



25/06/2025

# REPORT

**Built After Hours: From Side Gig to Big Dream**



# AUDIENCE

## Demographics

United States, Age 18 to 35

## Custom Screening

Have you ever run a side hustle or personal project alongside your main job, studies or other responsibilities?

**Qualified:** I'm actively running one now

**Unqualified:** I used to but not anymore, I've thought about it but haven't started, I've never had a side hustle



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## OBJECTIVE

To identify and understand the key drivers, challenges, and aspirations of U.S. consumers running side hustles, focusing on their strategies for balancing work-life dynamics, reliance on specific products or services, and expectations from brands, with the goal of discovering actionable opportunities in productivity tools, food & drink, personal finance, technology, and wellbeing sectors.

## BURNING QUESTION

Which products or services do you rely on most to support your side hustle, and what improvements would you like to see in them?



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## CHAT GUIDE

1. Let's dive into your side hustle! What exactly are you working on and how would you describe it to someone new?
2. When did you start this side hustle and what was happening in your life that sparked the idea or motivation to begin?
3. What types of tools or products do you currently use to manage or grow your side hustle?
4. How do you balance your side hustle with your main job, studies or personal responsibilities? What does a typical week look like?

5. Which of the following best describes your current mindset around your side hustle?

Answers: It's a fun way to make extra money, It's a stepping stone to something bigger, It's a creative outlet I need in my life, It's a serious business I want to grow, It's an escape from my main job

6. Which specific apps, platforms or services are essential to how you run your side hustle?
7. What do you wish these tools or services could do better to support you?
8. How do you usually stay on track? Are there any routines or methods that help you manage your workload?



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## CHAT GUIDE

9. What role does technology play in helping you succeed with your side hustle? Is there a moment when it really saved you time or stress?
10. Are there any specific purchases, apps, gear or subscriptions, that have helped you a lot?
11. Imagine you could design the perfect tool or service to support your hustle...what would it include or solve that doesn't exist yet?
12. When deciding on tools, services or brands to support your hustle, what do you look for...price, features, trust, aesthetics? Something else?
13. What are some of the biggest challenges or roadblocks you face when trying to keep your hustle going?
14. Let's say you meet someone thinking about starting a side hustle - what's the most honest, helpful advice you'd give them?
15. Where do you go to learn, get inspired or level up your skills for your side hustle - any podcasts, YouTubers, communities or resources you return to again and again?



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## AI SUMMARY

Side hustlers in this cohort predominantly rely on a core set of digital tools and platforms to manage and grow their ventures. Social media platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook are essential for marketing and reaching customers, alongside e-commerce solutions such as Shopify and Etsy for those selling products or services online. Gig workers depend heavily on their respective platform apps like DoorDash or survey apps like Qmee. Content creators utilize YouTube for distribution and creative tools like Procreate for design.

Key improvements desired across these services center on enhanced promotional capabilities, particularly more affordable options and better audience targeting to connect with relevant customers. For platform-specific apps, users seek improved customer support, greater transparency in policies (like YouTube's demonetization or Qmee's survey declines), and features that address common operational pain points, such as better communication tools within delivery apps or specialized equipment like improved delivery bags. There's also a clear desire for more integrated or specialized solutions, like an all-in-one app for gig drivers offering mileage tracking and gas finders, or dedicated marketplaces for niche products like homemade art. For those dealing with physical goods, advancements in logistics, including more efficient shipping and inventory management (even envisioning automated shippers), are high on the wish list.





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## KEY INSIGHTS

### Platform Power & Pitfalls: Side Hustlers Seek Niche Optimizations in Essential Tools

- Side hustlers are heavily reliant on core digital platforms (e.g., Shopify, Etsy, Doordash, YouTube, social media marketplaces, Qmee) for their operations, but express a strong need for platform-specific improvements like better audience targeting (e.g., for high-value jewelry), fairer content monetization policies (e.g., YouTube copyright), enhanced customer support, and more robust features for their unique business models (e.g., reducing survey declines, better customer education tools for delivery drivers).
- Opportunities exist for developing specialized add-ons, third-party tools, or services that address these nuanced pain points, helping users maximize the utility of mainstream platforms. Examples include tools for precise audience segmentation on social media, fairer revenue systems for content creators, or dedicated support channels for gig economy workers.

