

**Yurii Lazaruk:** [00:00:00] Welcome to the Independent Workforce, a podcast where we explore the now and the future of work with a lens of temporary employment such as freelancers, contractors, fractional experts, you name it. He will 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. Freelancer map, and international platforms has been connected, top independent professionals with companies for over 20 years. And my guest is Jamie Reed, a founder of Bright Berg Collective, a global consultancy built on the power of freelance talent.

A fractional CMO with 20 years of experience helping brands grow through flexible, high impact marketing, leadership, and a true champion of the future of work, helping companies scale with created freelance talent, while empowering independent professionals to build sustainable businesses. So welcome, Jamie.

**Jamie Read:** Thank you very much, Yuri. Great to be here.

**Yurii Lazaruk:** It's been some time. I remember that we started this [00:01:00] conversation before the first episode was out, and now it's like 20 plus episodes there. And finally we are having this conversation, so I'm so, so happy to ask you all the questions that I have. And you know, like going through your LinkedIn, I saw different words.

Um, as it is in industry, like freelancers, fractional experts, contractors. So I'm curious from your perspective, what is the difference between the words fractional and freelancer, and is there a difference?

**Jamie Read:** I mean, the difference, uh, I think lies with the, in the, the individual. Um, you know, it's, it's what people want to call themselves really what they feel comfortable with.

I think in some. Some places, you know, in North America, for example, freelance still holds a certain, a certain meaning. Um, a lot of people think it has more to do with like gig work and stuff, and so people use other words to, to talk about the work they do. And so, no, for me, I think, you know, someone who's fractional, uh, I believe would probably be more higher value work.

Someone that, that has more of like a C-suite level or director level. You know, um, [00:02:00] experience that you would hire fractionally so you could get a day a week from them and they would, you know, provide everything that you

need at that sort of decision making level and take that away from you. That's typically what, when you hear fractional, but I think I've heard, I've heard lots of people call themselves fractional, this and that.

So yeah, the, the, the terminology as we've talked about, it's changing all the time and, and there's not really a, a common vernacular for everything.

**Yurii Lazaruk:** What are the other words that you keep hearing here and there about the independent talent?

**Jamie Read:** I mean, the way that I. I think of it all as the flexible workforce, because that's what it really is.

It's what, you know, if you were to talk about, uh, there's gig work, there's, uh, independent contractors, there's solopreneurs, there's, um, you know, an addition to freelance, uh, independent talent. Like you can just, there's, there's so many different terms for it, but I think ultimately what it all boils down to is this person's working for themselves.

Right. They're running their, their business, whether it's them or whether it's a [00:03:00] team of them, or in my case, an agency of. Of freelancers. Um, but there, there's, you know, you're running on your own. And that's really what it comes down to is that you're, you're, you're a freelance. You're able to, um, apply your skills to the clients you wanna apply them to, and you can demand the sort of pay that you believe you're worth.

And then it's this, you know, market of supply and demand. So

**Yurii Lazaruk:** when you, when you talk to clients, what words do they usually use or words.

**Jamie Read:** It, it depends, like if, if it's someone that they go to regularly and that they kind of work in a full-time capacity, but they're, they're a contract. They're a contractor, right?

And so I think that's a lot of the time the words that, uh, that employers are used to because a contractor is someone where you're controlling their hours. You're managing, you're dictating their pay and things like that, which is, they're still technically freelance in a way because, um, they may be bound by a contract, but it's not like they're employees completely. [00:04:00]

Um, but on the flip side, you know, they, they work with freelancers and that that tends to be. I think what people perceive to be sort of like finding people through Upwork and Fiverr and this sort of thing, which I would consider, you know, no offense to anybody, but it's lower value work. It's sort of stuff that is, you know, creating logos and, and more task oriented rather than strategic work.

And so I think that's really where the difference lies for a lot of companies is, am I looking at this individual as a, a doer of tasks or am I looking at this individual as a thinker and a strategic advisor to my organization and to my business?

**Yurii Lazaruk:** Uh, you know, you, I feel like you just tapped into very interesting topic that people are usually missing because they, when they hear the word freelancer, they always think about what experience they have in their mind.

Sometimes as you've said, it's just very like low key or like small paid, uh, project and nobody really hear thinks about freelancers. If as amazing experts with decades of experience who can just. [00:05:00] Come and like lead the whole team and the whole project. So from your experience, what are the levels to freelancers?

**Jamie Read:** The levels? Uh, great question. So if you go from the top down, like I'd say at a C-suite level, that's where you would have your fractional leaders. So you could have a fractional, um, finance person, you can have a fractional, um, chief marketing officer. You know, I don't see so much CEOs as fractional.

