

How To Access 43 M Freelancers in Europe – Episode 9 with Glen Hodgson

Yurii Lazaruk: [00:00:00] Welcome to the Independent Workforce, the podcast where we explore the now and the future of work through the lens of temporary employment such as freelancers, contractors, fractional experts, you name it. Here we speak with CEOs, recruiters, founders, and industry leaders about how they work with independent talent, the wins, the challenges, and the lessons learned.

My name is Yuri. I'm growing the freelance market at Freelancer Mac and International Platforms, has been connecting top independent professionals with companies for over 20 years. And my guest is Glenn Hodgson, the founder of Free Tate Europa, A think tank champion in openness, free trade and ethical policymaking across Europe and the Freelance movement, a platform uniting honest companies.

Policy makers and freelancers, of course, to shape a fair and thriving platform economy. So welcome, Glenn,

Glen Hodgson: welcome indeed to you, and it's great to be on. Yuri. Thank you for having me. Uh, it's always great to talk to you and, uh, share thoughts, ideas, and knowledge on this, uh, growing [00:01:00] sector that we've been championing for a long time.

Yurii Lazaruk: Very much. Likewise. You've been in this topic for so many years, I feel like, you know, ever since and since you used the word growing. Tell me a little bit more from your perspective what's happening in on the freelance market, on this independent talent market in Europe.

Glen Hodgson: Yeah, well, there's a lot going on at the moment.

We've got sort of, uh, first I think it's the, uh, uh, the increasing push of individuals, not just millennials and Gen Z, but also older workers as well, who are seeing or having their eyes opened to the possibilities of, uh, uh, uh, freelance work, uh, uh, fractional careers and basically sort of opening their eyes to the fact that there are.

Multiple ways, uh, to earn money, when, where, and how you want. And I think a lot of this as well is also fueled by the fact that the, the myth of a, a nine to five job as somehow being more safe, more secure, more permanent, has definitely been busted in recent times. Across sectors, across [00:02:00] industries. We've seen massive layoffs, uh, and individuals being forced into a, a, a rethink of.

What is stable? What is, uh, basically a way of moving yourself forward and in the same way that you probably wouldn't buy just one stock, if you are on the, uh, the stock market business, you'd have a more sort of, uh, balanced portfolio. I think people are realizing the fact that having sort of. Several income streams, several ways of making money is something that is actually good for them.

It's good for the present, but also it's good for the future as a hedge against risk and, uh, economic and social volatility. But it's also an opportunity for them to actually sort of learn more skills. Um, more knowledge, expertise because this whole idea of, uh, reskilling and upskilling is so important.

People wanna sort of stay relevant. They wanna actually sort of take more responsibility for themselves in terms of how, uh, they can learn as a lifelong learning approach, but also the value that they could offer to companies and [00:03:00] organizations. So their value to the marketplace is crucial. But at the same time, and we've talked about this for a long time.

The fact that people want more freedom, they want more flexibility, uh, both in terms of their lifestyle and their work style. Uh, and the kind of the blurring of the two is there. But I think people wanna make money outta their, their passion, uh, things that they really feel sort of drawn to, as opposed to, uh, a, a job as being a traditional 1950s, 1960s vision of something that must be endured just to earn money, just to pay the bills and nothing more.

Yurii Lazaruk: You know, and it sounds like more from the individual side and also a little bit feels like a contrary to what companies really want. They want to own people, they want them to see it in their offices. So what's in it in for companies? What's in it, uh, in growing, in

this growing economy for, for end clients, for those who hire this independent talents.

Glen Hodgson: Yeah. Well, I think first of all, it's, it's the element URI that they need to be able to adapt to the reality. If you want the best coders, if you want the best, uh, uh, lawyers, uh, a lot of these [00:04:00] individuals now will not accept sort of, uh, a traditional, uh, full-time, uh, contract. They want more of a fractional approach, so.

I think it's enlightened self-interest to attract the best talent in terms of flexible working schemes, but also maybe more project based is something that aligns. But also I think for companies and organizations, the case of being, uh, uh, uh, more productive and rational, both in terms of being able to, uh, get yourself in terms of bringing people in.

To, uh, projects on a very sort of specific basis. So here's a project with a clear, uh, beginning, clear, middle, and a clear end. We can show that we've actually been able to, to, to deliver something as opposed to hiring people on a sort of a third, 35 hour a week, uh, contract. Sometimes it set around, sometimes they're maybe not fully employed, so it's a productivity gain.

For the companies and organizations as well, when sort of the, uh, times are tight. And I think it's also a sort of more blended team approach, [00:05:00] which is becoming more, uh, um, uh, uh, relevant for companies too. The fact that there's a blend of full-time employees. Contractors, freelancers, uh, open talent solutions so you can bring in the knowledge and expertise and skills that are needed, when and when, uh, when and where it's necessary.