### Quotes:

"It happens everyday so it impacts me by wasting my time and not giving me any compensation at all for it when I could've worked on a different survey that would've paid me. Less declines would rectify that and more open communication and guidelines between the app creators and survey providers would help too"

Age 26, Female

"A room tour video got demonetized and it messed up my work flow that week because I wasn't able to post another video until the copyright situation was sorted"

Age 23, Male

"That they know how to choose the specific audience and not the general one since not everyone has the same purchasing power"

Age 20, Male

"A customer could not get his order confirmed and customer support could not find it so it was cancelled. Better support might have been able to guide the customer through."

Age 22, Male





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## KEY INSIGHTS

### The Automation Imperative: Streamlining Operations is Crucial for Balance and Growth

- A key challenge for this audience is balancing their side hustle with main jobs, studies, or personal life, making tools that automate or streamline tasks highly valuable. This is evident in the appreciation for Shopify's automation and the desire for automated shipping solutions.
- There's significant demand for accessible productivity solutions that offer greater automation in areas like shipping logistics (e.g., direct home pickup, automated packing), inventory management, customer communication, and even content creation, freeing up time for strategic activities and reducing burnout.

### Quotes:

"My daily work is automated through Shopify for buying and selling, and at night I manage the shipments. During the day, I work full-time as a lifeguard."

Age 20, Male

"Shopify has a business mode to where it can help you sell your shoes and it'll accept payments and orders without you even being on the computer and it definitely makes my business more efficient"

Age 27, Male

"I normally will take care of everything that I need to handle first then doordash whenever i have free time."

Age 22, Female

"Facebook helps me promote and sell and procreate helps me design visualize and inspire what I paint or create. "

Age 21, Female





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## KEY INSIGHTS

### Visibility on a Budget: The Quest for Effective, Low-Cost Customer Acquisition

- Attracting and converting customers, particularly with limited marketing budgets, is a persistent challenge. Side hustlers are actively seeking more effective and affordable ways to increase their visibility and reach their target audience, such as better promotional tools on existing platforms or AI-driven customer targeting.
- This points to opportunities in affordable marketing technology, AI-powered tools for customer segmentation and lead generation, platforms offering improved organic reach for small sellers, or educational resources focused on lean marketing strategies.

### Quotes:

"I wish there were more tools to help promote your business on a lower budget."

Age 29, Female

"Low cost and better distribution of jewelry promotion"

Age 20, Male

"Facebook could add a small business part of marketplace "

Age 21, Female

"I wish they didn't demonetized certain videos for copyright that I work hard on "

Age 23, Male





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## KEY INSIGHTS

### Dream Tool Blueprints: Desire for Hyper-Personalized and Integrated Niche Solutions

- When envisioning ideal support, side hustlers often describe hyper-personalized tools or services that solve specific, unaddressed operational pain points. These range from specialized physical gear to sophisticated, integrated digital platforms.
- This highlights an opportunity for innovation in creating highly tailored solutions—be it niche software, specific hardware, or integrated service platforms—that cater to the unique workflows and challenges of distinct side hustle categories, offering more than generic tools can provide.

### Quotes:

"When a customer's soda shifted they were slightly disappointed and it overall affected their mood. The perfect bag would have a compartment that prevents drinks from spilling from movement."

