

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 Map and International Platform, has been connected to independent professionals with companies for over 20 years. And my guest is near ud, head of Partnerships and Investments. And think Up Managing partner at Tech.

Investor Club. Founder of Fresh Start and Startup Ecosystem Builder. With over 20 years of experience helping startups go from idea to fundable business, who works with founders on investor readiness. Go to market and scaling. So welcome here.

Nir Melamud: Hi, how are you? Thanks for having me.

Yurii Lazaruk: Super happy to talk to you.

You know, like I truly believe that startups and freelancers and solopreneurs have a very, very [00:01:00] similar mindset. And the moment I met with you, I was thinking like it would be an amazing conversation to learn more about how exactly those ecosystems are connected, how they work together, how they get the most talents.

Because always you need to work fast. You need to deliver best results. It's a little bit different from corporates, and we definitely talk more about it. So walk me through your professional journey and what role do you play in this freelance ecosystem today?

Nir Melamud: Amazing. So, again, thank you, Yuri. Um, so I had the chance to fund two companies, uh, one, uh, 20 years, um, uh, ago, a startup.

Five years. Ran it. Then, uh, close it. Uh. Um, then I joined a startup, uh, a service oriented company, uh, in the, in the media, in the media advertising space. And in the last decade, I had the chance to support early stage founders in their business strategy, go to market and investment readiness. [00:02:00] So fundraising, uh, also had the opportunity to invest in field.

Well, uh, also invested in a few that didn't, uh, which is totally normal. And, um, I joined, uh, or partnered with a, with a Norwegian fund about, uh, in 2020,

um, mostly in the space of mobility, renewable energy, Cleantech, ocean Tech, uh, had the chance to be a board member in, in one, uh, portfolio company There.

Also joined and ran a many, um, angel Investor Club, uh, which is basically, uh, private people investing first checks, uh, in early stage startups, uh, running for three years and in the last two and a half years, um, fully committed to, to think up. Uh, um, and, uh, think up is, um, is an only one. A platform that supports people who have [00:03:00] startup idea, uh, to build something meaningful, something that matters.

Uh, if you want to look at it as, um, as the place between, I'm seeing a problem, something is wrong. Something doesn't work. I want to maybe solve it and to a point where this is a real startup now. So structuring it all so a lot and, and, and talking to you, and I'm sure we're gonna talk a lot about freelancers and how they kind of work together with, with startups.

Uh, a lot of freelancers sits on amazing ideas, patterns. They see insight from client work, right. And um. Most of time they don't necessarily have the the structure way to build it or maybe even do something in parallel before quitting their jobs maybe. So that's the gap we're trying to solve.

Yurii Lazaruk: Yeah. You know, to a point, I have so many conversations with freelancers who are entrepreneurs and startup owners in the heart, and they always have some side projects or some [00:04:00] idea they wanted to try or maybe they were having like working with a client and they have something to build.

And sometimes I know that freelancers are starting startups. Within big organizations because every new project, every new thing that companies are trying, it's also kind of a startup. Yeah. So I totally, I totally get what you're talking about. So let's dive deeper into like this nitty gritty of how does it work?

And I'm curious, um, you know, it's, it's also like also my personal, personal question. Like how, like what role. Good hiring plays in startups journey. At what point people should start hiring and like, how, how, how does it, how much is it, is it important for startups?

Nir Melamud: Hiring in general or hiring freelancers?

Yurii Lazaruk: Both. Let's, let's focus on hiring in general and then we'll, yeah. We'll, mm-hmm.

Nir Melamud: Great. So, um, so I believe every startup starts with a, with a founding team. So either solo [00:05:00] entrepreneur or, or maybe a. Co-founding team and, uh, they usually take, uh, an expanded roles within. So some have business acumen, some have tech acumen, and then they kind of complete different task, uh, operational task, et cetera.