And I think that, um, Richard to Tobaccowala talks about sort of the, the, the Hollywood producer, Hollywood director, uh, uh, um, uh, model. Whereby if you're shooting a film, you bring together a set of actors. You've got a director, a writer, producers, you've got the camera crew, the catering crew. You've got the sort of the people who get the locations and the wardrobe, and then they disband after that, that that movie.

Maybe they come together on something else. But this idea of actually bringing together the best in class, uh, and creating the team that is best placed to be able to deliver value and deliver on a project, I think something is absolutely crucial. And sort of coming more into the. Everyday way of life for companies and organizations who need to [00:06:00] rationalize, who need to make their money go further and actually be able to deliver on the, uh, uh, resources and inputs that they have.

Yurii Lazaruk: Hmm. You know, it's interesting that you mentioned the, about like collecting the freelancers and working on one project, because I just yesterday listened to the Human Cloud podcast host also about Matt Mottola with nri. Yeah. Great stuff. And Nuri will be also the guest, uh, in the future episodes here also.

And, um. He told this very interesting thing that platforms currently that exist on the market, the freelance independent hunt, uh, platforms, they propose just one person for one thing, but he's like, what they're missing out is on creating projects, like creating teams. So for example, you have a project and you are not just hiring one person, but it proposes you like five, six people who are complimentary.

Like the full team that can work together. And I can imagine that company and at, at some point, uh, if you want to try something and you have people sitting in your office, they're doing some, uh, daily like tasks. They work on like [00:07:00] ongoing projects, but we want to test, you want to play with something you hire.

Small team and gives them a task, gives them a project, and you play with it. And afterwards you can either continue with them or you can like move this project to your, um, internal team and it's totally okay. So it's kind of like the faster way to test hypothesis, the faster way to try new things, because sometimes it's not that easy to take people from, from their full day work and try some things inside.

Glen Hodgson: Yeah, and I think sort of the, the C-suite more and more is getting used to this and I think sort of realizes that the benefits of it. I think there's still kind of a bit of a barrier from HR and legal, uh, who, um, in some cases, you know, there, there, there are a

few sort of gray zones that need to be addressed, but I think they're all, uh, doable.

But there's kind of, uh, more conservative mindsets from these parts of the organization that, uh. Uh, more familiar with the traditional route and maybe a little bit more skeptical, little bit more resistant to this, uh, uh, trend that is, uh, [00:08:00] uh, more efficient and more productive for the organization. Uh.

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Yurii Lazaruk: Tell me a little bit about your personal story, about your background. Like what role do you play in Mar influence market? How do you do this? And, uh, what is your personal goal?

Glen Hodgson: Well, first of all, I think sort of the, the whole, um, uh, starting point for this is out of my, uh, the. The lens of my own experience.

So I started out before, before freelancing. I wouldn't say before freelancing was the thing, but certainly, uh, well before COVID, when, you know, this was something that was a little bit strange, the whole idea of a full-time nine to five job was, uh, standard for the majority of people. Uh, but I realized that sort of freedom and flexibility, but also the, uh, uh, the uh, uh, strength of being able to work with, uh, different clients, different partners on, uh, interesting.

Uh, projects and being able to deliver value to that was something that was very important, parti, particularly within sort of the policy, uh, and the, uh, communication space. But then I think it was, [00:09:00] um, and it sort started free trade, uh, uh, Oprahs the think tank, as you said. And then there's an offshoot from that was.

Because I was doing sort of future of work, um, uh, papers, articles, uh, studies, uh, getting together with a few sort of, uh, platforms, companies, organizations who said, well, look, things are changing. No one really understands it, particularly from the media in the political sphere. Can we not get together some kind of stakeholder initiative where we can actually.

Profile and highlight some of the things that are actually going on, both in terms of, uh, education, on the reality of the present as well as the future of work, but also trying to help to shape some of the policy which was coming up that, uh, wasn't targeted. Because one of the things we see very often is that, uh, in a lot of, uh, markets still, uh, the voice of industry comes through the sort of the, uh, uh, the trade bodies, um, the employers, federations, and then.

Supposedly the voice of labor comes through the trade unions, [00:10:00] but increasingly there's more and more of us who are sort of freelance. We're not maybe in a union, we're not into this, uh, organized way of doing things. But we have our own communities, we have our own groups. We share knowledge and expertise much more than traditional employees do, who have this mindset of, you know, this is mine.

If I share anything, then basically be a, a, an advantage to someone else. I need to sort of, uh, ring fence it and be very sort of istic guarding. My skills and my knowledge, whereas in my experience, it's quite the opposite for freelancers. We're very open to share best practice. We're very open to share worse practice in terms of things that don't work, uh, both in terms of running the business, the, uh, the setup of this work style and lifestyle.

So that's something I think, uh, is really strong and I think that now. You know, the European Commission's very conservative figures are 43 million, uh, freelancers and platform workers, uh, within the European Union. That's a big number, and it's actually sort of increasing all the time. So I think that we need to be [00:11:00] listened to in terms of, uh, the policy, the social schemes, everything that makes sure that we are actually included within this as opposed to, uh.