Age 22, Male

"I would create a website for specific people like me to sell their home made artwork. It would work like marketplace but for art "

Age 21, Female

"And automatic shipper to where it'll ship the shoes and accept the payments without me even being there all I have to do is just get the product and it'll do the rest itself"

Age 27, Male

"Maybe an feature that could tell customers what the doordash drivers can and cannot do "

Age 22, Female





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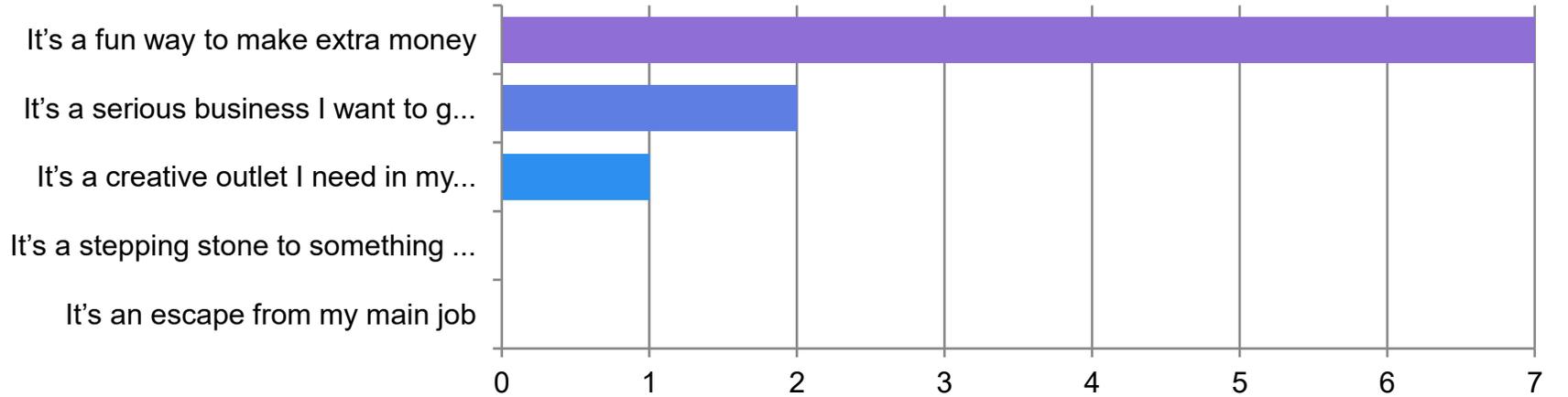
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## METRICS

Which of the following best describes your current mindset around your side hustle?