That's usually, you know, the one thing that you, you wanna make sure you have in your company, but around that CEO you can have, you know, fractional, uh, chief financial officers. So you really have to just, you know, if you look at your business. And you think, do I need to pay someone a C-suite salary for the whole year when I only really need them to kind of help me build out this business plan or to create this sort of, you know, to help me figure out my run rate?

Well, then you can just get a fractional CFO maybe to help you for, you know, six months, uh, a day, a week, and, and you don't have to worry about the contracts. Hiring and firing, [00:06:00] right? Like, I mean, the, the amount of time that you need to put into hiring someone at that level is usually six months in an organization.

So you save all of that time in a way. You're kind of testing this person out in a, a lot of ways. I think Fractional C-Suite can, you know, come on for longer. Once they understand your business and they get into the teeth of your business, well now maybe you bring in 'em on three days a week and eventually they could end up becoming your full-time CFO.

And so. It. I've seen that happen in multiple ways. Underneath the CFO, you kind of have this sort of director level. More consultant level type of freelancer, which I think is, um, you know, definitely a lot more entering the workforce. So these would be sort of your middle management director to, to manager level within an organization who are now maybe finding themselves without a job, rather than going back into the rat race, they're looking at, Hey, I can, I can sell my services.

I'm really good at a subject matter, or things like that. And so they're able to go in and build a bank of business for themselves around a, maybe a specific, uh, topic or, uh, [00:07:00] industry. And then one step below that you'd have sort of like your creative workforce, I think, which is more sort of what you would find through, uh, Fiverr and Upwork.

And you would, you'd, you'd be able to hire them to deliver a task or, or, or an output. Um, and then probably, you know, below that would be sort of your gig worker where you know your people that are working through a platform like Uber or, um, you know, a ride share. A grocery delivery, you know, app or something like that.

And they're also, you know, they're, they're part-time freelance. It's, you know, once you start getting into like the part-time work area, like our part-timers, freelancers, like, it starts to get kind of hard to define, but that's, I, I think, you know, that hierarchy of talent slash you know, you're paying for what you get, but you're also getting the higher value.

Uh, person with more experience as you sort of move up that ladder.

**Yurii Lazaruk:** So let's start from, uh, top down. So we have this, as you've said, uh, Uber kind of like, uh, users, um, kind of kind of like gig workers and we have this creative or like [00:08:00] professionals with experience. We can bring their knowledge and stuff.

Then we have like this directors and C-suite. So if we understand we, where we get gig workers and a little bit understanding where we get creatives, maybe you

can also add to them, but where do you get. Each type of professionals, where do you find them?

**Jamie Read:** Yeah, great question. Um, so I mean, I could plug my own agency a little bit, but I think, I think generally, um, there are platforms that.

You know, more and more, um, companies themselves, like even consultancies, like Deloitte, I know have something called Open Talent Network, uh, or Open Talent De de Deloitte, open Talent. And, um, you know, they're, they're building their own bank of freelance talent that they can tap into as they need to. Um, and so I think you, you may have to go out and curate them yourself because they're not always.

You know, organized in big, in big organizations, but a lot of professional freelance organizations, a lot of sort of, uh, fractional groups, like [00:09:00] they do have ways that you can outreach to them and, and identify, you know, talent through those platforms. Um, and even, you know, Fiverr and Upwork, they realize that there's.

Different levels to this. And so, you know, people that build enough bank of business and become, you know, have enough experience can kind of become a premium service, uh, service member, uh, within those platforms. And so they too kind of start to build themselves out and, and, um, work at sort of those higher director levels.

**Yurii Lazaruk:** When, when we're talking about the levels to, um, independent talent, there are also levels to people who hire them because it can be like a small business where there is one owner, maybe a few teammates, and it's easier to hire this person. Then we can have like medium to large businesses that, um, okay, not going to large, but medium where it's like still.

A bigger team, but there is not that much bureaucracy. And then we have corporate world where is close to impossible to hire freelancers because you need some compliance check-ins and all the things, and then you have to work through some kind of a vendor. So what level [00:10:00] of businesses do you see from your professional and how, okay, not how, but what blocks them or what prevents them from hiring this independent talent?

**Jamie Read:** Yeah, great question. I mean, we, I worked with all sorts of businesses, um, from brand new startups getting off the ground to very established like multinational, top, top 100 companies. And I think at the end of

the day, they all look at. The, you know, they, they ultimately want the problem solved, right? They want their, they want, that's really what they're looking for.

And I don't think that the people that hire us tend to care who's, who's solving the business, um, right. But then within the organizations to, like you were explaining like the bigger they become, the harder it is to kind of crack through their systems and, and things like that. And so working with a startup, super easy for freelancers because everyone's just sort of like rolling up their sleeves, getting the work done.

