

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

The. My name is Yuri. I'm growing the freelance market at Freelance Map, an international platform that's been connected top independent professionals with companies for over 20 years. And my guest is Anna Oja Hka, a total reward strategist and freelance transformation consultant, who is also over 20 years of experience helping global organizations rethink.

How they reward, engage, and support their people, who, from leading compensation and benefit strategies across international companies to driving complex transformation and HR projects brings a unique perspective as both a freelancer and a trusted advisor to [00:01:00] organizations navigating change. So welcome Anna.

Anna Orzechowska: Hi. Hi everyone. Thank you Yuri, for having me here. It's a pleasure and I hope I can provide some interesting, uh, insights.

Yurii Lazaruk: Super happy to talk to you. We had like the previous conversation and you definitely can provide some interesting insights and I will do my best to ask you all the questions that I want to learn myself.

So let's start with the easiest one. So total reward strategist. What does it mean?

Anna Orzechowska: Ah. Totally reward strategist. It was of course, a journey for me, so I haven't, uh, woken up one day and say that's what I'm going to do. Um, and I've been working, uh, throughout consultancies and then internal, uh, roles in the companies and now also for seven years as a freelancer, basically exploring and looking into.

How can the companies invest in their human capital in the most cost efficient way, but with the best outcome for the employees in terms of the value [00:02:00] proposition, in terms how they feel appreciated and recognized in what they do. And, um, I definitely did not want to continue with this. As it used to be in the past police role, that is just a written policy on a piece of paper, and then everybody has to comply.

But more thinking, how can we embrace that relationship that the employers have with the employees, be it freelancers, be it employees on the contract. And make sure that every Euro that is spent and you can only spend it once it's spent wisely. And it brings the value to the company, to the individual, and to the society.

And how did, so the strategist helps the companies defined for their specific context, how they, how they need to do it, how they need to change, how they need to adapt their behaviors. Sometimes it's the communication, sometimes it's the whole offering. Of what they have in their rewards portfolio.

Yurii Lazaruk: So you told that you entered the freelance market seven years ago, and I'm curious, [00:03:00] what is your story?

Why did you decide to go independent?

Anna Orzechowska: Um, I think there's many, many reasons for all of us. Uh, what I like to do is definitely, I like to work on interesting projects, and as you can imagine, if you stay as a head of compensation and benefits or head of total rewards. For a given company for a certain period of time, then you can redo your own work.

You know, because you kind of, either you did it right and then it's done and you're happy or you did it wrong so you can try to do it again. And being a freelancer gives me that amazing opportunity of going out there and meeting fantastic people and helping them without that expectation that I stay there forever.

Which gives me the, the fulfillment and it helps my curiosity about okay, how the companies function, how they go about and meeting new people. And it gives them the advantage of having a fresh perspective from the outside and my expertise of 20 years. More actually than [00:04:00] 20 years of doing reward, right?

So I can quite quickly scan what's their, what landscape, what they're doing great, what they need to improve, and maybe what they should stop doing. And in that way I can, I can help many companies. Rather than just one. So, um, I think that was the main reason, just having that joy of, of bringing value time after time, rather than going into that operational little bit more boring for me.

I'm sorry. I apologize. Uh, reality, and I don't say that reward is boring, but I just really, really like to work on transformations, merger acquisitions, you

know, the big impactful things that happen in the companies once in a while. They don't happen every day.

Yurii Lazaruk: You mentioned helping many companies, and I already see it as a red flag for many, many other companies out there because they usually want to own a person.

They want this person to sit in their office from nine to five and not go in anywhere, and they're even ready to pay this person [00:05:00] much more money just to keep them in place without actually tapping into the independent talent and get experts like you are. So I'm curious, from your experience, what is the difference between.

Having a full-time expert in this role that you're specifically working on. Mm-hmm. And having an independent expert like you are.

Anna Orzechowska: All right. Um, I think both are needed, so I definitely don't want to say that now. Everybody should go freelance. Uh, it's, it's a very specific way of living, and you need to have enough self-confidence and I think experience and skills to be able to go out to the market and offer this.

And you need to be agile enough to effectively just go. Meet new people and just do the job, right? So we are all different and that's, that's what makes every company richer is that diversity. And that's why I do believe that combining what is the best of both the, the permanent employees, those who are [00:06:00] loyal, those who know your company inside out, and the external expertise, it's actually a perfect match because it's diverse.

Everybody brings different elements to the, to the table, and then effectively you have somebody with the knowledge of a company where there is no go, where there are limitations and you have somebody who is able to challenge and to bring new perspectives. And then probably in the, in the fastest way, you can actually get the best results.