Once. Um, once the validation process is done and, and you need to shift from a, I would say a prototype early stage prototype to something more meaningful, an MVP or a commercial MVP that you can then present and, and, and charge for. This is usually the, the, the, the, the place or the. Point of time or the milestone where people need to hire people, other people, um, usually full-time employees would be the first ones.

Um, but then in parallel hiring freelancers for sure that, that, that's the point of time.

Yurii Lazaruk: What [00:06:00] is the difference between hiring full-time and freelancers? Why I'm asking? Because, you know, for example, if you're an established company, you have like decades of being there, or Okay, at least. Five years being there, it's already kind of like stay sane, that most likely you will survive, most likely will continue on growth.

And when people are joining startups, it might be more interesting payment, but also it's not always a thing. And, um, it's, it's also harder to find people who are really ready to commit to a startup who believe in the idea, who believe in people. So from your example, from your experience, what is the difference between hiring full-time experts and hiring freelancers for startups?

Nir Melamud: Yeah. So, so you mentioned one key point, and then if you are able to hire, uh, a good enough talent, uh, that believes in your vision because it's in a vision phase, it's, it's, it's, it's, you didn't prove anything just yet. Uh, and bring them on. Um, [00:07:00] that's, that's sometimes hard, and that's exactly where freelancers kind of complete the picture.

Uh, you can tap into experienced. Uh, workforce or experienced, talented, get them in. Um, and, and it kind of complete areas where you cannot hire, uh, full-time employee now to discuss or to, to delve into the, the, the differences. Um, especially early hiring, early, um. It, it, it, it's, it's, it's almost like the co-founding marriage thing.

Uh, it's more than just the talent. It's about the, the, the character, how you work together, uh, you know, the culture of the, this early entity that, that are formed,

uh, that is formed and, and, um. Uh, sometimes it's not a clear cut when you meet someone that this is the one you wanna marry to [00:08:00] for, for, for decade.

Uh, and, and, uh, on the other end, the freelancers hiring, uh, creates a flexibility agility, which feed. The, the, the, the, the startup space. And it, uh, it, it, it could be, um, a testing period for later, maybe a more deeper engagement. So sometimes we see that, and by the way, in think up, we can delve into that later.

Uh, we do hire freelancers and some of those were shifted along the way to being a full-time employee. So this is, this is a dynamic that, that works pretty, pretty, pretty nicely in many places. Or you find through the work, through real life tasks that maybe something doesn't connect there. Uh, maybe it's a great talent, but the culture doesn't fit.

Expectation from both sides doesn't meet. And, and this is exactly how we, how you can find it out without making. Uh, [00:09:00] without taking too much risk, I would say,

Yurii Lazaruk: I, I, I would say that it also, uh, serves like an insurance for, for a startup team because, for example, if you hire someone as a freelancer and uh, later on you are, you can switch into like this full-time collaboration.

It's still kind of like a trial period, you know, that you try, if it works, if everything is good, then you continue. It's, it's something that you have in, in corporates and companies that you have like from once to three months, and sometimes six, six months is like onboarding period. Yeah. But I feel like in startup you cannot allow to people to join and sit and read documents.

You need them to join and start working right away because it, it just doesn't work that way. And I'm curious. From your experience, what is, what is the percentage between like having internal and external teams in startups?

Nir Melamud: Um, it really depends. It, it depends on the, on on many factors. Some are external and some are internal.

[00:10:00] Um, in our case, for example, the ratio was about just a little bit less than third. Of the employees in the company. So, so, so I don't know de depend on the number of, of people we had. So if we had eight, we had about two freelancers or freelancers onboarded. And when we are 14, we have a little bit more than that.

Um, and also there are, for me, there are different types of freelancers engaged. Let, let me, let me get there a little bit, uh, because there are. The ones that I talked now about like, like the two versus the eight or the three versus the 10, um, we consider them almost as full-time employees.

Yurii Lazaruk: Yeah.

Nir Melamud: So they are not like an external agency that they get, um, you know, jobs or tasks and they need to deliver it on time.

