

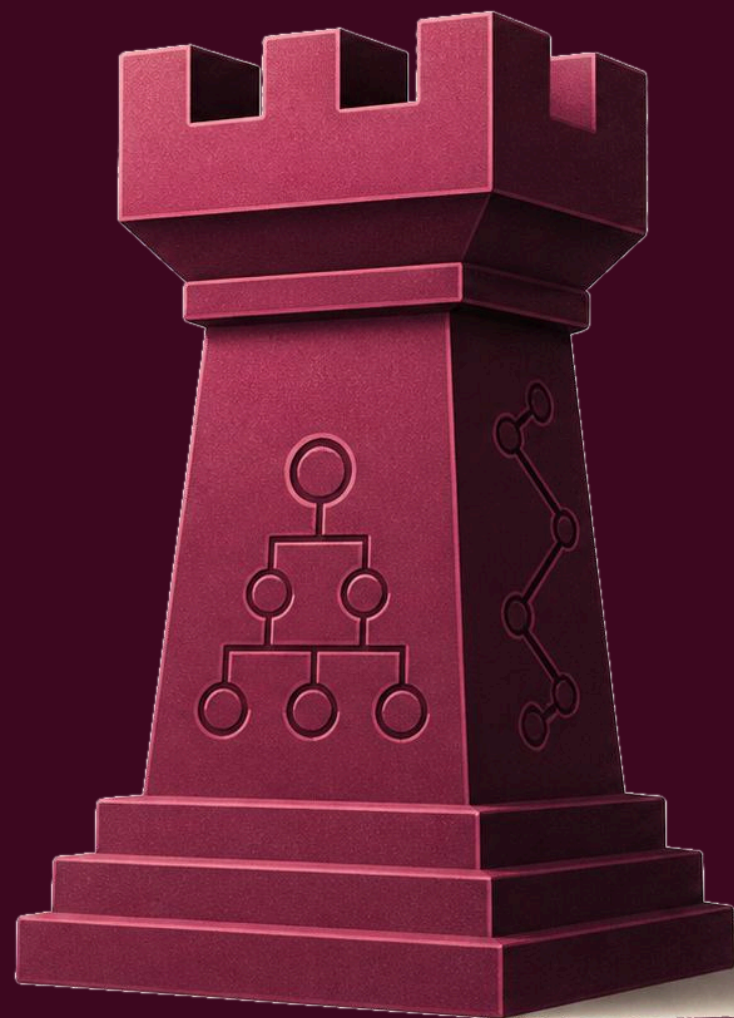
FRACTIONAL EXECUTIVE NETWORKS

The Future of Flexible Work in Fractional Executive Networks

What network leaders told Wingspan about running a 1099 specialist network at scale.

72%

of fractional executive network leaders feel "very confident" in their 1099 program. Only 28% are "very satisfied" with the system supporting it.



THE FUTURE OF FLEXIBLE WORK · 2026

The Future of Flexible Work in Fractional Executive Networks

What network leaders told Wingspan about running a 1099 specialist network at scale.

Fractional networks took the top rank of all industries Wingspan surveyed on five separate measures of pain.

Across 500+ finance, HR, and operations leaders in seven verticals, fractional networks came in at #1 on leader confidence, the confidence-to-satisfaction gap, contract e-signing pain, specialist workforce mix, and senior-buyer concentration. **The data shows why, and what the leading networks are doing differently.**

ABOUT THE DATA

Who is this for Ops, finance, and HR leaders at fractional executive and specialist talent networks placing 1099 CFOs, COOs, and senior specialists at scale

Fractional respondents **57**

Total survey sample **500+**

Company size ~58% have 1,000–4,999 employees

LEADERSHIP CONFIDENCE

72%

report being "very confident" managing contractors.

Yet, only **28% are very satisfied with the system supporting it.**

100%

of networks spending \$10M+ feel very confident. **0% are satisfied.**

The largest spend doesn't translate to satisfaction. Confidence and satisfaction fully invert. (n=16)

100%

of CFO-led networks feel very confident. **Only 13% are satisfied.**

The dominant economic buyer is confident, and not satisfied. (n=16)

OPERATIONAL REALITY

28%

report being "very satisfied" with their current process.