Right? And they can be complimentary. I worked on teams where the people. You know where there before we work together and they're still there and they're happy and they deliver wonderful work. And I like to think that they enjoyed that relationship we had because we also learn from each other a lot, right?

How much you can learn on the job, which in a way is quite unique. Often in the company. You may have one company band person for. Thousand

employees or more. And so they're pretty lonely often, right? Because of course they have the hr, they have [00:07:00] the leaders, they have the employees. But how about having a spotting partner?

How about having somebody who maybe has done this specific project 10 times over again? Who might know all the pitfalls. And with the AI tools, of course the, we are all helped and we can ask a lot of questions through the AI and it'll be like, you know, screwing through library in a amount of time and you get really nice an answer from your an from your agent.

But then again, I do strongly believe that the human touch. And that strategic way of thinking forward is the value added that we can bring both as freelancers and as internal employees. And putting us together is, is definitely, um, a great choice. So I dunno if that answered your question, but I do think that it's perfectly compatible and, um.

To the second part of your question about rewarding people and trying to keep them in at all costs. I'm a reward person. I don't believe, and I'm speaking against myself. I, I mean, in 20 years plus, there [00:08:00] is no money on this planet that will people, that will keep people in a golden cage if they're not happy, if they don't feel appreciated, if they don't have right, you know, wellbeing and the fulfillment in their job.

You can throw all the money you want on them and they will leave. So disregarding whether they're permanent employee or or external, I think you really need to think what's in the job, what skills they have, how to best deploy those skills. And then reward follows, of course, but it has to be appropriate, has to be affordable for you, has to be sustainable so that you're not frustrated that, oh, this is the most expensive employee.

And at the same time, it has to give them enough comfort to function. Right. And so I do believe that if you have a comp ban on your payroll, or it could be it professional or any other expert that you have, and you have that major project coming in, right? So the workload were will increase ly. Please [00:09:00] think about having external help because you will wear them off.

It's, you know, they, they will probably be interested and they will want the challenge and they would love to participate. But if nothing is taken away from typically already quite full job, then it, it might be very difficult for them to actually function and learn from that new experience. So you might aware of, and typically we see people leaving the companies there is so-called Bonus Ex.

So they wait until the bonuses are paid out and then they leave or the post project exodus so that people are just tired and then they just think like, I better go somewhere else. While having somebody external, uh, might actually help you win. The efficiency might help you do it better, probably because you will have different perspectives and the people who are permanently working.

They will also appreciate the challenge and they will of course, contribute to that project and feel fulfilled, but within reasonable boundaries. Or you can do something else. You can say, I want [00:10:00] my permanent employee to develop and I want my permanent employee to do that project. But then for, you know, the back office activities, why don't I just have some help so that it, it's doable.

Okay. And in long run, um, it, it'll, it'll prove fruitful because you will not have to replace the person that you might have lost. You'll not have to fix the project. Uh, you have the appropriate change agent in place and so on, so on. So I could, I could lease that. So I hope this answered your, because your question was dual actually, it was not an easy one.

Yurii Lazaruk: I didn't promise easy questions, you know? No, you did not. And, and also from, from this, uh, independent talent perspective, you mentioned this, uh, project and bonus so I feel like that's exactly what, also helping to overcome those things because if you hire. Let's say a freelancer or contractor, you name it for a specific project.

Of course, they will quit after the project unless you create another project. And of course, they won't wait for bonuses because they're there to deliver task and then go out on another task to [00:11:00] another company or maybe on another task with your company. And also to a point of having a great mix of both sides.

And I would even say. We are even adding ai, so having a mix of like full-time experts, independent experts and ai, is that something that people currently use? Co-branded workforce and it's like one of the best things that we can have on the market and overall in the workforce. And that's something that companies like Google, Microsoft, nasa, open ai, and many, many other.

I'm not talking just about tech giants, but a lot of companies are already implementing the things and for some reason they're growing. Hmm. Maybe there is some kind of example in that, and also you mentioned the word expenses. So when we talk about expenses about independent talent, one of the main things that people think about that it's like very, very high expense to hire an independent talent.

So I'm curious from your expect, uh, from your experience, what are the main. Biases that companies that [00:12:00] want to hire freelancers or independent ads have around, um, specifically expenses part.

Anna Orzechowska: Mm-hmm. Alright, before I tackle into that though, uh, URI, I'd like to clarify one thing. When I was talking about bonus exodus, it was primarily about the permanent employees because, you know, they have the annual cycle and then they're kind of exhausted or demotivated and then they think, okay, but I need to stay till the bonus payout.

It's not the freelancers or after the right. The freelancers, we are ready for that and that's normal way of doing. But the companies typically, when they want their internal employees to get on some new adventure. Make them manager, give them a new project. They hope that that will be that growth path for the people.