And they're really in our, you [00:11:00] know, internal company meetings. And, and so on and so forth. And on the other hand, we have external agencies that could be one single solo freelancer, ju just saying. So, uh, and this is different kind of mindset. And so we have maybe more so if, if, if I take those two types and tie them together, um, maybe half and half.

Yurii Lazaruk: Hmm. Okay.

Nir Melamud: Freelancers and full-time employees.

Yurii Lazaruk: Where like from, where do you personally at sync up and also founders that you are working with? Where do you most often see using freelance? Like for what tasks are you use them as like dealing with some minor things, like maybe, you know, doing some adjustments, like creating logo or something like that.

Or maybe you sometimes tap into their, like consultancy experience and get like years of, uh, them working on other projects into your team. Like how, how do they improve the teams that you are, improve your core team? Uh, [00:12:00]

Nir Melamud: I think up. And also the ones that I work with or, or, or used to work with, it's always a, a hands-on deep dive into the core of, of, of the, of the startup.

So, and it's, it's across the, the, the, what is called departments. Uh, so it could be marketing, uh, so either, uh, marketing itself or product marketing or, or whatever. Uh, it could be DevOps. Deep dive core, core development. It could be, uh, um, well product, which is based on, on, on research and validation and, and, and about the customer and designing, uh, conceptually designing the product.

Uh, all of these could hold freelancers that are paid externally but are, are considered. Almost as internal, full-time employee [00:13:00] for sure.

Yurii Lazaruk: Yeah. Am am I hearing correctly that you are kind of like hiring not just extra hands, but their experience mostly?

Nir Melamud: Sure, sure, sure. It's always the combination. Um, so we have, for example, designer, uh, in our company at the moment, um, that is, that has.

20 years of experience. Super talented. Um, you know, we are trying, uh, in our case we started, uh, desktop oriented and now we shifting into mobile because, you know, eventually 90, 95%, uh, where traffic is, is, is mobile. We knew from the beginning, but we decided to have a focus. Uh, having said that this designer is, uh.

Is, is I would say a ma, a freelancer designer, which is a master in mobile and, and conversion. And, and, and this is exactly how we enjoy her, her talent, her her experience. Absolutely not. And she's also hands-on. So [00:14:00] she does, you know, the conversion, the shift,

Yurii Lazaruk: you know, I know that, uh, if we're talking about like established organizations, they can sometimes allow themselves to make mistakes.

I mean, like they can spend time like for three, six months as hiring someone full-time just to understand that it was not the right person. And then to start this process over and over again. I truly believe startups doesn't have this time. So how do you ensure that you are hiring? Write free answers.

How do you know that they will be a good addition to a team, especially in like being part of like the core team?

Nir Melamud: Yeah. So, uh, we spend a lot of time in thinking about it, uh, before we hire. Um, we start with referrals. Uh, usually it's a referral starting point. Mm-hmm. Um, if we don't have the right referral, then we, we do have an HR external, by the way, another, another freelancer external.

Uh, [00:15:00] HR function that that helps us, uh, find other, uh, candidates and, and, um, we do a thorough onboarding, I would say, or or interviews session until we decide it takes them some time. Usually two months, three months for sure to decide on the specific, uh, on the specific case. And. On the other hand, we do have some, so in the, usually doesn't usually we, so far,

luckily for us and for most of the, by the way, the start of the, I, I used to work with, uh.

Usually it works. Uh, and when it doesn't, it doesn't quickly by the way, like after two months or so, three months, not necessarily six or eight months period, uh, we cut things. I actually just had one from, from the business development [00:16:00] side of think up. Uh, something looked good at the beginning. We took the time to, to.

Uh, to assess. Then we started working and something there didn't work, something didn't, uh, follow, and we had the opportunity to say thank you and, uh, continue.

Yurii Lazaruk: And I feel like it's all, it was also easier because you didn't have like this kinda like full-time contract and all the things and uh, you know, contract ended.

Yeah. Okay. Sorry, we're not working. Or maybe tasks were not delivered. You say like, yeah, okay, we're going with another person. So I feel like it's also about the speed.

