

# 2016 Info-Entrepreneur Market Report: insights on information businesses

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[Reluctant-Entrepreneur.com/resources](http://Reluctant-Entrepreneur.com/resources)

# 2016 Info-Entrepreneur Report

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## About the survey

Anonymous survey of info-entrepreneurs, solicited through the Association of Independent Information Professionals' AIIP-L list and social media

Survey conducted March 1-15 2016 via SurveyMonkey

# Cut to the chase...

## What do established\* info-entrepreneurs look like?

They average 36 hours/week

They are 50-69 years old

70% have graduate degrees

They had already worked for 17+ years before starting their business

\*Full-time business, 5+ years in operation

# How much do people make?

It depends on how you ask...

*Revenue* is the total amount of money brought in to a business. Out of this come direct expenses, overhead and your salary or profit.

*Income* is the amount of money left over, after all expenses have been paid. Income, in this context, includes the salary you pay yourself plus any other money you have after expenses.

## How much do people make?

It depends on who you ask...

60% of **established info-entrepreneurs** have revenue of at least \$60K/year, and almost half have revenue of \$90K/year or more.

Two-thirds of info-entrepreneurs **in their first 3 years** have revenue under \$20K a year.

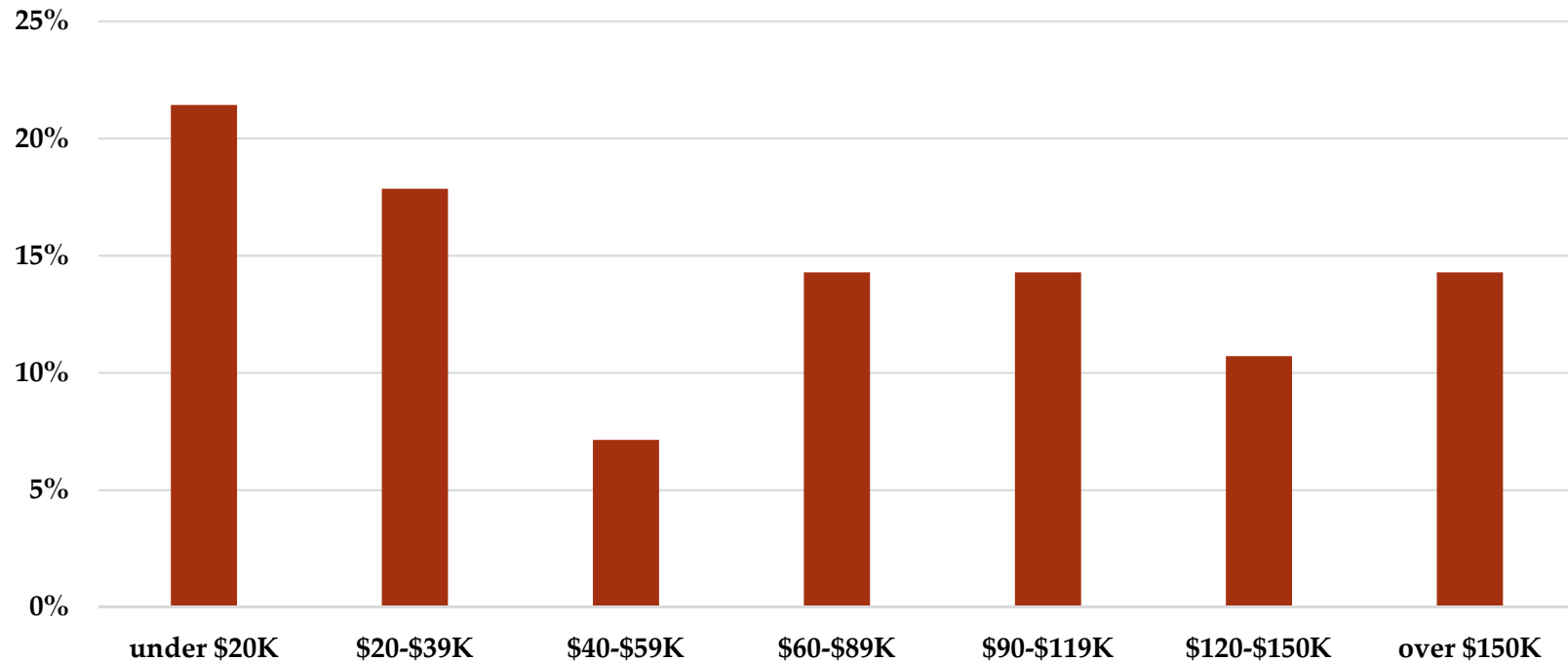
# How much do people make?

Following are charts showing *revenue* and *profit* for full-time information businesses, and for new and long-time businesses.