So it's with the positive, I believe, positive intention, just practically, it doesn't seem to work. So that's why some people, they do the project, they learn, but then they decide to leave the organization anyhow. So what the companies try to achieve in the first place is to retain their employee. Actually demotivate them, and that's why I say get extra help on board.

So sorry for not [00:13:00] being free.

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 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 [freelance map.com](https://freelance.map.com) and start building your next success story today. I also want to add this, like before we jump into expenses, parts. I recently read in the book about Netflix, how they approach rewards.

So they go to the market and then see. What is the highest paid for this specific role? And then they also encourage, at least it's what's written in the book. And then they also encourage people in the company to go on the market to go specifically to different interviews and to come back to management and say, Hey, I'm getting this.

And in this companies, they propose this. And usually if there is a valuable [00:14:00] expert, they are keeping their salary at the highest level and even a little bit higher than on the market. And also the role that. They do not go for a bonus system, so they prefer to pay people the highest salary on the market to keep them inside and not to wait for this bonus.

Ex as you, as you've said. So what, what do you feel about this, um, strategy?

Anna Orzechowska: Oh my gosh. I would, I would definitely not dare to comment on, on the book I have not read, nor the, the strategy I have not seen because it's probably just a part of the story. I do strongly believe in the incentives, right? So I do believe that good bonus is going to motivate people to say and will not lead to the exodus, and good leadership will prevent that from happening.

Again, don't get me wrong, I definitely am in for people having their, their bonuses and, and good incentive plans. It's just that what research shows that people often leave and that's why we, we as reward professionals have to make sure that the incentives we design and [00:15:00] the training we provide to the leaders about those incentives keeps them interested in motivated so that they can immediately see if I do this.

That, that's going to pay off either in recognition by my leadership, by achievement of certain deliverably and or bonus. But anyway, so paying just the cash high above the market. Uh, that's a very interesting one. I can tell you that I know a company that by philosophy, uh, when somebody comes and says, I earn a hundred thousand at this employer, they say, we are going to to pay you 95,000 and you're still going to come and work for us because we are fantastic.

Right? So, I mean. What's in the package? I think it really all depends on what you as a company want to achieve, what the employee wants to do. And, uh, I said at the beginning, uh, I do not personally believe that throwing money at people can keep them motivated and performing. All the way. There's much more to play than just Euro or dollar figure.

But so talking about expenses so [00:16:00] nicely, we went to your, to your other question. Um, yeah, I do, I do sometimes, um, hear that from recruiters and less and less from the companies actually that. Uh, their feeling is that, you know, when you tell them the daily rate or hourly rate, it's like, oh gosh, this is expensive.

It's a lot of money. Right? And there are plenty of reasons for that. First of all, most of the people who are paid by month or talking about annual. Like compensation for themselves. When they hear hourly rate, they don't even realize what their hourly rate is. So the person with whom you're talking as a freelancer, or if I'm a company, because actually we are doing the podcast to advise the companies.

When you think about that, you're sitting on that chair and you're looking to employ a freelancer and you think like, oh, you try to calculate quickly, I earn so much a month. How much is it, you know, uh, in hourly rate? And, and is it really worth it? Just stop. Right? Because even if you knew your hourly rate on internally permanent paid employee, there is a lot of cost that the company covers on top of [00:17:00] that.

Such as, like you also mentioned social security in, uh, in, uh, different countries. It can vary between 15 to 30%. Right? So that's an extra cost that the companies pay. Um, typically they are. All sorts of benefits being provided. Pension plans, company cars, uh, mobile phones, um, internet subscriptions, you name it, right?

So that's an extra cost. So typically when we kind of run manpower, budgets. For permanent employees, you take the figure, say they have a hundred thousand euros and you basically multiply it, but one, 1.5, 1.6 factor. They're even companies where it's nearly double. So knowing that, that that's the cost you have for your permanent employee, then what you pay for your freelancer.

Basically mine look completely different because you don't pay them their social security, you don't pay their car, you don't pay anything. It's all included in that daily or hour they give you. Right? And on top of that, um, if they're on [00:18:00] vacation, you don't pay them if they're sick. You don't pay them, it's their own problem.

So in that sense, that's what they need to calculate into their, uh, cash efficiency, right? When they make a business plan. Because believe it or not, every freelancer is also a little bit entrepreneur, a little bit of finance person, because they have to, not everybody has enough acumen, but a lot too. So they have to, before they, they start, they have to make some kind of a business plan.

They have to think, okay, what, what do I need to make my ends meet to save for the time when I'm not? Working when I'm sitting on the bench or enjoying sun, you know, uh, someone on vacation or hiking or whatever they do to relax and. All of this is not your worry. As a company hiring freelancer, again, I do

strongly believe that the whole package that is provided for permanent employee is there for a reason.