It ignored when it comes to rights, responsibilities, any kind of social security, safety net elements that are maybe given to our full-time, uh, uh, uh, employees, we should actually benefit from those. All we want is a, a level playing field. We don't wanna be seen as something less or, uh, taken away from some of these sort of, uh, benefits and things that should be, uh, uh, uh, allocated to us just because we've chosen a different work style.

Yurii Lazaruk: When you have those conversations with government representatives or companies or like you name it, what are what? What is the response? What, what are the main blockers they tell you that prevents them from finally understanding and acknowledging that, yes, there is this force. We need to deal with it and we need to work with it.

Glen Hodgson: I think one of the big problems. It's so [00:12:00] diverse. So, you know, you, you used terms like freelancer, solopreneur, uh, one person companies. Um, and the reality is it can be everything from a an, an IT programmer. It can be a marketing professional, it could be a, a lawyer or an architect. It can also be a musician or an artist.

So there's so many sectors. There's only so many forms of work, and there is no collective within that in terms of, it's so different in terms of what is an everyday, uh, job, what's it look like? And also I think the, the element is that sort of freelancers by nature are very, uh, independent. They want to be able to follow their own path, create their own presence, and create their own future.

And I think a, a a are less likely to be, uh, drawn towards sort of, um, um, groups in the sense of, uh, organizing just to look at policy. The organization is much more sort of a community sphere in terms of sharing best practice, sharing ideas, sharing knowledge. As opposed to sort of trying to push for any sort of policy or [00:13:00] legislative, uh, uh, gains within that.

But I think the realization is, uh, uh, is slowly dawning on the, uh, uh, the politicians now that something is actually happening. The labor market today is very different from, it was in the 1950s, 1960s, and, and, and the needs of individuals is actually evolving along with that.

So I think it's, uh, slowly but surely the, uh, uh, the viewpoints and the realization.

Uh, as always, it, it, it, it, it, it's, uh, uh, it, it drags a little bit behind the reality, but I think it's getting there in terms of waking up to, uh, the reality of what's happening in the, uh, uh, the labor market and society of today. Yuri,

Yurii Lazaruk: you know, I will ask you this one question that really includes three inside.

So what can we do? And by saying we, I mean like freelancers as individuals. Companies as end clients and also those who are in between like staff and agencies, platforms and et cetera, everyone who connects, uh, freelancers and end [00:14:00] clients. What can we all do like separately to fast forward the growth of this market?

Glen Hodgson: I think we need to be sort of, uh, very good at vocalizing what we're doing. And I think it, it, it falls to people like you, uh, and me Uri because of the fact that, uh, we are kind of aggregators, uh, I'd say we're also curators, uh, uh, of the knowledge and the stories and what's actually happening because a lot of freelancers there.

You know, as you as, as you know, you're doing everything, you're doing the work you're doing, the marketing, you're doing, the administration, the accounting, uh, some of the legal stuff, uh, running the business on a daily basis, and that takes up probably 120% of your time, uh, a a and therefore there's a, that there's limited abilities.

But I think that because we have such a, a, a broad. Uh, a deep network in terms of geographical, but also the, the sectors, but also the knowledge that we've accrued. I think it's very important for us to be able to be that curator and aggregator towards the, uh, [00:15:00] decision makers and opinion form to basically take the temperature on what's actually happening and articulate some of the, the fears, the worries, the needs, the wants of the freelancer community,

Yurii Lazaruk: and what can companies do.

Glen Hodgson: Well, companies I think need to also be, uh, a bit more realistic in terms of explaining, um, what their business model is because people talk about the fact that sort freelancing open talent and contractors is something very new. It's been around for a long time, and the biggest organizations, uh, uh, are often the ones who are actually the biggest users of freelance and open talent and contractors, but they just don't talk about it.

Um, so this is certainly not the reserve of SMEs and startups. It's, uh, more likely to be, uh, something that is utilized by big business. So I think the onus is a little bit on them is to, to actually get them involved, get them vocal, and to to, to talk about some of the issues that, that, that are relevant for the freelance community.

'cause it's. It, it is again, it's, uh, part of the [00:16:00] same ecosystem. It's enlightened self-interest for them as well because they're using more and more freelancers and contractors in their business model. They need to be able, uh, a viewpoint and actually sort of help to, uh, push the views and needs. Of the freelancer community.

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Just direct access to verified experts and opportunities across the globe. Visit [freelancer map.com](https://freelancermap.com) and start building your next success story. Today. You know, it sounds, um, very like, um, a little bit of like a fairy tale that, uh, there is something is not going right, but then there is this magic thing happens and everyone is happy.

Uh, but like the real life is a little [00:17:00] bit different and, uh. What I hear a lot, and it's like one of the main blockers of working with independent talent is this mindset of like, how can I trust them? How can I control them? How can I ensure that they're delivering a good work? How can I ensure that they're not taking my intellectual property and put it into the competitors, et cetera, et cetera.

You name it. So, uh, what is the, like the easiest, like the first step that companies, that end clients, that people who can hire those freelancers, those independent clients, what is the first steps they can take to deal with this mindset, to break this stigma?