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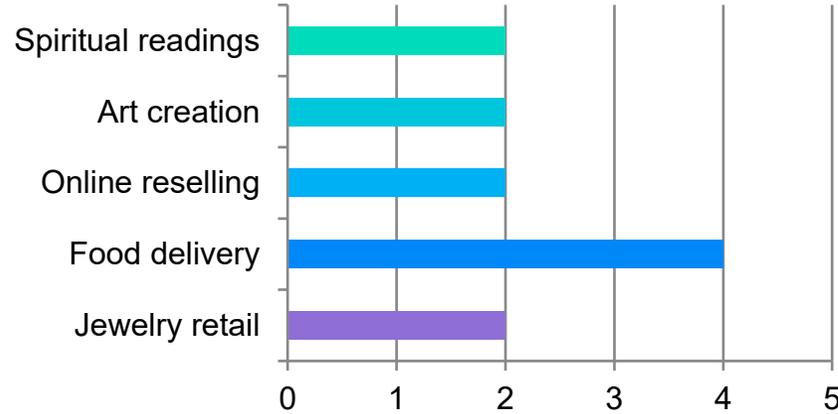
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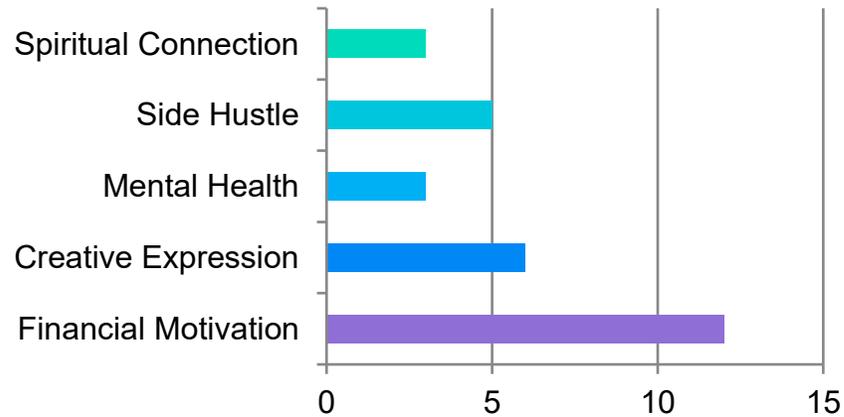
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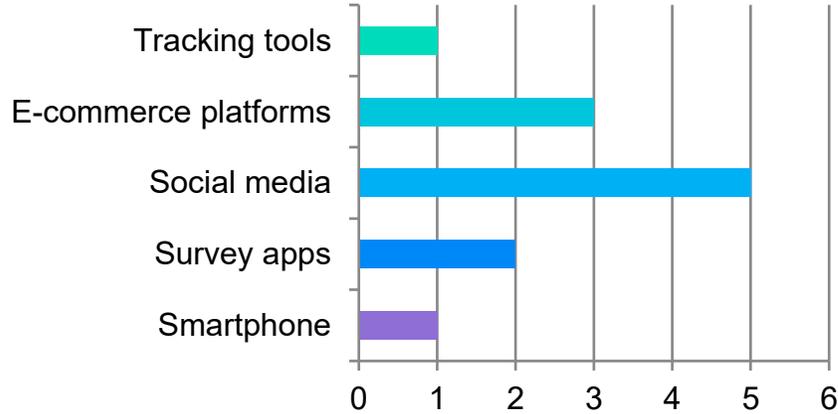
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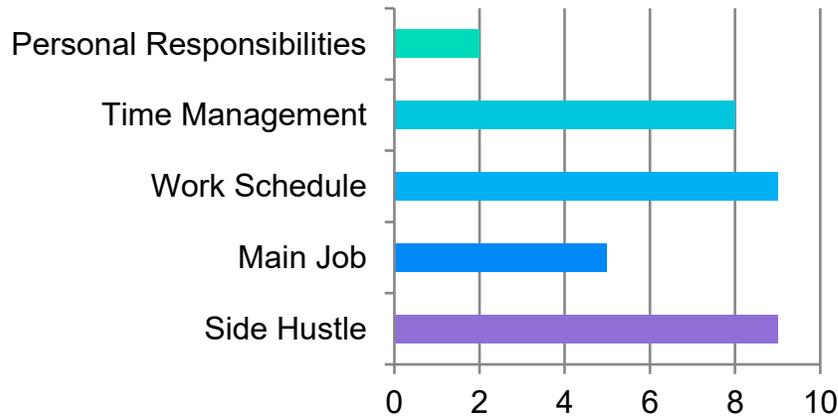