And you definitely want to maintain a workforce that is stable and that is there with all of the benefits, um, hanging on it. [00:19:00] But when you compare the cost, let's try to really compare it through. Value of both. And here, if I may, if there is an any tip I can give, and I'm not going to make myself here popular, but you told me I didn't have to make myself popular.

So, um, I do strongly believe that some companies, um, thinking, oh yeah, we have to, we have to be cost efficient. They have this huge, you know, uh, procurement deals with some kind of. Let's say contractors or recruiting companies who act as intermediate between them and the freelancers, right? And then they negotiate with them and the terms and everything and it's all fine.

And then what happens then is a poor freelancer who is then asked, oh, you have to reduce your daily rate because. Well, actually the, the price that the client is paying is 20, 30 or 40% more. So dear companies wake up with, now, you know, the independent workforce coming to about one quarter of the people who are there [00:20:00] looking for a job.

It's, it's a huge amount of capital you can tap into. But if you stick with the companies that charge 20, 30, 40%. Every day the freelancer is working for you, maybe you need to negotiate with them little bit different arrangements so that obviously they can cover the overhead costs, the processes, cost, and so on, so on and so on.

But if you have a freelancer for one year, that does not seem to be reasonable to me, a small little person to pay one third. Sometimes of somebody's income or a fee just for an agency that basically processes the invoice because that's what they do. And the funny thing is that your finance team also has to be involved so they don't completely let you out of it, right?

They send you just the bigger invoice one accumulated. So you have to figure out how much, um, that brings efficiency for the additional cost. I think that's a real, one key takeaway that the companies can take is just start thinking, how can we [00:21:00] collaborate, of course with the companies that are intermediate, between freelancers and us, but maybe let's make it a bit more fair and try to save costs where you can save costs.

You cannot save costs on one individual freelancer whose whole life depends on that job, but maybe negotiating with the big, big players, uh, on the margins

that they actually are. Um, having on those little freelances, that's might be a better idea. Just food for thought.

Yurii Lazaruk: And, and, and to a point, I know that, uh, if we're talking about like big corporates, they will never work.

At least who knows, maybe in the future something will change, but for now, they're not working with independent talents like one to one. They're always hire them through someone, as you've said, through some companies or some agencies because they prefer to work with B2B clients. And I'm curious. Is it your experience the same way, or do you have an experience of working with such corporates, like big companies, big organization as an independent person, one to [00:22:00] one.

Um,

Anna Orzechowska: I do have such experience, so I usually work directly with the companies, with my clients. I have returning clients, so I have some clients basically since day one, and they keep on coming back for some smaller things. I have companies for whom I worked couple of years where yes, I was negotiating with the whole procurement team, uh, three of them and just me, little Anna.

Uh, so yes, it does happen. I do think that it's easier for them to manage just because. A lot of freelancers, you know, they, um, they will not accept a payment terms of 60, 90 days and so on simply because they have to pay the taxes ahead of time. So by the time they would get the first invoice paid, but the customer, you know, they would need to take a loan or take their own savings.

So I think there is definitely value added in working with intermediate. Companies, but it doesn't exclude, uh, an idea of working with, uh, with the freelancers directly. And maybe, and I also understand that everybody wants to, to [00:23:00] optimize the processes, so maybe in finance teams there could be an option.

Okay? A small B2B payment terms. Up and it also goes automated, right? We all have to make invoices nowadays, in many European countries, as you might know, the invoicing is basically online, so everybody has to make it online, so it's easy peasy, and it's just, if it's just a discussion about the, the payment terms.

I do generally believe if there is a will, there is always a solution. There should be a solution. But again, I don't think that somebody in finance and poor

accountant should sit there and kind of manually process these invoices, because that's not what should happen. But maybe in designing the, the, you know, the, the automated, um, payment processes, there could be a little checkpoint, which would say, okay, a small business up to five employees or so we can have a different payment term.

So that would be one. Second. Um, I think that depends a little bit on the role. Actually, so a lot of, a lot of roles in technology, so like it, [00:24:00] um, and or finance, uh, where you have multiple incumbents that are subcontracted, then of course it's easier because you work like with that external agency and they have, you know, the network of those consultants.

So if one falls off or if you need extra hands, they know your company, they can quickly help you. So definitely, but in the situations like, uh, mine. Where basically you kind of have one or two people like that in the whole company, and the project is quite specific in scope from A to Z. So you need somebody to transform your reward strategy or you've just acquired a company and you need somebody to harmonize.