It feels very collaborative. In [00:11:00] fact, you feel like you're part of this, the found, you know, you're a founder of, of this organization as well. And so definitely, definitely there's that. But the, the downside is, is that you're working with someone that, you know, may not have two pennies to rub together. And so you're not, you're not getting paid as much or if all of a sudden things don't work out, you're not getting paid at all.

And there's a lot of risk for working with, with startups when you're, when you're freelance, um, you know, mid-size companies, I think. Or the sweet spot. Um, it's, it's where my business focus is and it's really because. There's sort of, you know, when you look at, when you look at the options for outside outsourced talent, so whether you're looking at consultancies or you're looking at agencies or anything like that, these are big, well-oiled machines that are sort of running and they've got a system in place and you're, you're, you know, you as a client tend to just be sort of put through that, that process, uh, meat grinder.

And you can get great results. Don't get me wrong, like agencies and, and consultancies can do really big great thinking, but [00:12:00] you're, you're working within their system. The difference I find is that, you know, when you're a mid-size company, you want to go to one of those big agencies. You just get absorbed inside their machine, and you kind of just become one of many thousands clients.

Your, your, your team's constantly changing. You're paying through the teeth for, for meetings, upon meetings and administration and hidden costs and things like that, and it can really eat away at your, your budgets and stuff. On the flip side, you go to Fiverr and Upwork and you're kind of. You know, your, your problem that you're trying to solve is a little bit more complex, and so you don't just need one person, like one freelancer.

You probably need a few people, a few different talents that you need to make sure they're working together and they're collaborating. And that's also very

difficult for, for those mid-size companies. And so what I find where I focus my energy is. Placing those kinds of mid-level talents like the up to C-suite.

I mean, like we have fractional CFOs too, but a lot of us are like director level. Everyone's got a minimum 10 years experience, so we're not talking about [00:13:00] junior people. But really specialized experts who, you know, we build the team that the client needs. So rather than having to go to, say, for, in a, in a marketing context, I go to a PR agency 'cause I need pr, but I also need a digital agency for my digital stuff.

And I need to build a website. So I have to get a website team. And so you've, you've, you're now working with all these different outsourced. Agencies. Instead, what we'll do is we'll just take the market, the different marketing expertise and we'll build the team for you. And so I find that. When you start to explain that to those mid-level, those mid-level companies, they, they start to understand like, okay, well I'm not herding cats through Fiber and Upwork and, and, and through these, these platforms, and I'm not also, um, having to pay through the teeth to get.

Uh, maybe not the greatest, uh, level of service for, for, you know, through bigger, bigger organizations. Um, freelancers can be the perfect sweet spot where you can still work collaboratively with them. You can have your high level [00:14:00] freelancers that are helping to sit at around the board table with you, giving you advice on the business.

At the same time, you could have under them a couple smaller freelancers who are executing and getting the work done. And so you can build an outsourced team that. You can just turn on an off as you'd like. And I think once companies understand that and it's like, oh, I'm not hiring those people. I don't have to contract them, I don't have to pay insurance for them, but they're delivering on projects as opposed to in a long term, like I don't have to pay for them in a long term way.

It really allows companies to flex and to move fast and to focus on the job at hand rather than having to. Plan out three years, you know what I mean? Like I, I, I don't know why people plan so far these days because the world changes now every week. So having a five-year plan is, feels to me like a little bit, uh, wishful thinking.

**Yurii Lazaruk:** Yeah. You know, you know, you, you mentioned, uh, that once companies understand that, and I feel like that's exactly what's going on right now in the markets that some companies are just starting to understand. And I'm

curious from your experience, what. [00:15:00] Stop them. What is blocking them from understanding the superpowers that they are living untouched.

**Jamie Read:** Yeah. I love that you used the word superpowers too. 'cause I, I do sometimes feel like that's the case. Um, when, when I'm working with a client and they have, you know, they're, say a very specific technology company that has a very specific audience and a very specific use case for their product. And then I have someone on my team that comes from that industry and understand, you know, like, where would they find that from, you know, if they hired an agency and things like that.

And so they, it really is, it's like bringing someone with a very specific superpower to your team. Um, these are the sorts of benefits, I think where, where, you know, it's, it's, it, um, it's maybe more difficult to manage, I think. I think a lot of companies, the blockers to your question are really more to do with how they look at.

Talent and how they look at, um, I guess organizing [00:16:00] outsourced, uh, vendors. And so it really does, I find, come down to the systems that are already existing in these organizations and companies don't know where to put a freelancer. And, and the biggest challenge I always see is that they treat them like vendors and so they go through procurement.

And so you're dealing with contracts and you're dealing with. Um, you know, people that are used to buying computer terminals and, uh, you know, other types of, of things where it's like, oh, I want, you know, if you're gonna sell me one for 20, I want 20 for one. You know, and, and you try haggle and bargain, and this is a human being, right?