Well below the confidence rate. **The source of the 44-point gap.**

86%

flag contract or NDA e-signing as a top onboarding challenge.

#1 of 7 verticals. +13 pts above the next-closest industry.

91%

manage a workforce that is mostly or only highly skilled specialists.

The highest skill mix of any vertical. Contractors are the deliverable.

WHERE FRACTIONAL NETWORKS GET STUCK

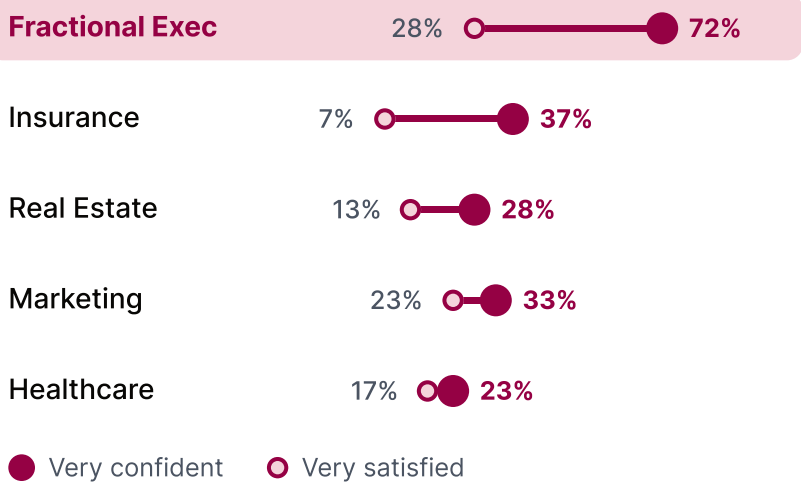
The chokepoints widening the confidence-to-satisfaction gap.

Pain isn't spread evenly across the contractor lifecycle. Three specific failure points show up sharply in the data, and they're where the gap between leader confidence and operational reality is widest.

FAILURE POINT 1 · THE LEADERSHIP BLIND SPOT

Buyers feel handled at the top. The contractor data tells a different story below.

72% of leaders report being very confident, but only 28% report being very satisfied. That's a 44-point gap, the largest of any vertical.

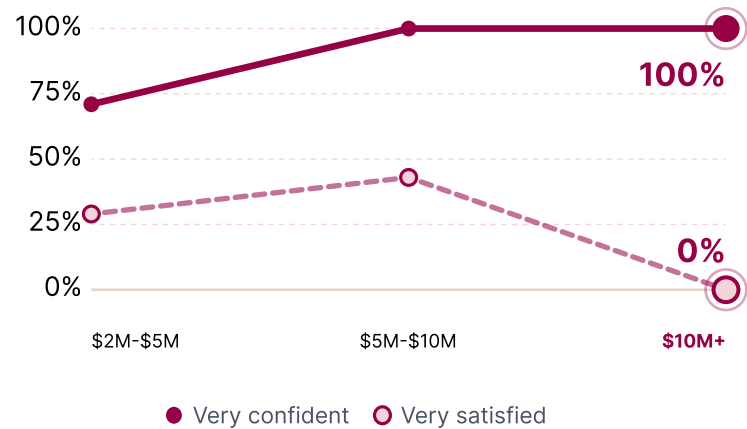


Very confident vs very satisfied · by vertical

FAILURE POINT 2 · THE \$10M CLIFF

The largest spend doesn't translate to satisfaction. It inverts.

Among the 16 networks paying contractors \$10M+ a month, 100% report being very confident and 0% report being very satisfied. Every leader at this tier flags contract e-signing as their top onboarding pain.