Um, all of the, you know, what happens, the HRIS systems, the payroll systems, the reward systems, then most probably. You will not have this kind of research via the agency, but you will probably try to find somebody like me, uh, directly on the market. Um, very, very specific skill sets. [00:25:00] You know, the more unique they are, the more, the bigger the chances that the big, even big corporation will find you and will want to work with you.

1, 1, 2 big, you know? But, uh, the more, let's say, um, yeah, the bigger the pool of the jobs, the, the, the more normal it seems to me that they would then, you know, go via the, the agency. So in my experience, I just. I, I barely work with intermediaries these days, and if I do, I work with the intermediaries that do not charge 20, 30% on my back.

So we have a different arrangements and their clients also. So they basically, it's like with executive search, they say we need this kind of profile and we are happy to pay x. Euros of dollars for that profile. And that's it. And then we negotiate the fees directly with the customer. So they indeed help them recruit, they search on the market, but then the, the, the negotiation of the daily rate is between the customer and the freelancer.

So there are agencies like that too. And I do believe that they're going to outpace those who just [00:26:00] basically just go on a specific percentage of a provision. But I already said that before.

Yurii Lazaruk: I, I also believe that to your point, that um, agencies, recruiting companies who are in between freelancers and uh, organizations, they're also moving into more flexible approach nowadays.

Because like before COVID, it was like, if, especially if we are talking about, uh, programmers, it was like super easy. They, uh, everyone needed a programmer and agencies could easily charge whatever they want, and everyone was happy. Now, like the, the situation is changing. It started changing after COVID and the war in Ukraine and all the stuff that's happening in the world.

So, mm-hmm. As you've, to your point, um, some of the companies that I had, for example, experts on this podcast before, and some of whom I know personally, they always are very open and honest with both sides, and they tell freelancer, Hey, here is the budget. We receive from this client here is our percentage, like here is your hourly rate.

Can we somehow match it? And then they not [00:27:00] just negotiate, as you've said on like this small little Anna, but they go and negotiate on both sides. And I know that there are a lot of companies out there who are recruiters, who are actually advocating for freelancers. And then also they're educating companies that, Hey, here is what you get.

Here are the benefits. Here is what you save. Let's increase this budget, or like, let's, let's, let's talk about something else. So. Also coming back a little bit to blockers. So what, what I hear from, from, from what you've said, so there is a difference in payments. If we're talking about working one to one, like 30, 69 days.

Uh, then companies, organizations, they don't usually have, uh, access to pool of independent talent. That's something that recruiting companies has. And, uh, compliance of course, uh, it's easier to sign a contract with one agency. Once at a time and then do not care about like going through each individual all over the time.

And then it's like, you know, even building a community of freelancers, for example, 100 people and then you [00:28:00] have to go with this 100 people through all these compliances. So from your experience, from what you see on the market, what, how can companies avoid the things? Like what should they do to make independent talent hiring easy?

Anna Orzechowska: Mm-hmm. Um, I actually think it's already happening a lot, and thank you for, for really capturing those things, um, together. I think that all prayer play an important factor. So also freelancers, we have to be adaptable and we have to kind of, you know, um, know our market or which companies we want to work and, and why, and we have to be flexible and not insist, like, I want my little paper, right?

So it's on both ends and I think that. Evolution is already happening. And maybe before we know it, um, we will actually start seeing jobs that are basically freelance talent acquisition people just internally at the companies. If we believe the forecast, it's going to be about 43 million people just in EU who [00:29:00] are self-employed, right?

So we have to start thinking about, um, going around that, um. I think there's one thing I want to say is like in anything we do, just treat the independent workforce, treat the freelancers like you would like to be treated yourself. It, sorry. It's just that simple. So if you would expect to have a working.

Computer on day one. Well, the freelancer expects that too. And moreover, you pay them. So if they're sitting having coffee with your IT department because the computer is not ready, then you're paying them for nothing. Right. Um, and also in terms of recruitment, I think, and you had it on some of your previous podcasts, um, very, very interesting conversation.

Where, um, uh, I forget the name of the gentleman. Um, but he, he mentioned that, you know, it, it, ideal scenario would be the talent acquisition working hand in hand with the procurement. Right. And that would be [00:30:00] the ideal relationship. I would just add the hiring manager. To this because for me, yes, it's you, you, you are buying services.

So it's business to business. So the logical thing should be indeed procurement, because they understand the terms, they can un negotiate best for you. They can research, you know, the market, what's reasonable so that you're not overpaying, but at the same time you're trading with people. And you are going to kind of semi employ them in a way, right?

So it has to be matched, it has to be matched with the hiring manager. It has to be matched with your culture and it's, it's win-win. If it's done well, it's win-win for the freelancer. And again, for you as a company, because the biggest chance of having. The success of a mission and the deliverables delivered in time as they should be, is when you have that good match.