Nir Melamud: Yeah. And it also works both ways. Uh, I mean also for the startup for, for the, for the freelancer, it's um. It's a kind of, um, um, you know, eventually it's a, it's a kind of a, it's a, it's a match thing and, and, and, and, and, and it need to fit for both sides.

Yurii Lazaruk: This episode of the Independent Workforce is brought to you by Freelancer Map, the Home of Freelancing. Whether you are looking to hire top [00:17:00] freelance talent fast, or a freelancer ready to find your next big project, freelance Map connects the right people with the right work. No endless job boards. No guesswork.

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. And you also mentioned very, very important thing about having external HR freelancer because sometimes companies think that they either have to hire themselves or a higher expensive, uh, recruiting company and they don't know sometimes that there are.

Real freelance recruiters who pretty much do the same job, sometimes even better. And you don't have to pay all this extra costs of maintaining a company. You are just paying for the freelancer. And they, they are also invested in

specifically your project because you are one of the clients that they cherish and they want to help you as much as they can.

I, I, I feel like every startup or like companies who doesn't have their internal hr, [00:18:00] they have to also remember about this part. For the startup, um, how hiring affect fundraising delivery go to market. I know it's very, very important. At least I feel so, and it's very, so I'm curious, like from your perspective, how hiring right people specifically free answers.

We can also talk about the core team, but specifically freelancers, how does it move you forward?

Nir Melamud: It's, it's, it's, it's, it's, uh, it's part of the, again, it really depend on how you look at, at freelancers. Uh, in my cases. We look at them almost as full-time employees. So, so naturally they affect the core, the core element of the startup.

They are part of the, of, of, of the core. It's not a task oriented, uh, relationship. Uh, we expect them to be engaged. Uh, this is part of the [00:19:00] assessment we, we are doing early in the process. So to see if they can commit themselves to being our, I I would add another layer here, emotionally involved, um, with, with a vision, with a, with what we build, with what we, uh, try to do outside.

Uh, for other, for, for, for founders or for, for people with idea and then. The whole conversation and the way we see them is they are, they're core to our success in go to market in fundraise. We, we still don't fundraise in this specific case, but in other cases it does. I was, if you want to take it, let, let's flip it for a second.

Interesting. Uh, so I was a mentor. Freelancer for, for early stage startups in their fundraising processes. Right. So, so I, I know it from the [00:20:00] other, other way around. Yeah. And I hope that I had a chance to support and kind of deliver value. Uh, to those who succeeded to, to fundraise. And by the way, also to those who didn't, uh, or, or couldn't, uh, sometimes this is also something that filters and save a lot of time and money and effort.

If the story is not coherent, if the, if you're not investment ready, uh, then you wasting time and, and, and really your soul, uh, on, on meeting people and, and getting the knows. And, and, and, and with, without any real chance. That's, that's something that if you can save from people and kind of spur them to do something else or to reevaluate their current status, it's also a value, I believe.

Yurii Lazaruk: How do, how do you make this assessment that you are talking about, like what is something that other [00:21:00] startup founders need to take care about and keep in mind when hiring freelancers?

Nir Melamud: Um, first of all, they need, again, in my view, they need to understand, first of all, there's the talent and the references.

I mean, it's like the first barrier. If they, and, and by the way, if they fit. To the specific role that you expect them to complete and that that's maybe so, so, so what I would do, what I would suggest to early stage founders to be super clear or ready before they hire full-time employee, but, but more importantly, freelancers is to define exactly what they're looking for.

Like deeply like, and how, how is their interaction with the other parties? Now, don't get me wrong, in early stage startup, the, the borders are [00:22:00] blurry. It's not like a corporate where, where, where people have the roles and if someone is doing someone else's role, it's uh, kind of, uh, getting into their. Space and, and you know, there's, there could be a tension thing.