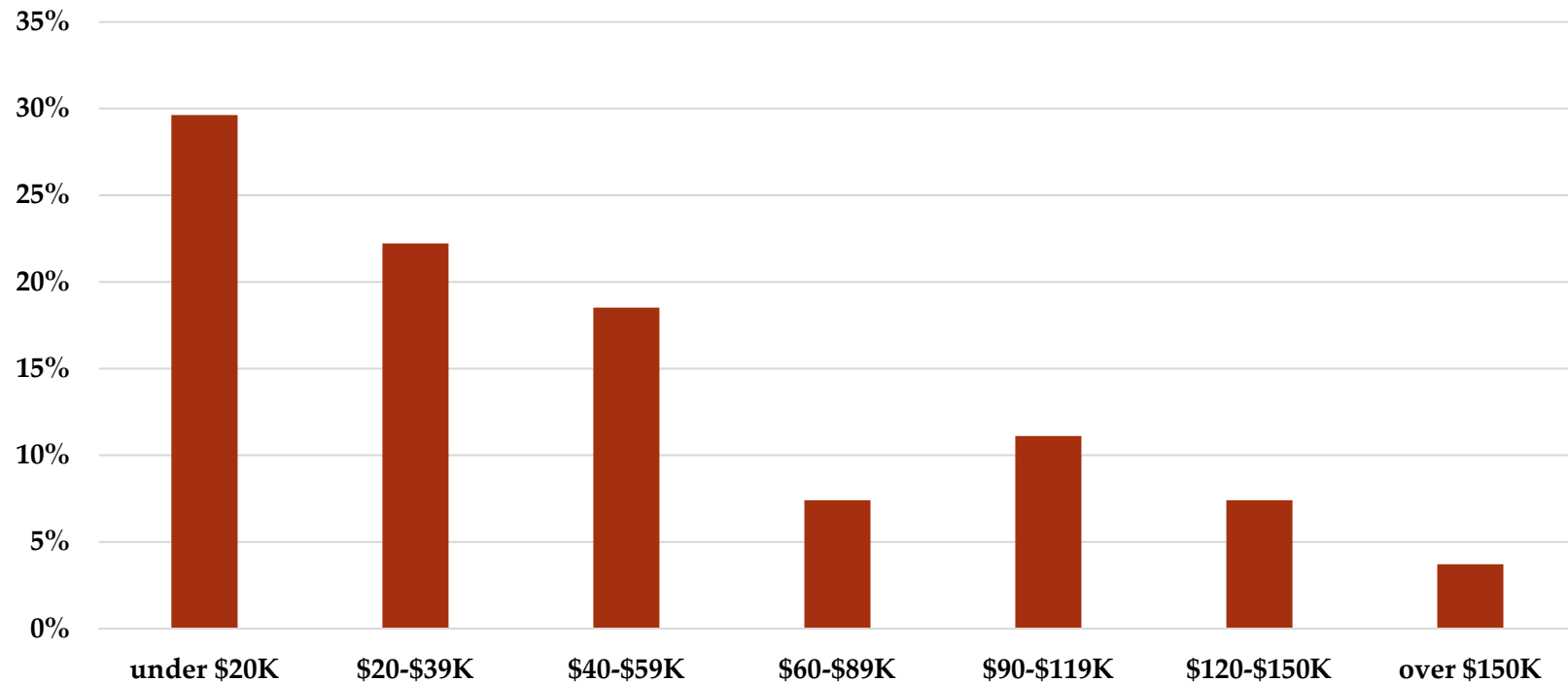
# What's the annual revenue of a full-time business?

Annual Revenue of Full-time Businesses



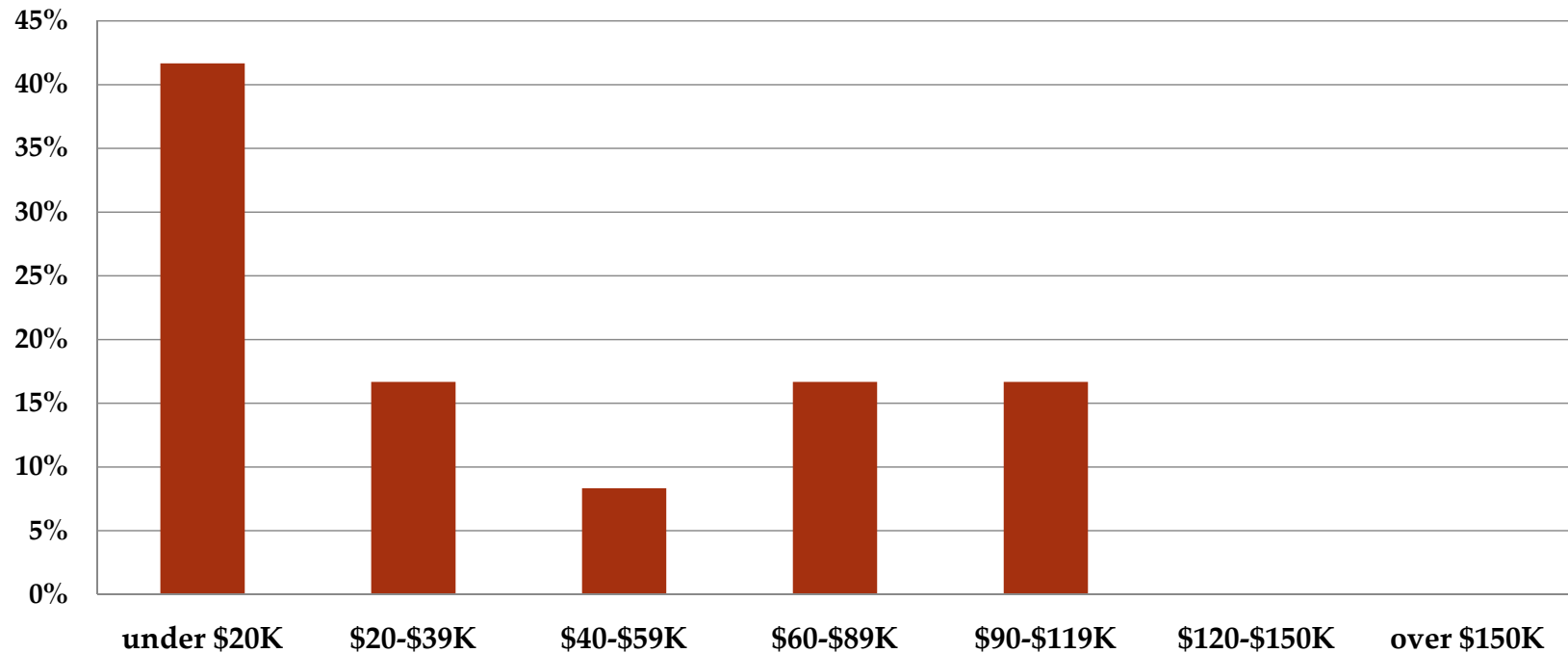
# What's the profit of a full-time business?