So my strong plea would be, um, to, to, to combine forces, to, to build, uh, you know, cross-functional teams that focus on freelance com. Uh, recruitments and [00:31:00] maybe don't consider it anymore as okay if we have no other choice, but really no other choice. We've been looking for somebody for six months. Start thinking now.

Well, a big part of the workforce is self-employed. According to Forbes study, 61% at least, does not even envisage going back to the permanent contract, right? So we need to start getting prepared, and a lot of companies do that. Just don't see recruiting freelancer as the final last resort option. Maybe see it as the first option.

If somebody tells you, Hey, I'm leaving and I'm leaving in two, three months, and then you think like, oh gosh, we have to find the replacement. It's such an important role. Well, why don't you just tap into the pool of the people who can come be your plug and play, help you fill the gap, and then give you the time to really find the perfect match for the future.

And please do not torture that consultant who doesn't want to be permanent to stay. Just use it as a first option to say, [00:32:00] okay. This talent is, is really flexible. It's agile can help me sometimes two days a week. So two days is maybe better than having no one for six months. And believe me, I did end up in such an environment where I had to come when there was no one for one year.

So things that I found is you just don't want to hear about those, right? So don't. Think about freelancer as the last option. Start considering at least as an equal option, or in some situations, maybe as your first go-to option, if you have an extra workload, if you have unforeseen projects or foreseen projects, but you know they're going to hit us.

Or if you feel, um, another idea, say you, you, you, uh, recently promoted somebody to become your CFO, right? Very, very responsible job. And, and typically you, you, you promoted somebody who's been bright, who's been doing excellent, who has good experience, and guess what they might do fantastically and they would thrive and that was great thing, but maybe, maybe they would be better off and they would even develop better if [00:33:00] once a day they could have somebody.

An elite expert with 20 plus years of experience next to them, helping them through some, you know, difficulties that they might have that they want to spare with some other expert who's seen many other companies. So I think the

tip would be, um, yeah, and it's happening already for it for programmers, like you said, developers, it's all done.

Uh, marketing, communication, it's all done. It's, it's, it's a business as usual now, but maybe it has to be business as usual for everyone. That's what I believe.

Yurii Lazaruk: Yeah. And when, when you were saying it also, three people came to my mind. So first of all, the person that you mentioned, uh, who came with this role on the edge of hiring and procurement, Ray Culver, and also, uh, as you've said that companies are already doing this.

So you reminded me of Steel Radar who was building an open talent, uh, initiative in. Nasa, so they were doing it for decades. Yeah. And also Neuro Deir Lopez, who've been building it in [00:34:00] Microsoft. So they have own community of freelancers. Of course. It's like a very small part out of like the whole, uh, people that they hire.

But still they do something. And also, I recently had another podcast conversation not related to the Independent Workforce podcast, but about community. And um, the person told me, uh, they were building a community. Of students for Google. So basically they were growing future workforce, starting from students already.

And once again, uh, I, I speak to a younger generation and I see that. They don't really want to sit in one place and I don't know who will win either. Corporates will break them and then they will go and sit in one place or they will win and we will see more independent, uh, talents out there. I have no idea the, the future will so will share with us, but I see that it's happening.

To your point. Yes, exactly. Companies who are not. At least [00:35:00] trying to hire some independent experts. They will miss out. Where they're already missing out. They're already missing out. Yeah. And they will miss out even, even more. And coming back to rewards part, so when companies think about freelancers, they always, as you've said, think about the daily rate or like, uh, coming back to hourly rate, they think about hourly rate.

That's how they calculate whether they should hire a person or not. But. How should, like from your over 20 years of experience, uh, professional point of view, how should companies think about reward systems when they hire these independent experts, when they hire these freelancers?

Anna Orzechowska: Um, here again, I think every coin has two sides, so we also have to educate our freelancer community a little bit.

I mean, not every freelancer is really kind of business aware and some of them. Actually have this kind of hidden [00:36:00] expectation that, you know, oh, I would also like to have nice bonus. Maybe I would like to have a better computer. You know, so I think, uh, to, to the defense, a little bit of the companies, why they also still think about this is that some of the freelancers also did not yet cut the envelope.

The unbelievable court. And so they really still think in the setup of, Hey, I was employee and I should have so many vacation, and ideally my clients should pay for it. Right? Or I've, I've heard all sorts of, uh, weird demands. So I think, again, it's an evolution and I believe in the good things of. You know, universe, it'll come to the to the positive end.

Eventually, the freelancers have to learn to go about business to business relationship, and the companies have to understand that this is just different kind of. Employee. I, I think Google, um, you know, nomination would be like smart creatives. You can call them innovative thinkers or whatever. So yes, they of course, want to be treated fairly and correctly, like the other ones.[00:37:00]

But, um, they are independent in how they are. So they want to choose their own benefits or not. They want to choose their own car or not, and they thrive on that innovation idea. Time after time they can come back. To you for another project, because I also have recurring clients, but they just cherish that certain freedom.