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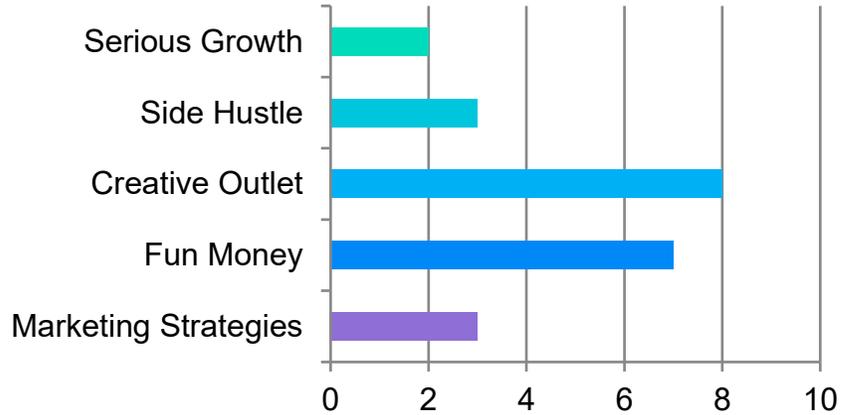
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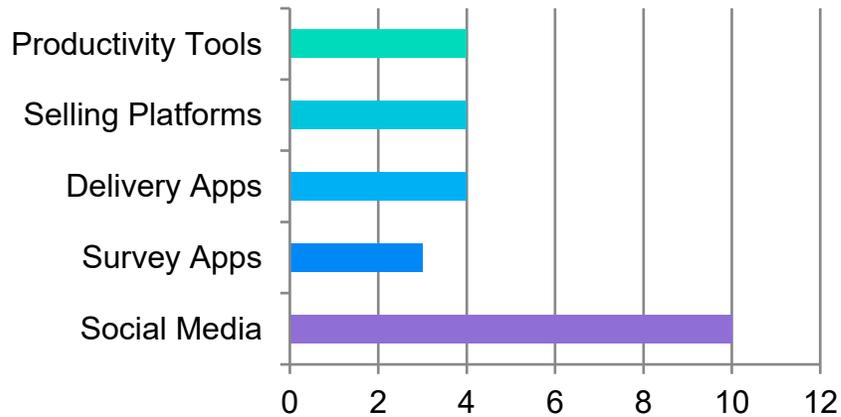
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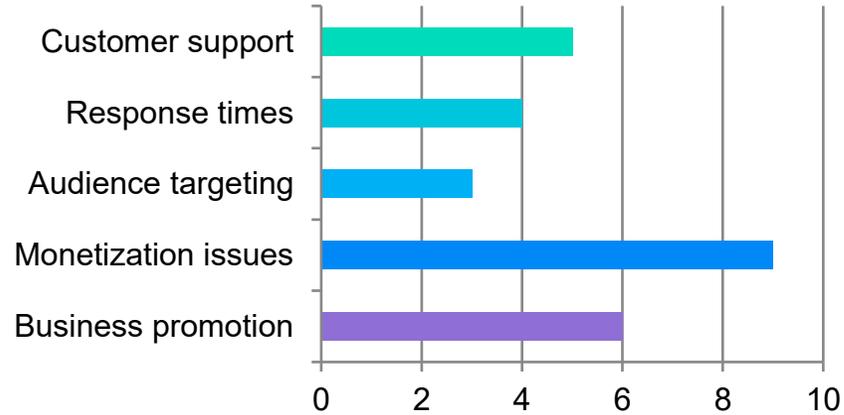
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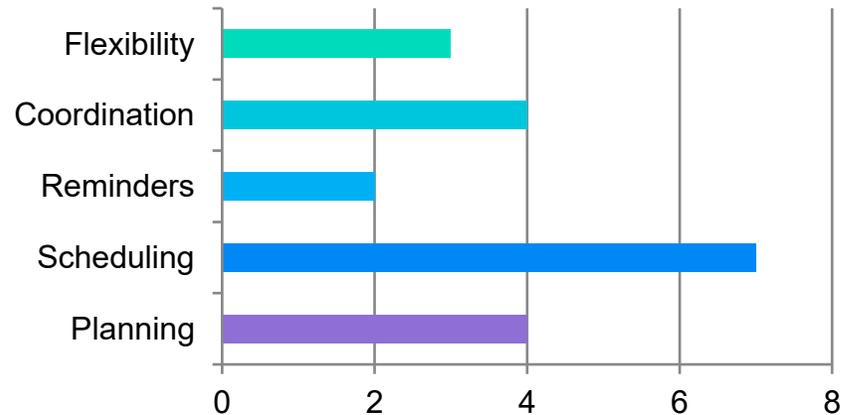