Annual Profit of Full-time Businesses



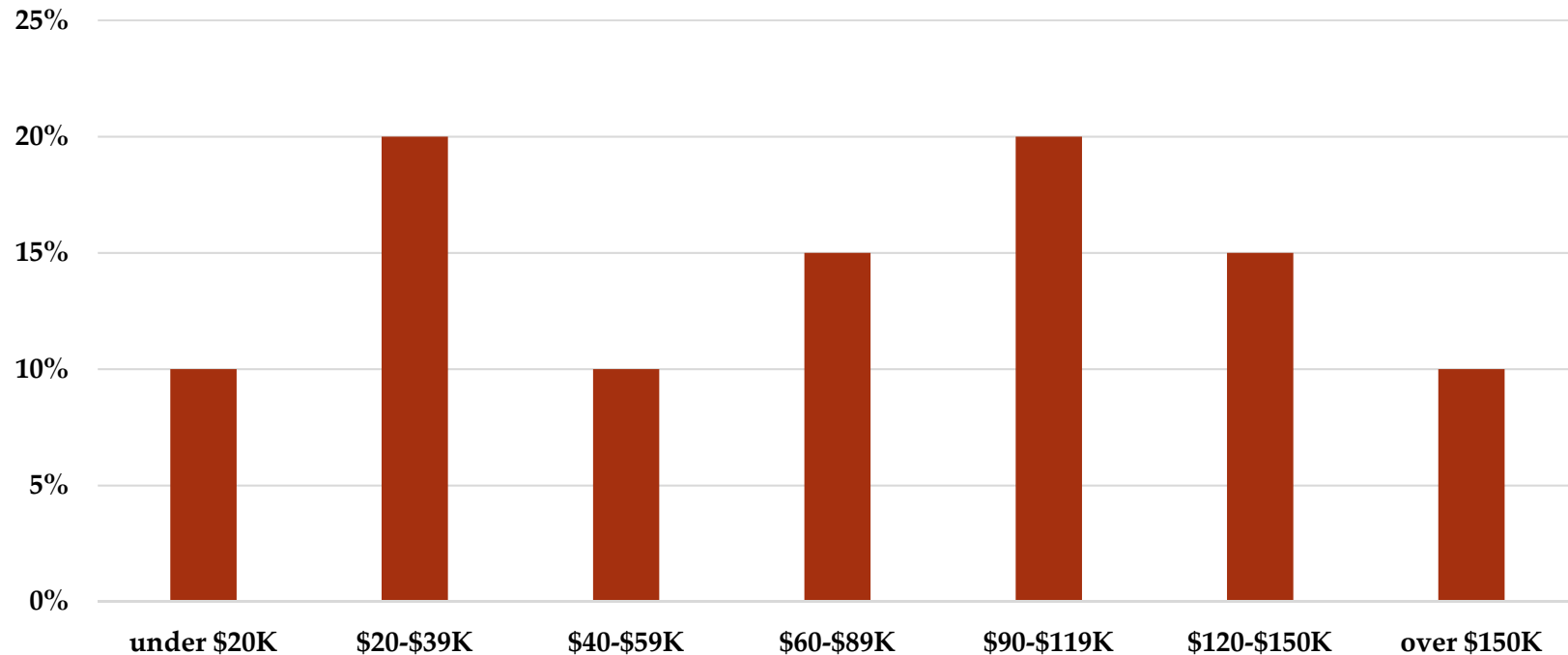
# What's the revenue of a full-time business in the first 3 years?

