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# How to become a \$600K per year 'supertemp'

By [Laura Vanderkam](#)

(MoneyWatch) The U.S. Labor Department's [most recent jobs report](#) was pretty bleak. But buried in it was an intriguing statistic: Employers added 25,000 temporary jobs in June. That's almost a third of the total net new jobs that month.

When we think of temps, we tend to think of low-end clerical workers brought in to process extra paperwork during an industry's busy season. But according to Jody Miller, CEO of consulting firm Business Talent Group, we're now seeing the rise of the "supertemp" -- high-end professionals who parachute in to solve problems, then ship off to the next project. Think of them as one-person consulting firms, like Bain or McKinsey on a smaller scale.

"There are a whole lot of things businesses need to get done that don't need that," says Miller, alluding to having multiple teams of consultants billing millions of dollars, "but need that level and quality of thinking and ability." Plenty of the supertemps Miller's company places command per diems of \$2,500 (or more). That can equal more than \$600,000 a year, without the bureaucratic headaches of working long-term for any particular company.

So how do you become a \$600,000 per year supertemp? First, you need experience, perhaps at a consulting company or as a high-level executive somewhere. Then you need these four things:

- 1. Evidence of results.** "The people who really do well in this are people who are doers," says Miller. "You've got to be someone who likes to go in and get something done." Maybe it's writing business plans for new products or turning around factories, but whatever it is the work is going to involve rolling up your sleeves. Getting paid for pure advice tends to be a different line of work.
- 2. The right skill-set.** "The place where you can provide value should be either something that's pretty broadly applicable, like being a pricing expert across a lot of industries," Miller says. Or if it's a niche, you should be "smart about who needs that niche." You need people with deep pockets and lots of potential work.
- 3. An entrepreneurial mindset.** The free agent lifestyle isn't for everyone. You can use an agency like Miller's to find work, but until the talent-matching market is more developed, "You've got to be comfortable selling yourself, networking, and using your contacts to get introductions," he says. "You're getting business the way a company gets business."
- 4. Your own team.** High-end supertemps increasingly have their own network of people to call, should you need expertise in a particular subject area or a skill that complements your own. To be a high-priced temp, you need to be able to solve any problem a client might have, pronto. But if you can do that, you're well on your way to being in demand whenever you'd like to work.

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