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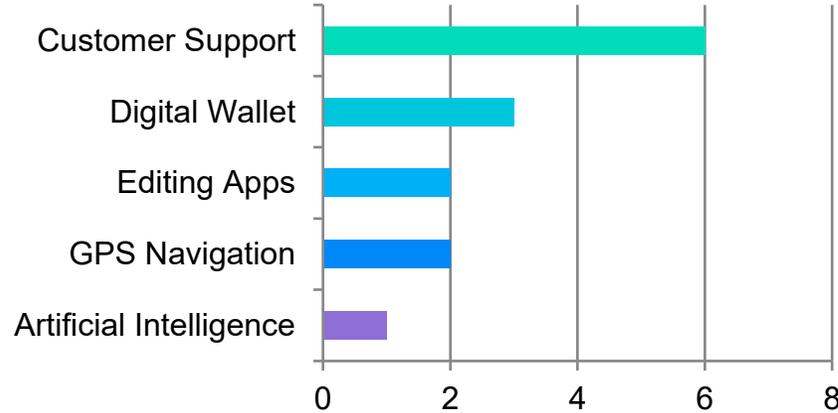
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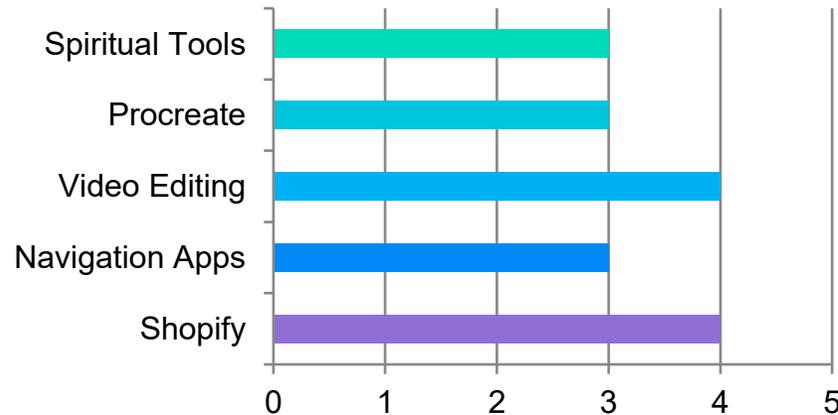
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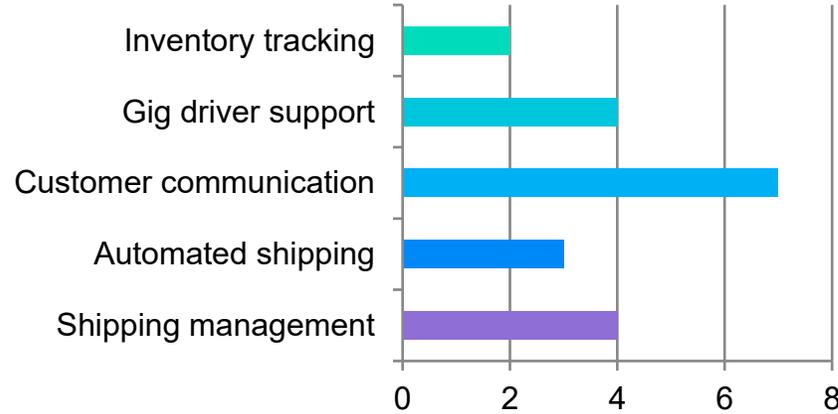
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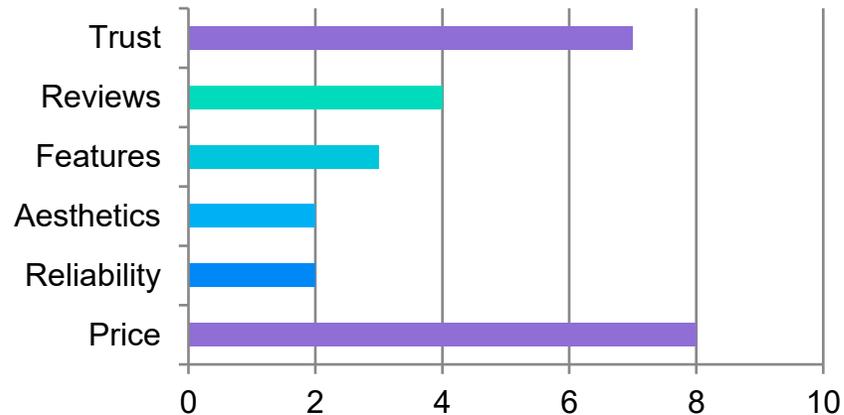