And it's like you can't put them in the same, in the same category. Um, it should be HR that's dealing with them. It should be, it should be more of like a human resource type of. A person that understands that, you know, this is a person that's feeding their family and that they have needs and wants and that they're motivated by different things, not just money.

So that's, to me, where [00:17:00] I think the switch is gonna start happening is as we help these companies understand that. You know, think of, think of freelance talent more as an extinction of your workforce than as an outsell or as an outsourced vendor. And I think that's gonna be the first step to solving a lot of the challenges they might have in trying to get, uh, freelancers to work for them.

Um, and when I say, and I purposely say that work for them because they don't understand the power dynamic is different and. If a freelancer who's really great talent, who's that perfect superpower for your needs, doesn't enjoy working with you, doesn't find the process easy, doesn't get paid on time, doesn't, you know, get treated like a person, but instead like a vendor, they might do one project for you, but then you're never, you know, they're gonna go work for your competitor.

And so. You need to be nurturing these people. You need to be thinking them of them as you do employees, right? And it's like, oh, I see the potential in this person being a long-term value to our organization. Maybe they're not gonna be an employee. I [00:18:00] can't, I can't force them to work for me, but I can help them.

Want to work for me, I can help them, you know, understand my business in a way that they can add so much value. 'cause they are gaining also experience outside of the organization. And that's another thing that I think companies don't realize is that when you're bringing this talent, they're, they're going out in the world and experiencing other things too.

And then they're bringing that knowledge back when you are working just with employees who've been there for 20 years. You know, they bring a li they gain a lot of like very specific knowledge, but they don't. You also start to kind of have blinders on and you don't really understand always what the world's doing.

And, and so it's a really, you know, that's why we call it like a blended workforce is ideal, where you can have on and off freelancers and you can have your permanent employees and you can make sure everything's working together, but you can't do that if you've got. Procurement handling one side of the equation and HR handling the other.

**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 [00:19:00] top freelance talent fast, or a freelancer ready to find your next big project, freelancer 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. I know you reminded me, uh, two of previous podcast conversation. It was Ray Culver who told that, uh, talent choosing to work this way, it's not companies choosing freelancer, but talent choose freelancers.

And if you are not tapping into this workforce, you might be lacking enough talents very soon. And also Met Unite who told that? We are talking to each other. Free answers are talking to each other. So her free answer one time, her free answer, a second time, no one will want to work with your company, uh, in, in the near future and, uh, maybe even forever.

So it's always like, you know, combining those two pieces. Companies has to be, have to be really, really careful. As, as you've said, they have to treat [00:20:00] freelancers, not just as a software, but as, as a human As they are, as as, as a business. And also it's interesting that, um, as you've mentioned, if uh, companies working with some kind of consultants, like big consult firm like Deloitte, everything, they are ready to pay a ton of money.

And to get some work done from them. And they are not ready to pay like s like super small amount of money of that. They parent to those firms, to an independent talent to get sometimes even better work done because many of those talents they were working before in those companies, they have all those experiences, they have all those systems and processes and they deliver the same, sometimes even bigger quality.

So. What do you think prevents companies, like what stops them from going to independent talent and keep going to those bigger consultancies?

**Jamie Read:** Yeah, that's a great question. And that's sort of what I was trying to solve with Bright Bridge was this idea that [00:21:00] freelancers on their own are challenging to work with when you're trying to solve more complex problems.

Um, I used to work in agencies. I love the idea of like. Bringing in the best of all of, you know, the PR experts and the, and the ad agency experts, and bringing all these experts together and creating campaigns and stuff. That multi-market, so you've got teams that are in different places and these sort of, you're solving complex problems and, and putting out a, a, these big.

You know, results, um, and, and big campaigns. But then on your own, you kind of can't do that, right? You don't like you, there's a, at the end of the day, you can have all the talent in the world, but you still need other people to work with. And, and we live in a world where you still have to interact and you still have to be partnering with people and, and, you know, powers combined and all that.

So the biggest sort of blocker I think that companies have is that they look at freelancers. And they think that's not enough, or I can't, you know, I can't [00:22:00] justify having to bring you on board and and on all that stuff. And they feel like there's this huge learning curve. They don't realize there's always gonna be a discovery phase when they work with a big agency or a big consultancy too, they're gonna have to like.

Learn about your business and stuff, but more often than not, they're taking a pro, like, you know, a playbook off of the shelf, dusting it off, and then just changing the names in it and giving you a report. Um, I think it, I think it's safe to say that there's a lot of companies that hire those big organizations because they're safe, because they're almost like an insurance.

Oh, de you know, Deloitte told me that this was the right business decision, so it's not my pro, it's not my fault. You know, like I think there is a use. Case of, of those larger organizations, um, using those types of, um, consultancies in that way, when, when you get, again, down into that sort of mid-level. Uh, B2B kind of company.