Annual revenue of businesses in first 3 years



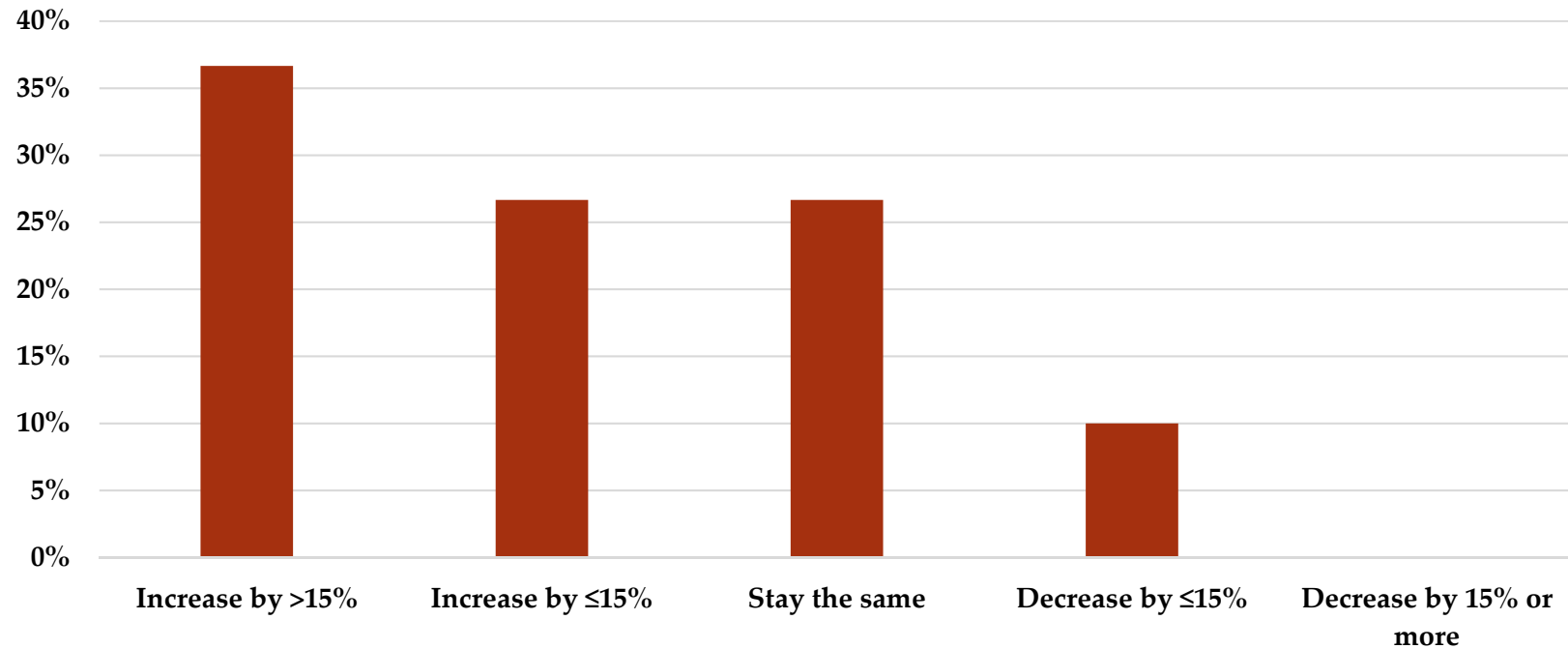
# What's the revenue of a full-time business of 5+ years?

Annual revenue of businesses of 5+ years



# What do info-entrepreneurs expect for 2016?

I expect my revenue to...