So a tip to the companies is just do not try to, to kind of keep on coming back to the same discussion. Like, Hey, but you know what? Let's convert you. And the paradox is that often when they start the conversion calculations, then it comes out that it would cost them much more. And then it's an awkward situation because they made that kind of, you know.

Willingness of the freelancer. And I've been in, in, in quite some discussions for my clients and also in my previous life as internal, uh, reward person in this kind of compositions where the companies try to convince freelancer, join us, join us, join us. They finally say, what a heck, it's nice. Yes, let's do it.

And then they do the calculations and it comes, oh, well we actually cannot [00:38:00] afford it, or it's going to become very expensive. And it's very weird, I can tell you. That's very weird. Right? So, um. Just accept it. Just accept it.

You have some people that, that, that love to stay, that build a community. And the freelancers, they also can build community.

I have clients with whom I meet regularly, you know, and, and then if they need somebody else that, not me, but somebody else, it's in my community of freelancers. I'm happy to help. If it's in my community some other way, I can share a post, I can do something else. I'm going to do it. So I'm ambassador too.

It's not that I'm not doing that job or it's not even a job, it's just, hey, it's, it's really great client. Uh, there is, there's one particular client that wins always the employer of the year or third or second place. I'm so happy. I have not worked there for a long time, but I've experienced that and I'm so happy for the internal employees and for them that they do that.

But they also quite quickly understood indeed that the external workforce and tapping into [00:39:00] that potential is the solution for efficiency, for best practices. You know, from the market, fresh perspectives. It, it's often people say when they have a new hire, oh yeah, come and, and challenge the status quo.

Tell us, well, that's what the freelancers do for you. Right? So, um, again, I, I repeat myself maybe, and you've had it in, in many other podcasts. I think the companies, uh, just need to feed, treat the influencers fairly. Of course, it's the right to negotiate and pay a fair price. Yes. But do not always compare to, okay, how, is it the internal faults or Yeah, if I ever want to hire them, then I have to pay them more.

And such. It's just two different things. But the relationship is genuine. I think between a good freelancer and good company, the relationship is genuine, and that's important. And if your freelancer says, I like to work from Bahama, I'm not going to come to your office unless it's very, very, very, very needed for that one conference, then don't make them come to your [00:40:00] office at the end.

You pay them for the expertise. And for what they bring in. And you can very easily judge the results. And here, I think we come for another problem that not every leader or not every company can actually judge the results by the output, by deliverable. So they're afraid. And then they say, we have to see them, we have to control them, we have to put them in the contract because then we have the punishment ways.

Which is a little bit of an illusion in the reality because paradoxically also freelancer, if you're not happy with the deliverable, you just say, well, sorry, I

can't test your invoice because you did not deliver in time. They can do it. They cannot do it to their internal employees because in most legal jurisdictions, if there is a fault, that's the fault of the company and not a single employee.

So that's a, that's a very important risk that the freelancers are also willing to take for you. So I think more important than reward is actually the mindset. Of how you go about it and respect the freelancers in if they tell you that's my daily rate. Most [00:41:00] probably they know what they're worth. It's been proven by the market needs and the value will be proven very quickly within a couple of weeks.

You will see. Yes, that's great investment. So I guess that's it. And then one little legal tip that I can give that some companies try to, to do when, when hiring freelancers, and it's both for freelancers again, and companies, sometimes they do try to offer them bonus. So they want to give that, you know, um, a carrot at the end.

Please don't call it bonus, right? Because then you open, of course, the Pandora's Box to the authorities and to whoever wants to. Come ever and, and challenge whether there was real employment or freelance relationship. That's one of the key factors that's going to say, yeah, you pay them bonuses like you paid for the other employees.

It was your employee at that time. Uh, instead, you can say, okay, we signed a contract for that daily rate. And if you meet that deadline by minimum or maximum like that, then we are happy to increase this, or we are happy to pay you that [00:42:00] extra for that specific de deliverable because then indeed you can link also, uh, a little extra motivation for your freelancer to deliver maybe faster, maybe more throughout, whatever your criteria for that delivery would be.

So from the reward kind of compliance perspective, that's one tip I can give for the companies to think about it. And do not subscribe freelancers and contractors to your internal bonus schemes because it's quite risky. And also it, it doesn't seem to trigger most of the freelancers because they just have a different little bit different mindset.