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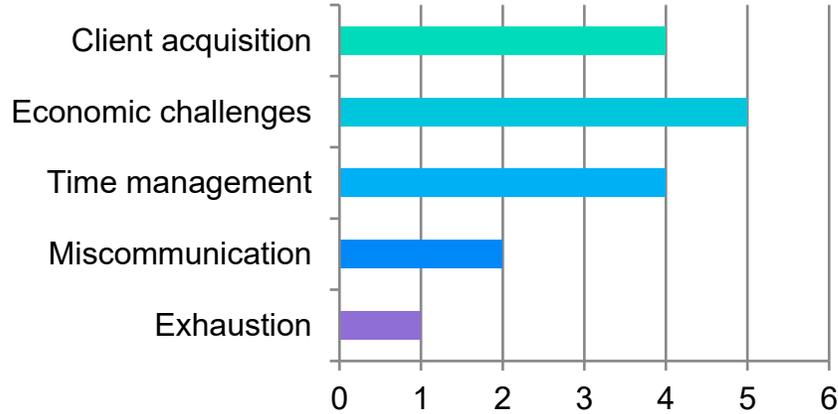
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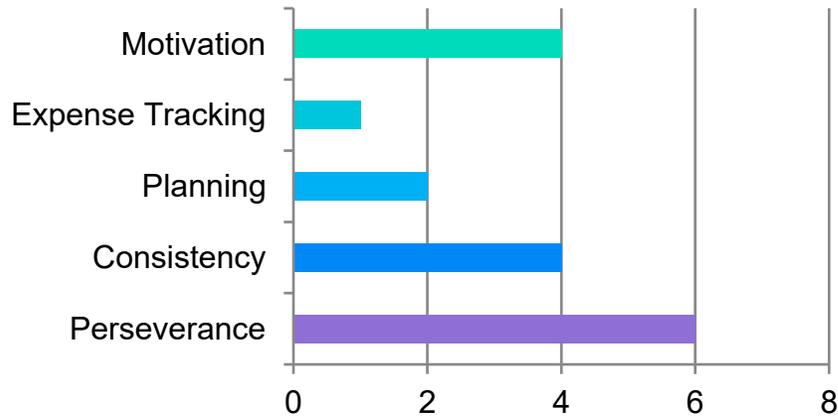
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What are some of the biggest challenges or roadblocks you face when trying to keep your hustle going?