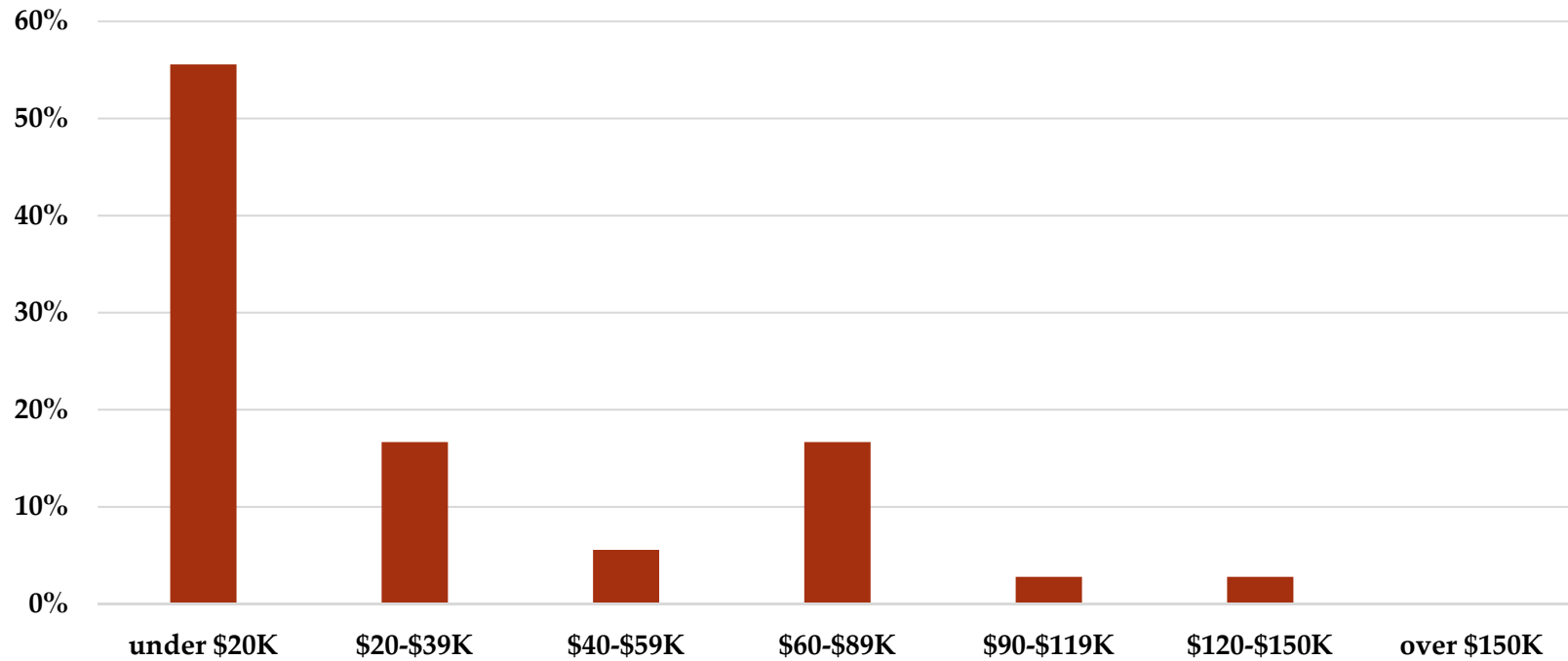


## What about a part-time business?

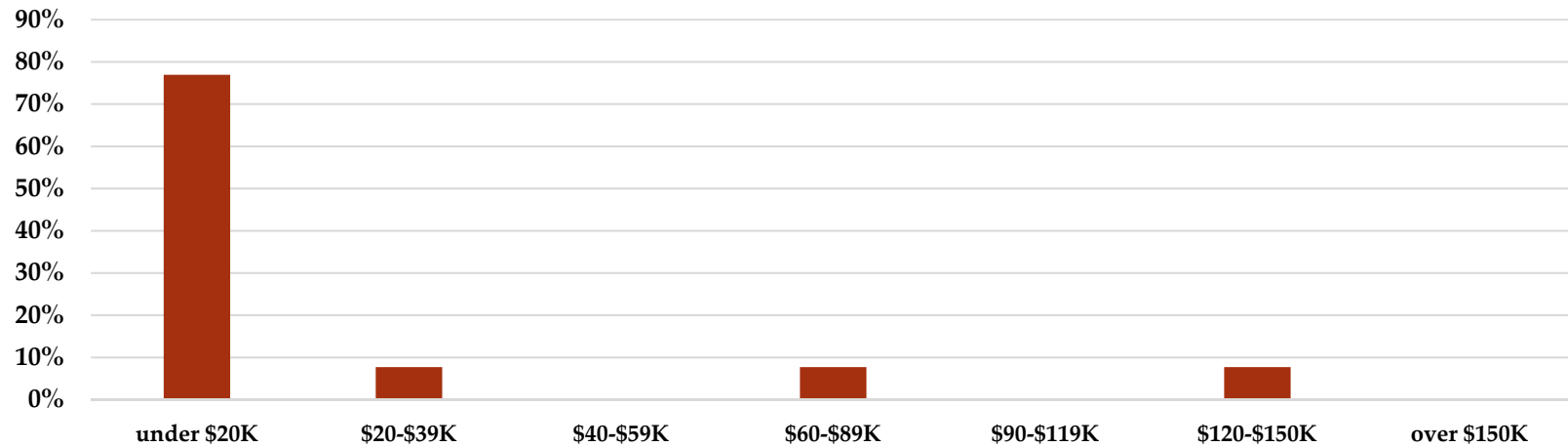
A part-time business can be successful, depending on your expectation of revenue. The more hours you put into the business, the higher your revenue, although there is still a limit on how much you can expect to earn.