No, that's not what I mean. But as a starting point in startup, you do expect those kind of, uh, overlapping working together, exploring together, and then deciding together, um, environment. But, um, um, you should start. See there's a fit, a core, uh, like a, um, um, high level fit for, uh, for, uh, for, for meeting, for the role that you defined and with the talent and expertise that this, the for answer brings.

So, so, yeah, super important that that's the number one, uh, uh, advice. And then afterwards, [00:23:00] culture, chemistry.

Yurii Lazaruk: You know what I hear sometimes from, um, external, like bigger organizations that, um, they hire freelancers and they, they expect them to be like full-time workers still without paying for insurance, like health and extra benefits.

And, um, what misconceptions do startup teams have, might have or have about freelancers?

Nir Melamud: Yeah, I, I totally understand, uh, what you're, what you're seeing, what you're projecting to. Um, I would say that payment for early stage founders are limited in the resources, that's for sure. Um, and paying for external party, um, is sometimes confusing because, because.

What you don't take into account when you see a, um, [00:24:00] uh, an hourly rate, for example, is exactly what you pointed to, which is. Um, you know, there, there's no employer employee relationship with all the benefits, et cetera, that you would have once you hire someone. And it might seem like an expensive hire, high hour rate.

Yeah. Um, nevertheless, I think that, um, um, um, eventually getting someone who may be a little bit expensive. Uh, but in this format of freelancers could be the right and cheap way eventually. Um, yeah, because, because, um, um, then the shift to converting freelancer, if, if that works for both parties. Yeah. But once you do the shift, it is fixed.

It is, it, it fixed the, the, the, usually the, the, the price or [00:25:00] the, the salary, uh, you pay is, is, is benchmarked with, with what happen outside. It makes sense for both parties. Uh, there's the compensation with, with options or, or. Or, uh, or other mechanism, uh, that is like the benefit of on top of the salary and then it is fixed.

What it does, yeah, it might cost you a little bit more in an hourly rate at the beginning, but then it's a learning, it's a cheaper learning, uh, curve that you, you pay for. For sure.

Yurii Lazaruk: Yeah. I, I also believe that to your point, that when you are hiring freelancers, um, there is much faster onboarding and as to a point about the learning curve.

So they're ready to be there for you, like from the day one. Of course, they need to better understand like what exactly are building and what is the task, but they don't need you to guide through all the ideas to create them a specific role, to give them the descriptions. Here is what you do. Here is what you don't just gives them a task.

You just, Hey, hey, here is a goal. Here's what you need to accomplish. [00:26:00] Do it. And then they are doing it because they're experts and you know, you are, you told me so many times already about. Hiring influencers and you're told that it's mostly about referrals and uh, I believe that you get these referrals, like first of all from your current team, then you go maybe to your personal network.

And I'm curious, like how does it work? Um, if for example, you don't have referrals from your team, where do you go afterwards? What kind of networks

or maybe tools or platforms, like where do you find freelancers outside of referrals?

Nir Melamud: Yeah, so specifically as we don't go to external platform, even though I know, and in my past I did, I mean, uh, there are, uh, different, uh, you know, global platforms that you can find either through Fiverr or Upwork or, or freelancers.com and so on.

Um. What we prefer at the moment, at least early stage, relatively early stage is, um, [00:27:00] is to have either from our team networks for sure, number one. Then, uh, we have our, uh. Um, uh, personal network where, you know, on LinkedIn or other resources that we post, uh, our requirements and then we get some, some, some insight.

Um, um, this is mostly it. This is mostly sometimes very early, but we did that, uh, we reach out to someone who popped up. Hmm. Uh, and that I'm saying that to encourage f freelancers to spend some time being there exposing the work, uh, it shouldn't be like a heavy. Uh, you know, a pause, super articles, super deep things that takes a lot of time in your, that you don't have in your daily, daily, you know, uh, routine.

It [00:28:00] should, it should be just to be out there and if it's a more of a tangible thing that you can expose, especially if you're a designer, especially if you're product, uh, manager, especially if you are a, uh, a marketing, uh. Uh, uh, savvy. I, I would, I would share it with the world and it shouldn't be super professional, but if it's constant and what you consider professional, I'm not talking about the, what I'm talking about when I'm saying professional.