Yurii Lazaruk: Now, I also see that currently we have this thing both on organization part and also on governmental part that RA B2B. Vendors or like counterpart partners that you are working with, that you are buying some services or stuff from. And then you have full-time experts and freelancers are your B2B experts and something in between and something that.

People read, [00:43:00] uh, I mean like people who are in power who are creating all those rules and taxation system and all the things, they also have to remember about that. There is more than one way to be, right? Okay. There is more than two ways to be right, and there is another power that is growing and there has to be also.

Mm. Met where they are and also cherished. And, uh, as you've said through are always challenging the status quo. They're coming with extra experience, they're coming with extra knowledge, and they can help companies grow faster without specifically trying to hire someone from another company, spend it for this like three, six months and a ton of money.

They can basically tap into this world very, very fast in like one, two weeks. And get this expertise and get this challenge and get this, uh, knowledge of the market already. So it's basically on top of their fingers. So who knows? Let's see how it happen. But I see like with experts like you who are also advocating like you are freelance for yourself and also advocating for the [00:44:00] world, I believe that.

The world will be a little better and you know, I wish to have the skyes the limit, but time is limit our conversation. Yeah. So the final question, what advice would you give to companies just starting to use freelancers and to freelancers and turn the market?

Anna Orzechowska: Two questions again. Okay. Um, one, one last advice to the companies, um, other than treat them like you would like to be treated yourself.

Um, no, just kidding. Um, I, I think you've got this, you've got internal processes as a company to hire talent, right? You're good at it, I'm sure. So. Try to take the best practice of what you have. And indeed, some of insight educations like from freelancer map, like from ask if you know Claude or whatever, um, AI tools you're using, what the key differences are, and try to [00:45:00] adapt and just go for it.

Just go for it and see what can happen. And at the same time. Educate your people to be open-minded and to collaborate. The freelancers don't come to steal their jobs. They come to help. If that's the, if that's the position of the hr, procurement and the leadership, then you have a match and then you will thrive.

If there is, uh, you know, bad processes, we can work around it. If there is some differences about the scope, we can work around it. But if there's wrong

perspective, that's immediately wrong. So freelancers are there to help. They're not better, they're just different. Give them a chance. So that's what the companies.

Just, just go for it. Even if you have your own processes, just do it. When you're new to the market. When you are new to the companies, just listen. Go to some interesting meetings, network opportunities, uh, to find out from others how did they go about learn and also to your clients. When you have your first clients, just listen, analyze again, you've got that.

[00:46:00] You're good in what you're doing. Just give yourself that chance before you jump to conclusion because you don't know the company. Just listen, let them speak. Let them talk about the processes, show you, and then you can help them best. So have open ears, open minds as a, as a new, as any freelancer for that matter.

But especially if you're new to the market, I would say. Does it make sense?

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

Anna Orzechowska: So, um, one lady, uh, actually she's in Warsaw, uh, now, um, uh, it's Julia Rago. She's, uh, she's been also in HR for many, many years and she's working about, um.

Um, strategic HR transformation project. So I think she could be the great person to help HR and procurement communities to understand, you know, what they can improve further from different perspective than mine in working with [00:47:00] freelancers. And she's become freelancer herself about a year ago, I think.

So that could be interesting. Simon Sinek, of course. I don't know if he's on your list already. And then, um. I thought about somebody else, but I would like to check with, uh, with him if it's okay to give his name. Okay.

Yurii Lazaruk: I will follow up on you. Uh, on, on this person. And, alright. What is one question that I should have asked you about the freelance market but didn't?

Anna Orzechowska: What's my biggest fear, um, for the freelancer market of future?

Yurii Lazaruk: So, what's your biggest fear?

Anna Orzechowska: Ha, go. You know what I, what I, what I fear is, um, that somebody at some point again, probably the legislators will start thinking like, nah, we don't like that kind of freedom. We want to protect them from themselves.

Right, and they'll start imposing rules, administration complications and such. Then basically the [00:48:00] freelancers, like doctors, like many other professionals, will have to cope with so much admin and rules that that will kill all the fun of it. So I think that's what I feel the most.

Yurii Lazaruk: Thank you so, so much for, first of all, growing affluence market.

By yourself as being an example for companies of how to work with freelancers and how freelancers are amazing, and thank you also so, so much for sharing this experience. Of course, we didn't have all the time in the world. We had, as you've said, just 45 minutes still, you've already shared. A whole blueprint for companies how to hire and reward freelancers in the way of them feeling not just an extra hands, but feeling as human feeling as expert, feeling as someone who actually matters.

And I believe that it's very, very important. And thank you so much for raising this question and sharing your thoughts on this topic.

Anna Orzechowska: Thanks so much, URI. Thank you for listening everyone. Thank you. Bye-Bye. [00:49:00]

Yurii Lazaruk: Thank you very much and 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.