# How much do part-time businesses make?

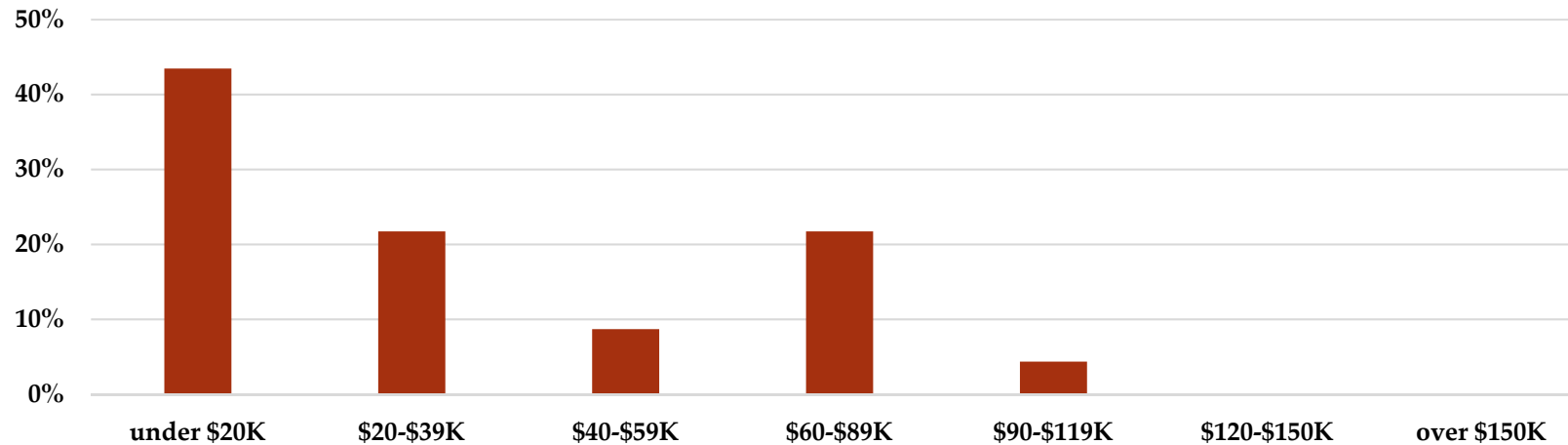
Annual revenue of part-time businesses



## Annual revenue for part-time businesses, first 3 years



## Annual revenue for part-time businesses, 5+ years

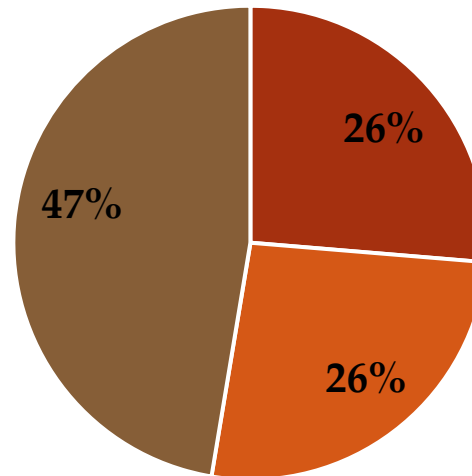




# What does a part-time business look like?

## Where else do you work?

- part-time business, part-time job
- part-time business, full-time job
- part-time business, no other job



# What does a part-time business look like?

Part-time info-entrepreneurs work an average of 16 hours/week.

They had already worked for more than 17 years before starting their business.

Two-thirds of all part-time businesses have revenue of under \$40K a year, even after 5 years in business.

## Do I need an MLS?

About 60% of established businesses\* are run by people with an MLS or MLIS, and two-thirds of all info-entrepreneurs have MLSs.