I'm talking about the, the post doesn't need to be professional, but, uh, you know, the outcome should, should highlight your, your, your, your expertise.

Yurii Lazaruk: Yeah. You know, there, I, I recently read the sentence in the book that. If you are not visible, you are invisible, which is kind of like, duh, not visible, it's equals invisible.

But I feel like people are still forgetting, like from both sides, from freelancer sides, they forgot that they have to be active anyhow, you know, because that's exactly how you pop up on Raiders, and [00:29:00] that's exactly how we get hired. And also, um, from hiring side, people also think that they will post a project and then of course, I'm not talking about specific platforms like Freelance Map.

If you post project there, people will go there because there are freelancers and they are waiting for freelancer project, but they think that they will go to some like general job platform, post a project for freelancer and get a freelancer the right fit. Now it doesn't work that way. You'll get. All kind of opportunities, all kind of, because there are so many people who are searching for this, even, even on LinkedIn, but Exactly.

Um, also to your point that tapping into this networks, because if you meet one freelancer, this freelancer most likely has. Friends. Their friends has friends. That's how it works because you know, freelancers won't survive by themselves. They're always part of like some kind of closer community or bigger community.

So I feel like when you are establishing relationships just with one good freelancer, basically you are opening the door for like. Hundreds of good [00:30:00] freelancers. And it's also something that people are, you know, not even thinking about. They think, oh my God, I need to build my network of 100 Freelancer. No, you have to meet just one freelancers and be good with them and build relationships.

And then you have access to all this network.

Nir Melamud: Exactly, exactly. And I would say, and I will add two things here. Uh, the first one is, um. Uh, with freelancer, be be generous. Uh, be as a freelancer with other freelancers. Be generous. Um, um, make it, um, paid forward. Uh, recommend, uh, there's, when people recommend me.

Uh, I usually feel obligated to recommend them. Uh, totally honest, and, and this is kind of, uh, the way I work and, um, um, and I'm happy to do that, not because of, uh, anything, just it, it just being nice to others and it comes back to you. That's kind of a one [00:31:00] philosophy. The second thing is, um. And we're not in a, you know, a marketing social thing.

But, uh, but, uh, um, uh, there's two things that would be aware when you post something outside, right? And the first one is try to tie. Try to tie a value to what you project. So for example, just to give you an example, so when I was in Vienna and I had a key speaking, uh, uh, just, just, uh, a week ago or 10 days ago, um, I'm not just saying I was in Vienna in that kind of, in that conference and, and, uh, I had opportunity to find, to talk to, I don't know how many people.

Um, I also add what I talked about and what are the key insights that I. Uh, try to deliver. And even someone who didn't be, you know, wasn't there, can, can maybe relate to what I tried to [00:32:00] talk to, uh, about. And, and, and, and that's, that's one thing. And the second thing. So, so think about that. What you learn from the project, what you had in.

Uh, what was the challenge? What were you, what did you solve? What did you find out inside? Um, and the second thing is the mass of things. So it's not about the specific post, but rather when you come to a point where you are, have you have like, uh, I dunno, 20, 30, 50, a hundred post over the year. Uh, it become, uh, it becomes a mass critical mass that, that when someone hits your post and try to delve deeper into who you are, then it waits there.

Yurii Lazaruk: Yeah. Yeah. It makes total sense because when you are, you know, projecting. Something more than like, Hey, I'm boss speaker, yay, good for me. But more like you are still bringing extra value and sometimes even the small tips of, uh, things that may people start [00:33:00] thinking and at least wanting to connect with you.

And when you connect. Like it's serendipity place. Everything can happen. So the first thing is like, just go and connect and, you know, um, we're living in the AI age, uh, and we with a lot of AI stuff and automation and things. So I'm curious from your startup founder and um, um, investor and also an expert, how does it look like how the.