Uh, they're looking at freelancers and just thinking, it's hard just thinking like, oh, man, I don't wanna manage 12 different people or five different people. [00:23:00] I think they're, they're having a hard time, um, reconciling in their own mind, like, well, if I hire an agency, they already are just running, they already know what they're doing.

I don't have to put the pieces together. And so what we did did at Bright Bridge we're like, well, we, we can put the pieces together for you. You know, we can ident, we can build this sort of like network of high value. Team members who all specialize in different ways, and then we'll build the team for you and you can know that there's an organization.

There is a shared values. There are shared ideals, and there's a team that is committed to a strategic output, not just a bunch of doers who are just sort of, you have to manage. And I think when they understand that there's like one person kind of managing the team, that that team is synergized and that team can be flexible for you, so that if you need this person now, you can turn them on.

If you don't need them, you turn them off and you don't have to. Pay people to sit around, which is like you do in agencies and stuff. So there's, once they start waking up to that, and then, and then when they see the results and they, and they get to actually work hand in hand and it's a [00:24:00] more of a

partnership than a vendor relationship, then they start to really understand like, oh, this is, there's a strategic value to working like this.

Um, and, and that's about the time when these sort of older B2B organizations start to rethink. And they start operating more lean, they start to see their competitors, you know, operating a little bit more lean. And so then they start to do that too. Maybe, maybe they have some layoffs, but then they hire those people back as freelancers.

Like I'm seeing that a lot more and more where it's like, you have the talent, you have the institutional knowledge. Sorry, we, we don't wanna work for you. Or, you know, you, we, we can't hire you, but we can bring you on as a freelancer. And, and in a way, the freelancer's making more money now because they're not paying out all this.

Extra stuff, but then also the company's saving money 'cause they're not paying for all the insurance and, and having the employee and the freelancer can go and work for, you know, 50% for this company and then they can go work 50% for their dream. You know, their dream gig or like to go do art on the side or things like that, or their kids' [00:25:00] basketball game, which, you know, is something that we haven't talked about yet.

But it's definitely one of the benefits of being able to choose your own, your own jobs and your own work is, is you know, you can set your own work life balance. So,

**Yurii Lazaruk:** and, and I feel like in the setting is the government who think that they lose because they think that everyone wants to treat them not to pay taxes, but they don't really see that that's just how it's changing because those independent professionals that are still paying taxes, they're still buying insurance and they're still buying, like other businesses and other business are still paying taxes.

They're missing out on this. And you know, I, I, I sometimes feel that there is a corporate business and there is an entrepreneur. And someone in, in between. As a freelancer, there is no such category for some reason. Yeah. Hopefully it'll change in the future. And also, you know, to your point, you, you are talking about, um, trust to those bigger companies that if someone, you hire Deloitte, you tell, I it's them, it's them told me what to do, I'm safe.

Like there is no, no [00:26:00] my responsibility and I, it, it reminded me, uh, in one of the previous episodes, Danny G told that. Every person in a corporate

world, they still want to safeguard themselves because they need to be safe. And sometimes, you know, they need to move responsibility somewhere else. So if we are not talking about Deloitte, if there is a person who is working, who is choosing to work with independent talent, how can they safeguard themselves in this Uh, uh, in this scenario?

**Jamie Read:** I think both sides. Need to safeguard themselves. And so this is, this is, it comes down to like being a professional and, and if you're a freelancer and you have a contract, right? If you've got, um, if you've got something on paper that says, this is how I work, this is what you can expect, I think already in the mind of the person hiring you, you're more professional.

You, you, you know what you're doing. If you've got set hours, if you've got, you know. If [00:27:00] you're just more strict with how you operate, um, in the mind of your, the person trying to hire you, you're more professional and you are more trustworthy in a way. If you come in and just be like, oh yeah, I can do whatever, and you're kind of like super flexible, that can be benefit, don't get me wrong, but at, at the end of the day, like, these are businesses and these are corporations and they're looking for contracts.

They're looking like, I know it's a burden on everybody, but like. It's, it's also a safeguard, um, have insurance have, um, like through, uh, through Bright Start, which is uh, a com a, a broader community that we have, um, adjacent to Bright Birch. We we're, we're providing now, um, cybersecurity training, so you can get certifier certified as this, you know, as, as someone who's been trained, um, as a freelancer for cybersecurity purposes.

Because more and more companies are getting hacked through their vendors and, you know, everyone with a laptop is running a, a multimillion dollar business now, but it's one [00:28:00] laptop. It's not, it's not like a whole IT department protecting you. So. There's these realities that I think we're all waking up to.