Glen Hodgson: Yeah, and I agree, and I think this is something that does come up very often still because it's, it's, you know, as human beings we're very sort of, uh, if not scared and certainly reticent and wary of the unfamiliar, the things that are, uh, uh, new, uh, and potentially disruptive.

So I think this is the part played, uh, within this, but I think one of the big elements here is the whole idea of getting a relationship, uh, building [00:18:00] it over time, but also starting small with, uh, um, little projects. Build them up, wants the sort of the trust and the uh, uh, the comfort. And the reality, what is the value that can actually be, be given in that over time, but also I think to be able to facilitate that it's getting good contracts in place.

So having a freelancer, uh, contract between a, a company and an organization and an individual. Or a, a, a small company, um, to be able to make sure that it, it is right. So if you've got very much, very specific worries about, uh, intellectual property, I think given the fact that knowledge is almost free and almost ubiquitous these days, that's a very old fashioned way of looking at a lot of things.

Um, but also if there are, we, uh, worries about these kind of things, why not write that into the contract that you have in place with the, uh, uh, the individual be very, uh, uh, specific and concrete in terms of the, uh, the rules, the obligations. So that can actually sort of secure for the, for the, [00:19:00] for the, uh, internal audience, particularly HR and legal.

Uh, but at the same time, it can also help to also, um, uh, really define the remits and the framework of the assignment that the freelancer or the contractor has. And I think this helps both sides by having, uh, as much, uh, clarity as possible in terms of what's gonna be delivered, what's the price, what's the timeframe, what's the dos and don'ts of this, um, so that the, uh, uh, the, the maximum benefit can be gained for, for, for, for both parties within that relationship.

Yurii Lazaruk: And that's if we're talking about contract and I feel like it's an e, the easiest part. But what if we are talking about compliance? You know, sometimes when you hire a full-time employee, it can take months to check all the things about the person that you can actually hire them. And free answers won't wait months for go through this check-in.

So how, how can companies deal with compliance thing?

Glen Hodgson: I think compliance is something that's increasingly gonna be, uh, outsourced to third parties. I think that when [00:20:00] companies have sort of, um, you know, their, their bench strength, uh, they have a group of, uh, experts, freelancers that they can call upon for specific things.

That's a great situation and that's the best place that they need to be. But if we're starting from a position whereby we need some, um, um, skills, I think sort of utilizing a third party, whether it's a platform, whether it's a, a, a body that can actually, you know, be that interlocutor that has done the due diligence, who has basically done all.

Checks, uh, is basically a filter for the talent so that, you know, if you go through this platform, um, you can actually sort of get the, uh, talent that you need meets the requirements that someone's vetted all this talent in advance. I think there's a clear opening for that at the moment, and that's kind of moving away from the kind of five or Upwork model.

You've got this sea of, uh, uh, of individuals. Some of it's good, some of it's average, some of it's pretty bad. Uh, and it's kind of this, um, potluck approach to, [00:21:00] uh, taking on freelance talent, talent. I think this is something that really needs to be, uh, uh, moved beyond because there's increasing numbers of, uh, potential employers who.

Moving away from these platforms because it just doesn't meet their needs. There's too much of a, a, a, a, a, a scale of, uh, good to bad and you just, there's no way of checking really, apart from some of the ratings, which also can be inflated or, uh, shall we say, suspect in some cases. So I think a, a, a reliable.

Uh, partner who could, who could be a platform as a third party, as a barrier, as a filter to, uh, basically ensure that the, the, the quality of the talent that's being brought on can actually sort of meet the needs of the, uh, uh, the one who needs the project to reassignment completed.

Yurii Lazaruk: Am I hearing it correctly that you don't really have as a client to deal with all these things such as a compliance, uh, contracting, invoicing, et cetera, that you can literally delegate it to people, to companies who [00:22:00] were doing it for years already and it's not that hard?

Yes.

Glen Hodgson: Yeah. And also internationally as well. I mean, there's the, the fact, you know, I want this person, but they're based in, uh, uh, Moldova, or they're based in, uh, uh, Chile. These things are more complicated. I don't wanna have to deal with the compliance, the, the, the work assignments, all these kind of things to bring someone on board.

But we're seeing an increasing number of, uh, uh, companies and platforms who will actually do that work for you. Sort of take all the headaches, uh, uh, uh, uh, the heart administrative processes outta that. And allow you to be able to access the people that you need as well. And I think this is something that's just going to, uh, increase over time because the need is there.

And I think that compliance and that, that risk element is the, uh, is the big and probably the largest barrier at the moment that is stopping the, uh, the, the increase in, uh, turning more towards, uh, uh, freelance talent.

Yurii Lazaruk: So we talked a lot about less compliance contracting mindset shifts. So from the.

Freelancer side, [00:23:00] what are the most common frustration they face when they work with companies?

Glen Hodgson: Yeah, I think there's a, there's, there's a lot of issues like that. I, I cover these in, I'm gonna go, there's the work reconstructed, there's the book as well. We talk about some of these, uh, elements within this.