Hiring process both for full-time, for core employees and also for freelancers. Looks like for startups with this AI stuff.

Nir Melamud: Yeah, so, you know, uh, we think up are, are totally based on AI and we, we have an engine behind that works with all the models, et cetera. So, so we are deep into there in, you know, product.

But to be honest, we are still not there in terms of hiring processes and embedding AI processes. Or, or tools [00:34:00] in our, we are a little bit old fashioned maybe because, you know, the, the mechanism that I talked about earlier. So, so it's mostly focused on referrals, mo mostly, uh, around our, um, um, our network.

So, so when you start there, um. You know, we, we, we, we, we meet usually face to face or zoom to face or something like that. And, um, and, uh, we assess, we do the assessment and, uh, maybe there could be tools that could help us

evaluate better, better. I'm sure there are things out there that are starting to be, you know, part of, of the processes in many, many cases.

I guess since we, as a small, unlike corporates, that that has, I don't know, in every, every point of time, they could hire tens or hundreds of people. Uh, they need to have a structure mechanism. And embedding [00:35:00] tools there could save a lot of time, effort, money, resources, so on and so forth. And, and kind of be also the validation layer to what the HR or, or you know, whoever uh, interviewed, uh, had in mind.

Uh, we are small, agile. It's always one or two hiring per, per period of time. So, so it's, uh, uh, embedding AI is, is, is, is not there yet to be honest.

Yurii Lazaruk: If you were building a startup from scratch today, so for example, right now you have an idea and you start building a startup and you start assembling the team, which roles would you will definitely hire full-time.

And which roles will you definitely hire as a freelancers?

Nir Melamud: Um, well, the, I, I would say that the managerial as, as you go between, you know, task oriented, [00:36:00] it's not a task, it's like a role defined, but hands-on role versus management. I would definitely say that the manager should be full-time versus the others. Uh, that's one kind of key. Uh, but to be honest. I am not sure I can draw the line in a, in a sharp, kind of defined, generic way.

Uh, I think it's, uh, really depends on the case, on the person, on the involvement, on the, on the, on the chemistry, on, on, on their commitment.

Yurii Lazaruk: No, I,

Nir Melamud: I can see, yeah, I can see both sides. I can see having freelancers deeply involved.

Yurii Lazaruk: I'm very happy to hear that, you know, because, uh, it's, it's, it's amazing that you are already like having this blurred line between like having like kind of full time and uh, external, which means that the main thing that they are experts and the main [00:37:00] thing that they're committed and the main thing that they're delivering.

And it doesn't matter whether they're seen on your payroll or you're hiring them as contractors. The main things that you are, have the same vision, you agreed,

and you are working together. And then you know life will happen and you will see what, what is going next. And I'm curious if you could change one thing about how startups work with freelancers to improve this collaboration, what would it be?

Nir Melamud: Um, it, I would say that, um, structuring the, the, the, the processes, the work processes, the, the, the defining. At, at, at the beginning, at least when, when the freelance is, is, is, is onboarded and, and starting, starting to, uh, to work, uh, sometime it's very easy to, to lose the talent or to miss the, the right way of working [00:38:00] because there wasn't, there wasn't alignment in terms of what is expected from both sides, by the way.

And when you structure the process. You definitely. And, and this could be by the way, part of the, of the assessment part. Yeah. Before hiring the, the freelancer. Um, doing this, uh, uh, structured, sometimes I would say even documented and early stage founders find it very hard to document stuff and, uh, sometimes even document things maybe over the email.

Maybe having it, it written creates a much more, uh, decent or or alignment between, between, uh, the two parties. Yeah, for sure. That's what I would advise to early stage startup founders to do.

Yurii Lazaruk: Is it clear you understand for where you want to go? Is it clear you understand like what are steps to take? Like, not exact, but like the general idea.

I feel like [00:39:00] the the better the collaboration will be and in only I wish to have. The sky is the limit, but time is the limit. So the final question, what advice. Would you give to startups? Just starting to use freelancers?