And so companies, if they're, if they're looking and they're, and they've got three people in front of them, and this person, they all have the same CV and they all have the same capability, but this person has cybersecurity certificate and a, you know, has a really tight contract, I'm gonna choose them because they're showing me that they're more professional, they're thinking about.

My perspective as the person hiring, I'm, I need, you know, I need someone I can trust and is dependable, but that isn't gonna come back and bite me. Uh, so I think that's, you know, on both sides, I think looking for those types of

professional agreements, uh, professional steps take the time it takes to go through the process of getting the project set up because you do not want to have to go back later when you're not getting paid.

You know, and you don't have something in writing, you know, so I think it's pr, it's good. It's [00:29:00] protection for everybody.

**Yurii Lazaruk:** We were talking a lot about how beneficial work with independent talent is with et cetera, how they are faster to hire, how they can be cheaper. If you, if we think about all the, uh, extra payments that company are doing for full-time experts, how they're bringing more experience and how faster they do project.

Okay? I will not talk about all the freelancers and all the independent talent, but it's up to them because if you're doing a shitty job, no one will ever hire you. At least most of them are trying to keep the standard, but. Let's talk a, let's watch a little bit on this dark side of, of the moon, not just the bright side of freelancing.

What other problems that freelancers can cause to companies?

**Jamie Read:** I think, I think it's probably similar to any employee really, um, or any other vendor. So if they're not insured and they come in and they make decisions and they, you know, they, they have access to your. Um, internal [00:30:00] servers and they delete the wrong files.

And, you know, it depends on how much access you give them. If you're, if, if they're, you know, at arm's length, if you, uh, set them up like a proper HR system and you set them up with like an like it, and. Um, it understands that this is a freelancer and so, and, and they can work with you and your laptop and, um, help build in protections, then I think you can mitigate a lot of that stuff.

So it really just comes down to understanding the way that they work. Um, if they're, if you know that they're gonna be traveling a lot and working from airports and stuff, like, there's a lot of dangers there from a cybersecurity standpoint. Cafes and stuff. So there's that. There's like, you know, cybersecurity is definitely one area.

I think the other area could just be work quality. You need to do your vetting. You need to make sure that, you know, people are really good at selling themselves. So unless you're working through an organization like ours where we can vouch for the people, you know, you're gonna have to do your own due

diligence and you're gonna have to interview them, like you would interview them as like an employee or something.

Make your [00:31:00] decision, but they may not work out just like employees sometimes don't. So take your time, do your due diligence. Um, so, so the, the biggest problems I see are that they can waste your time and they can waste your money if you don't take the right, you know, the right approach. Um, but in terms of like pure damage.

I mean, it just really depends on what you're giving them access to. Like if they're, if you're, if you have someone as a chief financial, like a fractional chief, CFO, um, and they're like in your books and they're able to make decisions and, and things like that, then you need to be pretty careful that you're hiring someone who's ethical.

So it's just the, it's the same, it's the same problems that you would have with hiring anybody, really. Uh, it's just maybe. You have a different recourse because instead of being able to fire them and, and, and whatever you're able to do as a, as an employer. I mean, you can still fire them and you can still sort of rip up a contract and you can still take people to court.

And, and so I, I would say that the risks are minimal in comparison to any other kind of [00:32:00] employee. Um, the upsides are much, are much more though.

**Yurii Lazaruk:** I think it's a very important moment that you mentioned that companies are thinking that freelancers are something different, but those are still humans. Those are still businesses.

They are still interested in bringing the best work without like, with do no harm policy 'cause they're not interested in doing this. But if, if they, they're uh, want to, I dunno, hack your computer system or whatever. What prevents 'em from like, starting to work with you full time? You know, we see a lot of movies out there of how people from within the company are hacking systems and like they taking millions away.

But I feel like it's more, it's more of a spy movie, uh, fear that, uh, companies have, but

**Jamie Read:** a bad person is a bad person. A good person is a good person. And like, if you don't know the difference, I'm sorry, I can't help you. Like, it's, there's like, I I, the fears, the one of the big fears that I think a lot of companies.

Um, have, are like the team, right? So when we, we build a team and we put, um, you know, a client architect at the center of that team, [00:33:00] um, a lot of the times clients are like, well, but if they're not your employees, how can you guarantee that they're gonna show up for me? And how do, how do you guarantee that they're gonna.

Do a good job. My, my, my answer to that is really always like, they're gonna do a better job because they've gotta put food on the table. This is their livelihood, this is their company. Right. So there's less chance of, of them fluffing off and, and, and not doing what they're supposed to. They're also more mature, like the people that we're dealing with.

I mean, in, in Bright Burch, everyone's got that experience already. And so I did that on purpose. 'cause I don't want to have to handhold and, and. Um, and, and do that sort of thing. I wanted people that already kind of understood their job and what they were good at, and I could plug them into teams and they could just be specialists at what they do.