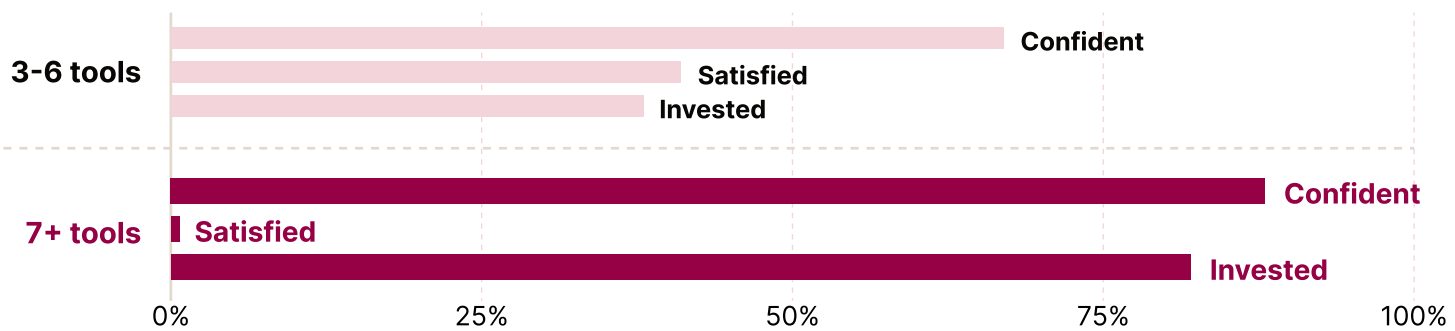


Monthly contractor spend · confidence vs satisfaction

FAILURE POINT 3 · THE TOOL-SPRAWL SIGNATURE

Tool sprawl, not under-investment, is the upstream driver of the gap.

Among 17 fractional networks running 7+ contractor-management tools, zero report being very satisfied, despite 82% having invested in a new purpose-built system this past year. Every very-satisfied respondent sits in the 3-to-6-tool tier.



Confidence rises, satisfaction crashes, investment doesn't fix it · by tool count

Zero

networks running seven-plus tools feel very satisfied

Sprawl multiplies the gap. Among 17 networks running seven or more contractor-management tools, none feel very satisfied, and 14 of the 17 already invested in a contractor-specific system this past year. Sprawl is the upstream driver.

WHERE FRACTIONAL EXECUTIVES RANK

#1 industry on five separate measures of contractor pain.

Across the 500+ leaders Wingspan surveyed in seven verticals, fractional-executive networks took the top rank on five separate measures. **No other vertical leads more than two.** Each rank surfaces a distinct buyer felt-pain and a distinct structural cause.

	Fractional	Insurance	Marketing	Real Estate	Healthcare	Transport	Customer Support
Very confident managing contractors	72%	37%	33%	28%	23%	18%	18%
Confidence-to-satisfaction gap (pts)	+44	+30	+10	+15	+6	-1	-4
Contract / NDA e-signing pain	86%	44%	73%	59%	30%	32%	35%
Mostly highly skilled contractor mix	91%	69%	54%	29%	81%	3%	16%
CFO / senior-buyer concentration	39%	24%	21%	18%	17%	16%	16%

The takeaway: fractional networks are fighting the gap between perception and reality: confident senior buyers, specialist LLC counterparties at scale, and an onboarding flow that breaks at e-signing. Fractional networks need e-signing, multi-client invoicing, and LLC-aware payment ops in one stack. A generic AP tool covers one of the three.

WHAT THE LEADING NETWORKS ARE DOING

How the leading fractional networks closed the gap.

- 01 Surface the confidence-versus-satisfaction blind spot.**
 72% feel very confident. Only 28% are very satisfied. Closing the gap starts with measuring it.
- 02 Consolidate the seven-plus tool stack into one purpose-built system.**
 0 of 17 networks running 7+ tools feel very satisfied. One platform replaces the sprawl.
- 03 Make e-signing native.**
 86% flag e-signing as a top onboarding pain. LLC engagements need e-signing as default, not add-on.

These are the moves Wingspan customers like **Graphite, OdeCloud, Mento, Mplace, GigTalent, and Assembly Industries** have already made. They're fractional networks placing CFOs, COOs, and specialists on multi-client, LLC-based 1099 engagements at scale.

[Read the case](#)

Wingspan is the payroll platform built for fractional-executive networks.

Contract e-signing, multi-client LLC invoicing, per-engagement pay, and 1099 filing in one platform, used by Graphite, OdeCloud, Mento, Mplace, and other fractional networks scaling past 500 specialists.

[Book a demo](#)
[See how it works](#)

The 2026 Future of Flexible Work Report surveyed 500+ US-based finance, HR, and operations leaders. Fractional Executive cut: n=57 (~11% of sample). Cross-industry comparisons computed against the full sample. Customer references from published Wingspan case studies on wingspan.app/customers.