\* Full-time businesses, in operation for 5+ years

# Other details about info-entrepreneurs

## Other details

46% have full-time businesses

28% have part-time businesses & are employed elsewhere

25% have part-time businesses & are not employed elsewhere

Format of business

65% sole proprietorship

28% LLC

7% corporation

## Other details

Average hours/week for full-time business: 37

Average hours/week for part-time business: 17

90% have no employees

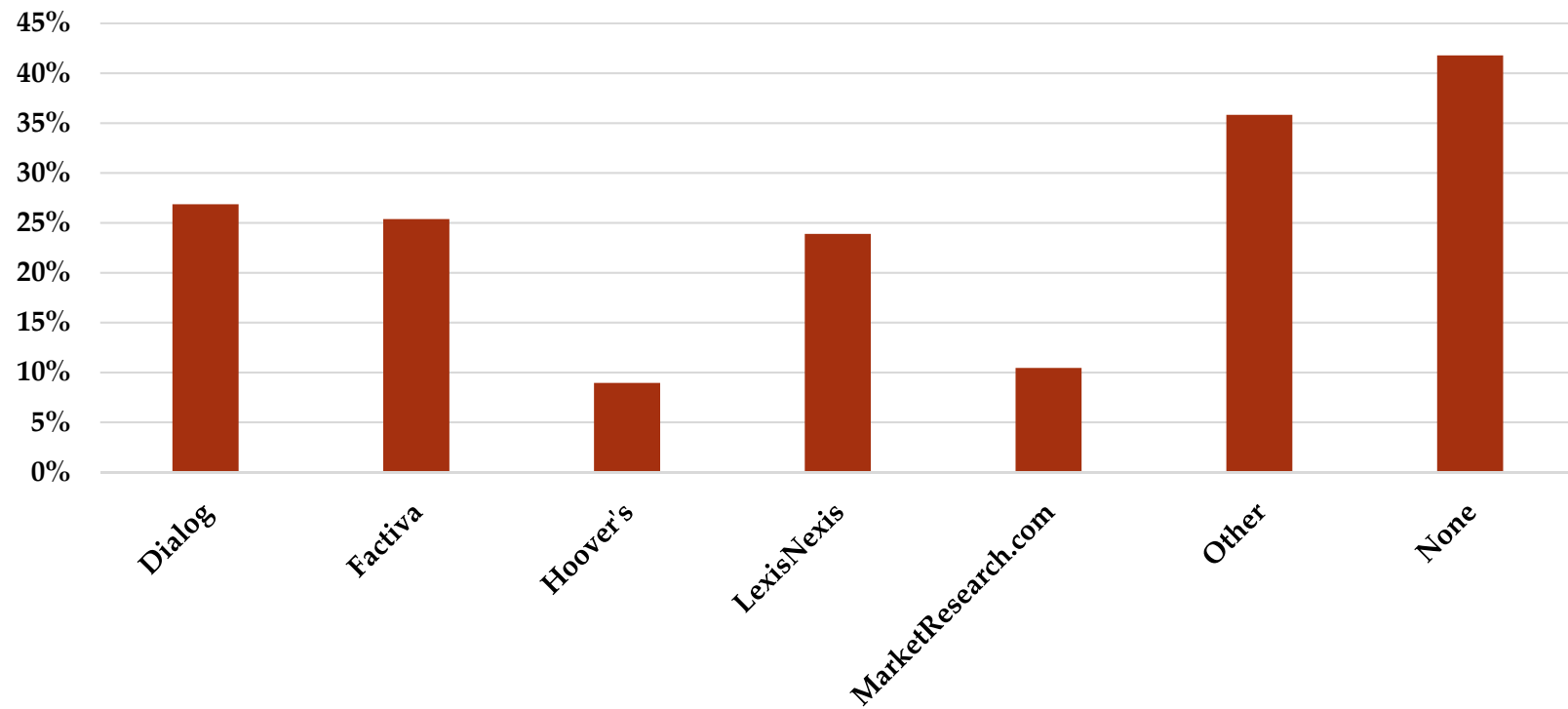
88% have graduate degrees

Average 18+ years of prior experience before launching business

## Other details

What online services do info-entrepreneurs use?

Professional online services used



# Advice to new info-entrepreneurs



# Advice to new info-entrepreneurs

The survey asked respondents for their advice to aspiring info-entrepreneurs.

Their suggestions and comments have been aggregated and organized by general theme.

# Advice to new info-entrepreneurs

## PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL SKILLS

Be confident in your skillset and value.

Give it your total commitment and build strong relationships with clients.

Make opportunity for self-reflection; ask yourself questions frequently.

Keep at it. If you are serious and focus on what you want to do, you can be successful.

# Advice to new info-entrepreneurs

## THINK LIKE AN ENTREPRENEUR

Listen to your clients and establish a niche.

Take the risk – jump in feet first, no hesitation. No guts no glory!

Keep track of what's working and what's not; move on when you need to.

Treat your business as a business.

# Advice to new info-entrepreneurs

## IT'S ALL ABOUT THE CLIENTS

Not every potential client is the right client for you.

Build a strong network of referrers, potential clients and satisfied clients.

Immerse yourself in your clients' industries.

You have to always be marketing yourself.

# Advice to new info-entrepreneurs

## DON'T GO IT ALONE

Join AIIP! The resources and relationships are wonderful.

Keep networking.

Ask for help – weigh all the advice you're given.

Share what you like and are good at.

Or, in other words...



**What would help your business  
the most?**

## What would help the most?

The survey asked respondents to describe the one thing that would help their business the most. The following is a summary of where info-entrepreneurs feel an unmet need.



## What would help the most?

An extra brain and pair of hands. Finding the right people to help, at the right price, is very difficult.

Steadier, consistent flow of clients

Developing a larger, more diversified client base

Having a solid marketing strategy and building my network

I need to like marketing and sales more

Identifying the correct target market

Or, in other words...



## What next?

Are you considering launching your business?

Do you want to move your business up a level?

Do you want to raise your profits so you have more time for the rest of your life?

Do you want to find ways to *enjoy* your business more?

**Mary Ellen can help you!**

## What next?



A thought leader and long-time info-entrepreneur, **Mary Ellen Bates** offers **eTools, books, online courses** and **one-on-one strategic business coaching** for new and long-time info-entrepreneurs.

She is passionate about enabling her clients to succeed and create the businesses they want.