And, um, when I explained that to clients that, you know, when I worked at agency behind the scenes, we were losing people all the time. The churn was real. You know, I think it was like 30%. Um, and so [00:34:00] they don't always see that, and they're protected from that. Here, we're transparent about it. If you don't like someone on your team, we can plug and play someone else.

We can, you know, if, if you want more of someone, we can, you know, communicate that to them and be transparent and, and get them to, uh, to participate more. And so it's, uh, it's really, they're still the client. They still get to make decisions. It's not like, it's not like we take over and that they don't have any more decision making power.

It's. It's sort of, you know, once you bring them on, it's, again, it's a relationship. So over time they, the, the freelancer knows your business more. You understand how to work with them better. And then that's why I think that's the other value of maintaining a freelancer network and having sort of your consistent freelancers that you want to trust and nurture is because over time they become so ingrained in your business and they understand your business, maybe sometimes better than new employees and stuff like that.

And so. That's really the benefit that a lot of, uh, a lot of companies miss out on too, is like, your freelancers [00:35:00] aren't one and done. They should be, you know, you should be nurturing them and you should be thinking about ways

of, of bringing them more into the fold of your organization. Invite them to your trainings, invite them to.

Um, you know, your team dinners sometimes, right? Because they're part of your team and, and they're working with your employees. And the more, like, those little things mean a lot to us as freelancers, I think, because we, we miss out on a lot of the social aspects, on a lot of, you know, that sort of thing. So the more we can be brought in on that stuff, uh, the more that we're gonna be endeared to that organization.

And if we have to pick between, you know, two competing companies that wanna hire us, we're gonna choose the one that. You know, in that we understand better and that has been treating us better. So, you know, it comes down again to those power dynamics shifting. I'm

**Yurii Lazaruk:** gonna choose the one that is more human.

So, yeah. And,

**Jamie Read:** or, and that, and that gives me like a better work life balance. Like people's motivations are very unique to their, to themselves. But. Again, you're not gonna know what those things are that are motivating them unless you treat them like people instead of like vendors.

**Yurii Lazaruk:** [00:36:00] Yeah. If you could design the effective three step system for bringing freelancers in, what would it look like?

**Jamie Read:** I. It would look very similar to potentially the steps that you would take for hiring someone. Um, you would start with, you know, obviously a call to for support. If you don't have your own pool of freelancers, um, that you can just actively tap into, then you know, you need to, you need to reach out to platforms and things like that.

Once you get a whole bunch of them, you need to vet them. So you gotta do some preliminary screenings and calls. Oh, these people, you know, here's a short list. They have great personality, they have the right experience. Perfect. Then you just start doing an interview process, and I don't see why you need to think of it differently.

I mean, think of it as an investment. How much money are you? Uh. Look, what's your budget? If you're, if you're putting a million dollars in the hands of this person, you want to interview them, you know, if it's only a \$10,000

project, maybe you, you're not gonna [00:37:00] be as, uh, you know, you're not gonna scrutinize as much.

So, um, for me, I think it really comes down to like, yeah, just going through the right motions. And then, you know, again, it's an HR thing. I'm not talking about procurement. I'm talking about HR identifies, Hey, this person here, here's the top couple people, and then the project person. You know, interviews them and gets involved, and then they make a decision, and then there you go.

You contract them. They're now part of the team, they're doing the work. Um, and, uh, you know, you can, you can, if they're working out, then you can turn, you can dial them up. You can be like, Hey, I want an extra couple hours a week from you. Or, you know, and if they're not working, you can dial 'em down. And I, I think that's the difference is like when you hire someone, it's like they're there every day.

You're paying for them, you've made that decision. But when they're a freelancer, you can. You know, it's, it's, it's, uh, much more flexible. That's why I call it the flexible workforce. So

**Yurii Lazaruk:** you make it very easy, and I totally understand that. It is easy. It's not that hard that some companies think it is. It's so much easier when you really [00:38:00] put your focus and interest in it.

When you build systems and processes and afterwards you just get so much benefits. Ah, it's, but yeah, hopefully, hopefully market is. Go in there. I know it's going there. So we will see it in the nearest future. And you know, Jamie, I wish to have the sky is the limit, but time is the limit. So the final question, what advice would you give to companies just starting to use freelancers and freelancers just entering the market?

**Jamie Read:** So I think there's a lot of both of those right now because, uh, as we're seeing a lot of, uh, companies are. Uh, cutting, uh, employees. There's a lot of people that are entering the, the world of work and they're realizing like, maybe I should try to do things on my own. And so that's again, where, where we created Bright Start, uh, to help those people that are just entering this workforce.