Nir Melamud: Yeah. So the, I believe the main number one advice I would say is to get help from other founders on how they hired, uh, uh, founders.

I mean freelancers, uh, especially if, uh, if it's the first time you're doing that. Um, the key thing here is that you're not talking to first timers, uh, when, usually when you are freelancers, you've already been engaged with interaction with other companies, customers, clients, and you come very much prepared.

And if I'm, if I'm. Projecting my answer to the founder. Um, I believe that you need to kind of understand the, the interaction and, [00:40:00] and when one party is experienced and you are maybe not that experienced, uh, you need to level up your, your, uh. Uh, your, the way you describe the role, the way you

describe the, the relationship, the way you kind of, uh, seed something that maybe be, uh, growing or, or.

Or later in the process, meaning converting them to being maybe a full-time employee. That could be eventually a, a good outcome. Maybe sometimes for both sides. Uh, sometimes not, but, but sitting it early, uh, makes sense.

Yurii Lazaruk: And it's also a very good point because you reminded me that sometimes freelancers can teach you actually how to work with them.

And I remember, uh, two of the conversations that we had previously, uh, it was Uri De Lopez and he told that in Microsoft Freelancers hire freelancers. So they basically build this team that freelancers, they know what their needs are and you don't [00:41:00] really have to explain them how to do this. So basically they help you hire.

Write freelancers and deal with them and work with them so they're, you know, executing on the same level. And also, I remember John Ger told like long time ago that you can hire kind of like the board of freelancers to help you develop processes of how to hire freelancers. So as and to a point like, go, just ask questions from people who do that and they will help you.

So it's like the easy P way to do that. Last but not least, name two people I should reach out to to talk about the independent workforce.

Nir Melamud: I would say one great guy I know from, uh, from long time ago, he is Andrew Sandeck. Uh, he used to work in a workmate and he is, uh. A great company and now he's, uh, he's written two books and he is, uh, he's well known in the, in the [00:42:00] Asian part of the world, in the, in the VC part, and, and investments in startups.

I definitely recommend talking to him about his view on, on on independence work, uh, for sure. Uh, and another. Close to my heart, uh, person is, uh, she's called Inha. She's an go-to market expert. And I definitely believe that, uh, talking to her, she's by the way in charge in the, uh, on the Israel Austrian relationships of Chamber of Commerce.

And, uh, she has a vast experience in working as a freelancer. But also with freelancers and I definitely believe that you'll find lots of insights talking to her.

Yurii Lazaruk: Got it, got it. Ni York, thank you so much and thank you a lot for typing just a little bit more, just sharing your like huge amount of experience about.

How exactly startups [00:43:00] can hire and also benefit with, from working with freelancers. And you know, as, as we started this conversation, I feel like we have, like freelancers and startup founders have really very, very similar mindset. And also sometimes freelancers are becoming startup founders and sometimes startup founders are becoming company organization, like huge companies, farmers.

Like, it's, it's like the growth way. And I think that the more, the more people like follow the approach that you have. That you are not seeing a line between like full-time and freelancers. You basically treat them as expert. They are. The more people understand it, the better the far off we will go. And uh, yeah, I, I really, really hope that more and more people will connect with you, talk to you and learn from it.

And by the way, what is the best way to connect with you?

Nir Melamud: Could be either through LinkedIn, uh, I think that's the more direct, just, just connect and I would say find a word. Uh, if you are in the phase of having, [00:44:00] um, uh, you know, an idea, uh, or you wanna structure something for your client, uh, in both ways, I do recommend kind of a, uh.

Registering and kind of looking at what we do in Think Up Global. Um, and if you find you find it, uh, interesting, you can reach out. So,

Yurii Lazaruk: yeah. Yeah,

Nir Melamud: feel free to do som.

Yurii Lazaruk: Thank you so much. And yes, people, if you are building this. Go check up, sync up and, uh, connect with near and, um, yeah, see you in the startup and freelance industry.

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.