4%	4%	2%	

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Base	Male	Female	1	2	3 to 5	6 to 9	2 to 5 [NET]	Owner/ Proprietor	Partner

Has your business ever missed a tax return deadline?

	Unweighted base	505	344	161	279	108	49	69	157	439	66
Base: Owners/ partners in Micro-businesses		505	347	158	254	101	46	104	147	431	74
Yes, and I/ we received a fine/ penalty	9%	9%	11%	6%	8%	10%	12%	9%	11%	9%	8%
Yes, but I/ we didn't receive a fine/ penalty	4%	4%	5%	3%	4%	4%	8%	4%	5%	5%	2%
No, I/ we haven't	84%	84%	83%	86%	86%	83%	78%	81%	82%	84%	81%
Don't know/ can't recall	3%	3%	2%	5%	2%	3%	2%	6%	3%	2%	9%

Generally how anxious, if at all, do you feel about the process of completing your business tax returns (i.e. Self Assessment, VAT, corporation tax etc.)? (If you are not responsible for completing business tax returns, please select the "Not applicable" option)

	Unweighted base	505	344	161	279	108	49	69	157	439	66
Base: Owners/ partners in Micro-businesses		505	347	158	254	101	46	104	147	431	74
Very anxious	6%	6%	5%	8%	7%	7%	4%	4%	6%	7%	3%
Fairly anxious	20%	20%	18%	22%	24%	22%	14%	10%	20%	20%	15%
Not very anxious	27%	27%	27%	26%	28%	26%	22%	26%	25%	28%	21%
Not at all anxious	25%	25%	29%	17%	29%	21%	22%	19%	22%	26%	17%
Not applicable – I am not responsible for completing business tax returns	22%	22%	21%	26%	12%	23%	37%	41%	27%	19%	44%

Do you track or record any of your time (e.g. time spent travelling, at meetings, administration, and other work related activities etc.)? (Please select the option that BEST applies)

	Unweighted base	505	344	161	279	108	49	69	157	439	66
Base: Owners/ partners in Micro-businesses		505	347	158	254	101	46	104	147	431	74
Yes, all of my time is tracked	8%	8%	9%	6%	7%	6%	12%	12%	8%	8%	8%
Yes, but only time that can be billed to clients/ customers	23%	23%	24%	19%	27%	21%	22%	13%	22%	23%	18%
Yes, other	6%	6%	5%	8%	8%	3%	2%	7%	3%	5%	9%
No, I don't track any of my time	63%	63%	62%	66%	58%	69%	63%	68%	68%	63%	64%

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For the following question, if you/ your business does not use the services of an external accountant, please select the "Not applicable" option.

In which ONE, if any, of the following areas do you think you receive the MOST support from your accountant(s)? (Please select the option that BEST applies)

Unweighted base	505	344	161	279	108	49	69	157	439	66
Base: Owners/ partners in Micro-businesses	505	347	158	254	101	46	104	147	431	74
Managing/ processing expenses	1%	1%	1%	0%	2%	2%	-	2%	1%	-
Reconciling bank transactions	1%	1%	-	1%	1%	2%	-	1%	1%	1%
Completing tax returns (SA/ corporation tax/ VAT)	44%	45%	41%	37%	49%	55%	51%	51%	43%	49%
Correcting financial/ admin errors	2%	1%	3%	1%	2%	4%	3%	3%	2%	-
Giving advice about my business finances/ tax affairs	8%	10%	4%	2%	5%	12%	23%	7%	7%	15%
Other	3%	3%	3%	0%	6%	6%	4%	6%	2%	8%
Don't know	2%	2%	1%	1%	2%	2%	4%	2%	1%	7%
Not applicable - I/ we don't use the services of an accountant	40%	36%	48%	57%	33%	16%	14%	28%	43%	20%