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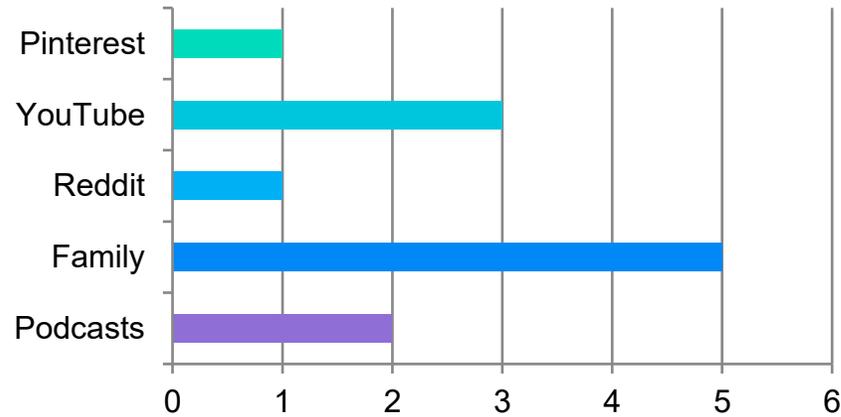
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### The Aspiring Mogul

#### Description:

- Young (early to mid-20s), typically male, often balancing a full-time job or studies but driven by a vision to grow their side hustle into a significant enterprise (e.g., high-value retail, scalable e-commerce).
- Highly strategic and tech-savvy, leveraging platforms like Shopify, social media for targeted advertising (sometimes with AI like ChatGPT), and productivity suites for organization and collaboration (e.g., Microsoft Docs for partnerships).
- Motivated by substantial financial success and building a lasting business, they are resilient, goal-oriented, and actively seek knowledge from successful entrepreneurs (e.g., Steve Jobs, Jeff Bezos) and niche online communities (e.g., Reddit for resellers).

#### Insights:

- Productivity & Technology: These individuals crave integrated, AI-powered tools for automation in sales, marketing (hyper-targeted ads for specific demographics like HNWIs), inventory management, and logistics (e.g., 24/7 home pickup shipping services). They value reliability and are willing to invest in premium, scalable solutions that prevent crashes or data loss.
- Personal Finance: Opportunity for financial products tailored to growing small businesses, offering guidance on scaling, reinvestment strategies, managing business-specific expenses, and understanding tax implications. They are focused on profit margins and achieving ambitious financial goals (e.g., \$100k/year).
- Wellbeing: While driven, they face exhaustion. Services or content addressing burnout prevention, motivation strategies during tough times (visualizing future success), and maintaining perseverance would be valuable, perhaps inspired by the resilience of figures they admire.



### The Passionate Artisan

#### Description:

- Typically female (20s-early 30s), may be a student, full-time employee, or parent, who initiated their side hustle (e.g., handmade crafts, digital art, spiritual services) from a deep personal passion, creative hobby, or as a therapeutic outlet for mental wellbeing.
- Utilizes platforms like Etsy, Instagram, TikTok, Facebook Marketplace, and creative software (e.g., Procreate, YouTube Premium for video editing) to develop, showcase, and sell their unique products or services, often relying on word-of-mouth through friends and family.
- Values the intrinsic rewards of their work—creative expression, personal fulfillment, helping others, stress relief (e.g., coping with depression)—often as much as, or more than, the financial reward.

#### Insights:

- Technology & Productivity: Seek user-friendly, affordable tools for marketing and content creation (easy video editing, AI-assisted customer targeting for niche products, graphic design templates). Platforms simplifying audience building, direct-to-consumer sales with lower promotional costs, or dedicated marketplaces for handmade/niche goods would be highly beneficial.
- Wellbeing & Food/Drink: Actively seek ways to balance their passion with life's demands and manage mental health. Products promoting mindfulness, stress reduction, and time management for creatives would resonate. Quick, healthy, and energizing food/drink options for focused creative sessions are needed.



### The Flexible Earner

#### Description:

- Young adults (early to mid-20s), often students or full-time employees, engaging in app-based gig work like food delivery (Doordash, UberEats) or online surveys (Qmee) primarily for supplemental income and schedule flexibility.
- Relies heavily on their smartphone and platform-specific apps for sourcing work, navigation, and communication, sometimes using basic tools like Google Spreadsheets for expense tracking or apps like Upside for gas savings.
- Pragmatic and motivated by the ease of earning quick cash to meet immediate financial needs (e.g., rent, savings, daily expenses), valuing low commitment and the ability to fit work

#### Insights:

- Personal Finance: Need simple, accessible guidance on pricing products, work management, and expense tracking. Understanding gig work's tax implications and how to optimize earnings (e.g., better mileage trackers, real-time demand alerts). An all-in-one app for gig workers consolidating useful services like lowest gas price finders or efficient route planning would be highly valued.
- Personal Finance: Benefit from simple tools for tracking income and expenses specific to gig work, understanding tax obligations for independent contractors, and maximizing earnings per hour.



**REACH OUT TO US IF YOU HAVE  
FURTHER QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS  
REPORT**

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