See her resources at

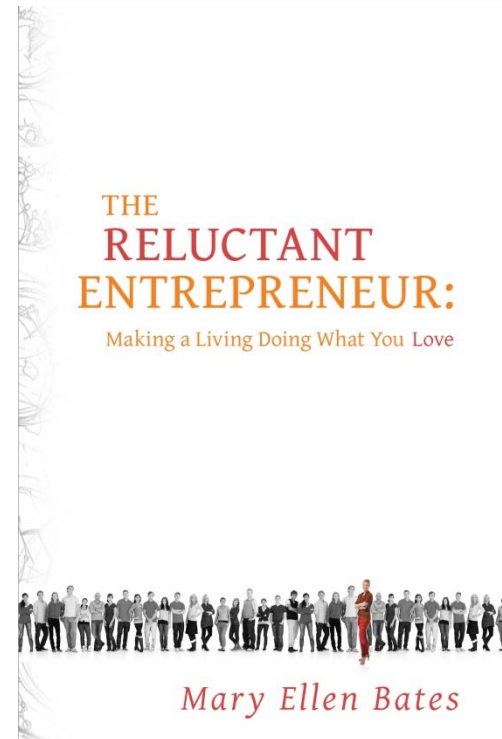
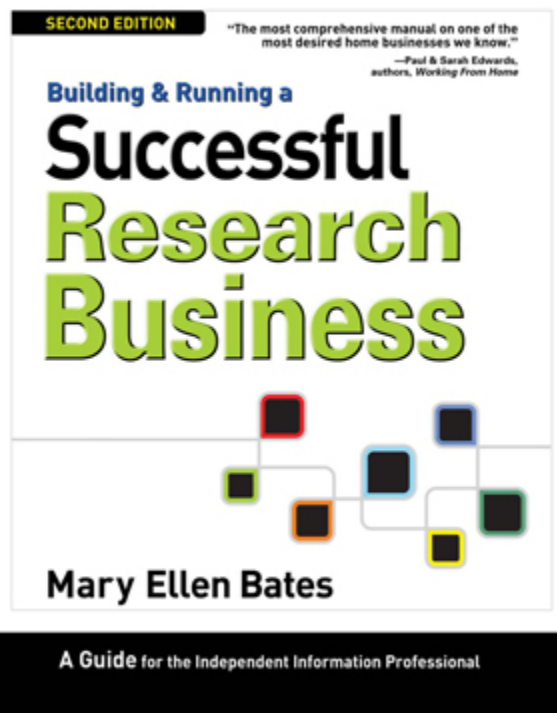
**[reluctant-entrepreneur.com/resources](https://reluctant-entrepreneur.com/resources)**

Learn about her coaching at

**[reluctant-entrepreneur.com/coaching](https://reluctant-entrepreneur.com/coaching)**

# Read the books

Mary Ellen wrote the books on info-entrepreneurship!



## Where to learn more

Web: [reluctant-entrepreneur.com](http://reluctant-entrepreneur.com)

Twitter: [@mebs](https://twitter.com/mebs)

Facebook: [maryellenbates](https://www.facebook.com/maryellenbates)

LinkedIn: [maryellenbates](https://www.linkedin.com/in/maryellenbates)

email: [mbates@BatesInfo.com](mailto:mbates@BatesInfo.com)

# Appendix

# Survey questions

1. Have you already started your information business?  
(if answer is *no*, survey is ended)
2. In what year did you start your information business?
3. In what year did you join AIIP?
4. In what country do you live?
5. What is the structure of your business?
  - Sole proprietorship
  - Partnership
  - LLC
  - Corporation/subchapter S
  - Other (please specify)



# Survey questions

6. Is your information business:
  - a full-time job
  - a part-time job (and you work *part-time* as an employee elsewhere)
  - a part-time job (and you work *full-time* as an employee elsewhere)
  - a part-time job (and you do *not work* elsewhere)
  - Other (please specify)
7. On average, how many hours a week do you spend at your information business?
8. Do you have any employees *other than yourself*?
  - No
  - 1 to 3 employees (either full-time *or* part-time)
  - More than 3 employees (either full-time *or* part-time)

## Survey questions

9. Have you used subcontractors in your information business at least once in the last 12 months?

10. What fee-based online services did you use in 2014? How much did you spend on this service? (US\$)

CAS

Dialog

Factiva

Hoover's

LexisNexis

MarketResearch/Profound

Other provider (please list service(s) and amount you spend)

# Survey questions

11. What was your estimated *total revenue* (not net profit) for your information business in 2014? (US\$)

under \$20,000

\$20,000 - \$39,999

\$40,000 - \$59,999

\$60,000 - \$89,999

\$90,000 - \$119,000

\$120,000 - \$150,000

over \$150,000

## Survey questions

12. What was your estimated *salary* (or profit, if you are a sole proprietor) for your information business in 2014? (US\$)

under \$20,000

\$20,000 - \$39,999

\$40,000 - \$59,999

\$60,000 - \$89,999

\$90,000 - \$119,000

\$120,000 - \$150,000

over \$150,000

13. Do you expect to see your total revenue change in 2015?

Increase by more than 15%

Increase by 15% or less

Stay about the same

Decrease by 15% or less

Decrease by more than 15%

# Survey questions

14. Your age:

under 30

30-39

40-49

50-59

60-69

70 or over

15. What college degree(s) have you earned?

BA/BS

MLS / MLIS or equivalent

MBA

Other master's degree

Other post-graduate degree

Other (please specify)

## Survey questions

16. How many years did you work professionally before you started your information business?

17. The most important piece of advice you would give to an aspiring independent info pro is:

18. The one thing that would help your business the most is:

# # #

**Interested in slicing and dicing  
the data in other ways?**

**Just ask!**