And I think that is a, that is a, a clear area that, uh, um, looking at sort of more and more here because there are. Lots of problems that we do have with these kind of, uh, uh, areas as well. I think the big thing that always comes up to me, um, increasingly is the idea of, uh, not being treated fairly and late payments.

So when you're working with a company or organization, freelancers who don't have the, uh, uh, the, the runway and maybe the, uh, the buffer that, uh, some even SMEs or larger companies have, the, the, the, the constant chasing to be paid. Um, some companies say, well, it's only a few thousand euros, but for, for, for a smaller contractor or organization, that's the difference between able to pay your bills, uh, that month or not.[00:24:00]

And I think this realization that, uh, you know, you've got someone on the other end of it, they've got their obligations as well, and the, the late payment piece is, uh, uh, very much a problem, which is, uh, uh, infecting the whole sector. And discourages a lot of people, um, from the, uh, freelancing community, sadly, on that basis.

Um, I also think it's this element of, um, you know, this still the fact that, you know, that the idea that, well, you're a freelancer because you can't get a, a real drop job or a proper job. When are you gonna, when are you gonna turn to that? It's still this mindset thing in, in, in society, which is certainly less than it was sort of 10, 15 years ago.

But it's still there in certain quarters. And I think this is something that is, uh, a little bit of a, um, uh, a barrier, um, for individuals themselves. And they feel sort of being, uh, pushed into the category of, uh, of, of a second class citizen in some cases un, un, un, on unjustly. Uh, and it's, uh, incorrectly.

[00:25:00] But I think this is something that kind of infects a little bit the, uh, the, the, the sector, uh, uh, uh, as well. And I think it's also the fact that, you know, that being, uh, being dealt with and treated

differently by the financial community. So if you wanna, if you've got a, uh, go to your bank or financial institution, they'll lend you money on the basis of, look, this is your sort of, uh, uh, salary.

This is your contract that you've got. We'll give you x amount of money. But if you're a freelancer and you show, well, I got this this month and this month, the kind of, um. Uh, income, which goes in peaks and troughs. They're, they're much more, uh, um, uh, reticent to lend your money in some cases to insure you.

So I think the being treated badly by the financial sector is something that really, uh, uh, worries people. But also as well when it comes into the fact of, uh, some of the social security and some of the provisions there in some countries and some geographies, um, when you're a freelancer, being, [00:26:00] having act.

Access to things like social security payments, uh, maternity leave, paternity leave, uh, some of the um, uh, uh, remote work. Uh, uh, uh. Obligations or, uh, um, uh, abilities are actually sort of taken away from you. Some of the pension pieces, some of the health security. So is these kind of, kind of social things that are part and parcel, uh, in a lot of countries of a traditional job, a traditional nine to five, the lack of that is, um, a worry for a great number of.

Uh, uh, freelancers, uh, on, on on that basis. And I think also the, um, the, the element of, um, you know, just being seen as something different and outside the traditional workforce. This is something as well, which is, um. I think problematic for a number of freelancers, and it's kind of, you know, they're doing their thing, they're delivering, uh, uh, uh, value, but they're seen as being something a little bit less, a little bit.

Second class. I think that's also a, a, a, a big, uh, [00:27:00] uh, a big problem and a big barrier and a concern for many.

Yurii Lazaruk: You know, to your point, I think that yes, many companies think that freelancers are those who are who, who are needed for some leftovers, and uh, at some point it's fine. Yeah, it's okay. You have some tasks that you don't know how to do or you don't want to deal with.

Yeah. Freelancers can do that for you. You can just pay them. They're professionals. They will do it. No worries. And also, it was so fun when you told about like this, when you are freelancers, they tell like, get a job. But then when you, I'm a business owner, oh wow, you're a business owner, but you nobody knows what business do you really run?

So I feel like, uh, also from the freelancer side, it's good to treat your freelancing as a business because you are a business owner. Yes. And it's, it's, I I feel like it also moves the needle because when you talk to a company as I'm like, I'm running my. Uh, professional business. I'm, I'm running my like, one person advertisement agency or one person development studio.

And I feel like it's also shifts the needle and it's, um, kind of like helps companies to understand, oh, [00:28:00] okay, this person is professional. It's not like some just one stop shop and, uh, we cannot trust, we cannot work with them. And also to your point, to have this intermediary, someone in between who you can trust.

And once again, usually intermediary is not another freelancer. It's just some. Tough in recruiting company that have like hundreds and thousands of connections and a lot of employees and it's also as big as potential clients are. And they're kinda like collaborating on the same level. And then these companies are collaborating with freelancers and like connecting these two worlds.

So I feel like they're also very, very important part of this ecosystem of this, uh, world of independent talents. And still, I'm curious, where do you see. The biggest misalignment between company's expectation, between client's, expectations, and freelancers.

Glen Hodgson: I think the biggest, uh, mismatch is still this idea of, uh, you know, what is, uh, uh, what is a role, what is job, uh, what can be delivered.