And so we see a lot of people, different industries. Some people are starting up their own storefronts and some people are, you know, um, starting to freelance and, and offer their services. [00:39:00] Um, for them, I would say. Get yourself

figured out first. Um, you can get into a lot of trouble by just jumping in and trying to do work.

And then maybe you get a client and you're like, yes, I'm getting paid. But then as soon as you stop getting paid, you're like in a huge hole because you don't have, you don't know where your next, your next, uh, you know, company is coming from. You don't know where like your next paycheck's coming from, plus you haven't set up the systems and everything.

So really think through like. Who, who you're selling to, how you're gonna reach them, how you're gonna build a bank of business. Get a, you know, get some legal advice on your contracts. Get some, uh, advice on insurance and stuff. Protect your belt. This is your business. It's, a lot of freelancers think that they're just gonna go and do a job and it's gonna be this great sort of thing where it's like you're working under the table for.

You know, maybe if, if that's what you want, like you can do that sort of thing. But if you want this to be a career and you wanna put your kids through college, you need to treat it like a business. And [00:40:00] so that would be my advice to, to freelancers, to companies. Just starting out. It's kind of the same sort of thing, but in reverse it's, I would say like, start with the professionals.

Start with the people that have. There's, there's shit together and that no sort of, they, they, they show you a contract and they show you those things. And because they're the ones that have figured themselves out and they're treating themselves like a business, and when they treat themselves like a business, they're gonna be, they're gonna do well for you because it's, they, they're taking it seriously, I guess is sort of my, uh, there's a lot of people dipping their toes.

There's a lot of people coming out of retirement being like, maybe I'll freelance. And they, they're dipping their toes into things. Be careful because. Those are the ones that may kind of all of a sudden disappear halfway through the project because they're just, it's not vibing for them. Uh, you need to find people that are gonna set a contract.

You're gonna set a timeline. There's deliverables. Treat it like they're not buddies, they're not your friends. They are, you know, as much as they're vendors and subcontractors, treat them like people. [00:41:00] But you can contract them like vendors still, you can still, you can still sort of manage them in a way that is, um, you know, obviously professional.

It's not just your buddy, your fr you're not, someone's just not like helping you out with these favors. You're contracting them. You're, they're doing a job for you, so you need to still treat them in that sort of professional manner. Yeah, that's really, it's, it's easy to fall into that trap for, for small companies especially to kind of be like, oh, I'm bringing on a freelancer, and it's like, there's no real contract and there's no real agreement.

And then at the end, no one's happy because you haven't really set those expectations and everyone just jumps into the work. So just be careful about that stuff. Really set those parameters, know what you want, then go find the person, contract them for what you need them to do, and just be, you know, take the extra step at the beginning to make.

The ending much more smoother for everybody, and that goes on both sides of the equation.

**Yurii Lazaruk:** Last but not least, name two people I should reach out to, to talk about the independent workforce.

**Jamie Read:** I mean, I'll be honest with you, I've, I [00:42:00] have yet to meet like so many HR or, um, like I've been trying to identify and build, um, those types of connections.

But it's been challenge if you're interested in the, in the sort of freelance, uh, cybersecurity question. Uh, Greg Lahar is, is our, our partner from Cyber Snap that I think would have a really great. Perspective on, you know, um, what companies should look out for, but also what, uh, freelancers should look out for in, in the cybersecurity, um, space.

Um, who else? I mean, I, I'm pretty sure you've spoken to, you were talking about Matt Knight and you're talking, you know, you, I think you've spoken to probably a lot of the other, other people that I would recommend that you speak to. So, um, yeah, I'll just leave it with Greg at this point, I guess.

**Yurii Lazaruk:** Got it, got it.

And the final question. What is one question that I should have asked you about the Fluence market but didn't.

**Jamie Read:** Is it possible to get rich?

**Yurii Lazaruk:** Is it a quick answer? [00:43:00]

**Jamie Read:** I don't know. I don't know the answer to that.

**Yurii Lazaruk:** Got it. Got it. Jamie, thank you so much for this conversation. We've been waiting for this for some time, but here we are, here we sharing.

And thank you a lot for building this market, for building not, not just for yourself and as of being a freelancer, but also for bringing this expert together and becoming this kind of like translator from the corporate, from the company's language. To freelancers and vice versa, and making this connection happen.

And yes, thank you so much for sharing all this experience that you've, uh, and answering to all of my questions.

**Jamie Read:** Well, thank you for everything you're doing too, Yuri, bringing a lot of, uh, you know, light to this, um, this new kind of way of working and, and getting, you know, people aware of the opportunities, the risks and, and treating it like what it is, which is I think a new market, a new opportunity.

Um, and I think those, those organizations that jump on this, this opportunity early are gonna be the ones that succeed. So, [00:44:00]

**Yurii Lazaruk:** yeah. And, uh, yeah, Jamie, see you in the freelance market. 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.