And I think thinking this mismatch between the, [00:29:00] the traditional idea of a role and a title as opposed to the value that you can bring to a company or organization, this is still the thing where we need to get sort of closer together because companies still think in

terms of roles and titles. Whereas increasing the freelancer community is more thinking in terms of projects, the value that I can add, what can I actually do in terms of change for this, uh, for this, uh, institution.

And I think that's really, that value element is much more where we're going and the market's going. But I think that sort of companies are still a little bit, uh, uh, stuck in the old mindsets of, uh, uh, a job, uh, in the sort of, uh, old fashioned sense of it.

Yurii Lazaruk: What companies are missing, what they, okay, so we were talk, we, we were told a lot of about the benefits of hiring freelancers, but what is, uh, another side?

So what companies will miss if they don't start working with flexible talent now?

Glen Hodgson: Well, I think the big, the biggest thing, Yuri, is the fact they won't be able to [00:30:00] access the best talent we see, uh, the figures from across Europe and globally, that, uh, the number of companies who are struggling, who, who can't find the talent that they need, uh, specifically in sort of the, uh, the technology space.

But it goes across the board. There's a great number of sectors which just can't, uh, find the, uh, uh, the talent, the need regardless of the employment or unemployment rates of the country. Um, they're just not around. So I think this need to be more flexible to actually sort, think as a a, on a, on a, uh, uh, an open talent model, maybe sort of a, a, a part remote hybrid model as well.

To be able to attract the right talent, knowledge, and expertise that the companies need, we'll be forced upon them because this shortage can't go on. And I think that, uh, it's either a case of, uh, training up individuals within the organization to meet those needs, and that's long, uh, slow and expensive, or else actually sort of [00:31:00] changing the model to be able to access what you want, when you want it.

Yurii Lazaruk: But do they need the best talents? You know, I'm asking because I have some friends who work in different corporates

and they say like, companies are super open with us. They are not saying we need the best talents, we need some average talents. And it's totally okay.

Glen Hodgson: Yeah. Well I think this it, it starts the.

Everything is the, the, the sharp tip of the spear. So we start with the sort of the best talent, but I think we go down to sort of the good talent, then to the, uh, average and then even down to the mediocre talent who can actually do a, uh, quite simple tasks, quite simple jobs. It's not gonna set the world a light.

But I think increasingly more and more of the workforce is moving towards a, uh, a demand for, uh, more freedom and flexibility. So I think even to access the kind of okay talent, um, now and, uh, certainly into the future, uh, companies will have to be able to, uh, change their mindset and, uh, change their uh, uh, recruitments and, uh, partnership models.

Yurii Lazaruk: So we [00:32:00] were talking already a lot, and you talked about this huge numbers, like 43 millions of, uh, independent of freelancers in Europe only. And I'm not even talking about the whole world in the US or even more, much more, uh, independent times. Yeah. And, uh. Let's, let's dive a little bit, uh, more into like, uh, let's say crystal ball.

So, uh, how do you see the role of freelancers evolving, especially with all this AI and all these new technologies coming into our lives?

Glen Hodgson: I think I'm, I'm seeing, I'm very sort of glass half full on this. I think that there's so many, uh, jobs and, uh, roles that don't even exist now, which will be created by, uh, AI technology and new innovations.

So in the same way that, um, um, we, we, we, we don't, uh, uh, say bad things about the fact that, uh, medicines, uh, uh. Stopped people dying and therefore put grave diggers outta jobs. I don't think we should be sort [00:33:00] of worried about the fact that AI will sort of kill the jobs market at all. I think there's certain things that will be displaced.

There will be certain, uh, needs and requirements, uh, will change thanks to technology and I think that it's us to us as individuals to be able to, uh, re-skin it up still. So that our knowledge and skills stay relevant and we have value for the market. That's one thing. But I also think that, um, you know, this symbiosis of, uh, of us as uh, individuals with the technology will make us much, uh, faster, much more efficient, much more productive, and also maybe take away some of the repetitive, boring tasks as well and allow us to, uh, focus on the, uh, uh, the more high value, the more creative, the more, uh, uh, uh, interesting.

Um, elements of our work and our, and our roles. So I think that the, um, the upside is us for there as individuals. And I think that, you know, whether you are a, uh, an accountant, whether you are a, a, a video content producer, uh, or [00:34:00] if you are a, uh, a speech writer or a musician, I think utilizing the. Uh, the technology, the tools and the applications that are there to augment your role, to augment how, how you can actually do things, either the, uh, the, the depth, but also the, the breadth of tasks that you can take on thanks to technology.

I think aligning with it is, um, I, I is, is the way forward, but I also think that the surefire way to make yourself obsolete is to ignore, uh, the technological changes and the innovations in the market. That will mean that very, very quickly you will, uh, uh, have a, a diminished. Uh, uh, value that you can actually offer to the marketplace and to companies.

So I think that, uh, ignoring it is definitely not the way to go.

Yurii Lazaruk: You never know. You never know because IC there are so many companies are still ignoring many things, but, um, also as the history shows that, um, they're not usually less long. Um, so, um. If you could, okay, so let's, let's, let's, let's focus a little bit on this part.

So we are talking about, uh, starting working with [00:35:00] freelance, like hiring them, uh, dealing with all these agreements, parts, et cetera, et cetera. And I know that, um, it's just the beginning. So sometimes, um, many, many different blockers happens. Exactly.

When you start working because of onboarding, because of integrating into the existing team.

So, uh, companies treat like freelancers. As someone, as an outsider, as someone there, what, what, what do you do here? We have no idea. So if you could design the perfect system for integrating freelancers, what would it look like?

Glen Hodgson: It would be a a, a model whereby it would be a blended team. And there would be openness from all parts of that team.

The fact of trying to sort of ringfence, uh, certain parts of the, uh, organization, certain parts of the knowledge, uh, certain part of the details for the project, which is kept out of the, uh, the hands and heads and mind. Of the, uh, contractors and freelancers [00:36:00] is the wrong way to go because basically you dilute the possibilities for them to be able to add add value, but also the overall team and the overall product and, uh, that you can actually produce is severely limited by the fact that you, you're not open, uh, with your free trip.

Freelance talent, treat them as a team, treat them as part of the team from the beginning, uh, on a specific project and also into the future. And there's maybe a sort of repeat work elements that can, uh, can, can, uh, uh, fall out from that original project. But I think it's really sort of something that is, uh, so limiting.

And you see it time and time again that companies try and, uh, keep things internal and only bring on their, uh, uh, uh, freelance talent as an add-on, which means that they're working on sort of sometimes 30, 40, 50% knowledge as opposed to having the full view of the details and the, uh, the full aim of the product or, or, or the project.

Uh, and basically the elements needed to be able to succeed.

Yurii Lazaruk: [00:37:00] I also, I know that there is a good practice when you are kind of like having a project manager, someone overseeing what's happening, and then you have part in your, in your internal team, and then you hire freelancers also as a part of the general project.

And they do not receive all the information, but they receive just enough information to work on their part of the project. And once again, talking to your point, not limited amount of information. Enough information to really deliver the good work and also not all the information because they don't really need to know about all the projects because it also can move their attention to, um, yeah, somewhere outside and they don't have to focus on anything very.

Right. We should do some specific task and you know, if we're talking overall about, uh, coming back to fast forwarding to, uh, grow in this talent, independent talent economy faster, what one change. Do you think would accelerate trust and adoption of freelancers worldwide?

Glen Hodgson: I think it will be, having the right [00:38:00] uh, uh, policy framework in place would, would, would certainly help.

But I think also the, the, the, the, the, the business community, uh, having the right mindset as well to say that this is no longer something that is strange or odd. It's on the same footing. Uh, we have a level playing field with our full-time employee, uh, uh, uh, brothers and sisters. I think this would be the sort of the greatest starting point.

So this is, uh, something that can be, uh, uh, utilized maybe on an ad hoc basis, but certainly something that is, uh, uh, acceptable and open to all and can actually deliver value within projects and organizations.

Yurii Lazaruk: You know, Glenn, I have so many questions and I wish to have the sky is the limit, but time is the limit.

So the final one, what advice would you give to companies who are just start using freelancers and to freelancers who are just entering the market? I mean, like, it'll be two advice. Yeah.

Glen Hodgson: Well, I think for actually both, it's the same. It. Uh, uh, crawl, walk, run, [00:39:00] start small, uh, build up trust and, uh, uh, develop from there.

So in the, in, in the company specific, uh, uh, paradigm, think about sort of some areas where you are sort of missing, uh, talent or expertise. Uh, and think about the projects whereby you can actually sort of bring in specific talent who could be brought in. You don't want part of the overall, uh, headcount, uh, or the, uh, ongoing payroll, but they can actually be brought in to help out things that you maybe don't have time for or you don't have the knowledge or expertise in-house to be able to do that, but it's something that's important.

So that would be a, an area and also with them as well. Start small. Start very concrete, uh, in terms of the project with a clear beginning, middle, and end, and then be able to develop from there. Just test it and see what the results are that you can actually feedback. So I think trial by doing is the greatest way to basically get the organization and particularly the C-Suite on board, is to say, we've done this, we've spent this [00:40:00] amount of money.

Look at the, uh. Impact we've had from this investment that will buy in internal, uh, uh, users and, uh, cheerleaders. And it will go from there. And I think the same thing for individuals. If you are maybe in a, in a full-time job or studying whatever it is, and the thinking about freelance lifestyle, don't go in with sort of, uh, both feet and jump into the cold water, uh, in December.

Uh, maybe start by a side hustle. Think about what you want to do. What is your passion? Where do you have. Uh, knowledge, skills and expertise that are actually valuable to the marketplace. What you can monetize, uh, and think about the offer, uh, and maybe start small as well with maybe sort of a, a, a couple of, uh, partners or a couple of projects that you can do.

Then from there, the word of mouth. Uh, uh, works, works very, very well. Be able to profile yourself with your, uh, uh, peers and your, uh, network and your ecosystem through the, the work that you're doing, but also through, uh, [00:41:00] social media channels, uh, a website over time as well. So you seem, and this goes back to your point, Yuri, about seeing more professional, more real.

So over time people will, people won't buy ideas and they won't buy dreams. They want sort of clear, hard facts that you know what you're

doing and you are a serious professional, but also a serious professional who knows how to run a business. So the more professional and the more uh, uh, uh, uh, well put together you look the more trust and uh, you'll be able to engender with companies and organizations.

But also you'll be able to build out your, your knowledge, your expertise, but also your brand to a broader, uh, stakeholder group. And I think this is something that's crucial as you, uh, build up over time on these, uh, these elements.

Yurii Lazaruk: You know, if we are talking about freelancer, it's clear who is responsible.

You are. As a freelancer, you are responsible for that. But if you're talking about the companies, there are many different titles and there are many different levels. Yes. And, uh, people who are listening to this podcast, they're might be CEOs, founders, recruiters, business growth manager, uh, [00:42:00] executive director, whatever you name it.

So from your experience, who is responsible for bringing independent talents, bringing freelancers inside what their titles usually look like?

Glen Hodgson: I think it's a mixture, and as you say, it's absolutely right, Yuri. It's not just one person. I think it's usually the, uh, um, uh, the business unit, a business unit, unit head or a project manager or someone who's got a specific need or a specific pain point within the organization.

Then it's also the, uh, public procurements or the, uh, private the procurement people within the organization. It's the legal department. It's the, uh, uh, HR department who sometimes feel a bit threatened because a lot of these decisions sometimes go to the business units and even the C-suite about, uh, how they should actually bring in the, the, the talent.

And maybe it sometimes can be the, the, the side of the HR function. And it's very interesting that we still see these kind of things where a permanent headcount goes through HR and [00:43:00] is a, a silo. Uh,

a a apart from the kind of the businesses who have the sort of money and budget available for freelancers and contractors, they need on specific projects and specific activities, and I think it's always interesting that there's still so many organizations that have these two siloed approach to different type of workers.

And, uh, you go through a very different stream and a very, very different channel if you have this, uh, label on your head, full-time employee as opposed to a open talent solution.

Yurii Lazaruk: Got it. Got it. I feel like there are so many roads to be created in this, um, sphere, in this market, and I feel like that's exactly what we're working on right now.

And last but not least, name two people I should reach out to to talk about the independent workforce.

Glen Hodgson: Oh, great question. I mean, I think that, um, you know yourself, you've got Matt Mottola as well that you already got, got involved in there. I think it's really important to be able to, uh, uh, be able to speak to, to them about some of the, [00:44:00] uh, uh, developments that are, that, that, that are going on, uh, right now.

Um, so I think you're covering, uh, uh, uh, covering a lot of the, the, uh, main. Uh, basis already on this piece. I think the sort of more, more, more broadly than that, there's a lot of, uh, uh, the, a lot of discussions that we've been, uh, uh, having, I still see what, um, um, uh, John Wind is still doing a lot of great stuff on this, this field as well.

He's got a lot of, uh, elements that we can sort of bring in. I think it would be good to have him. All, uh, uh, and also Alina who runs the course, the freelance business, uh, uh, community in the Freelance Business Month. Uh, and this is it now in October. I think there are also interesting individuals to speak to, to, uh, get their thoughts, ideas, and, uh.

Because again, like us, they have a broad view of what's happening in different markets, but also speak to a lot of, uh, members of the freelancing community. So I think that would also be an interesting

angle [00:45:00] to, uh, uh, to, to, to, to bring to bear and share their thoughts and ideas here, Yuri.

Yurii Lazaruk: And what is the best way to connect with you?

Glen Hodgson: Best way to get to me is either, uh, via the website, send me a, uh, message on email or else dms over, uh, LinkedIn, um, x uh, probably the best ways to get involved. And I, and I, I read everything and I respond to everything. So be careful what you wish for.

Yurii Lazaruk: You know, Glenn, you're such a light in this, uh, I would even say Lighthouse.

In this, uh, world of freelance or world independent, you are doing a lot of conversations. You are like bringing a lot of movements. You start a lot of movements and, uh, I really, really appreciate that. And, uh, it's such a pleasure to talk to every time you have such a positive, uh, exciting interest in energy.

And, uh. I'm just smiling every time I'm talking to you. So thank you so much for these conversations.

Glen Hodgson: Be careful. I'll start to believe you and I'll, I'll, I'll, I'll get very arrogant and very conceited about these things, Yuri, but thank you for the kind words

Yurii Lazaruk: and um, [00:46:00] yeah, see you in the freelance world and for listeners.

Thank you for joining us on this episode of The Independent Workforce. I hope you've taken one step closer to working smarter with freelance talent. If you enjoy this conversation, subscribe to learn even more and share it with your colleague. And remember, the future of work is now.