

Yurii Lazaruk: [00:00:00] Welcome to the Independent Workforce, the podcast where we explore the now and the future of work through the lens of temporary employment such as freelancers, contractors, fractional experts, you name it. 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 at Freelancer Map and International platforms has been connected. Top independent professionals with companies for over 20 years, and my guest is Una Herlihy, the founder and Chief matchmaker at the In India List. Ireland's number one place for marketing freelancers where she connects companies with top freelance, creative, and marketing talent.

And also with over 30 years of experience across leading agencies and as a marketing consultant. She has built career around creating the conditions for high performing teams to deliver real business outcomes. So welcome Una.

Una Herlihy: Hi [00:01:00] Yuri. Thank you for that. That was really, really good. I I, I feel a boost to my confidence after that.

Thanks for having me on.

Yurii Lazaruk: That's who you are. You know, it's not me, it's you. That's let's, let's just continue this conversation. You know, I was very much inspired with. Your story, I would call it like accidental business starting. So in July, 2020, you wanted to help freelance marketing talent find sustainable work, and this COVID happening.

Nobody knows whether we will be alive or what will happen next. There is like the doom is coming or whatever, and then you created the in the list. So tell me a story of how you came up with this idea and what happened next.

Una Herlihy: Oh yeah, it was, it was so extraordinary really at the time. I, I had had a career as a freelancer for 15 years leading up to COVID, and then on the 12th of March, 2020, the whole world [00:02:00] changed and I got, I was in a meeting with a client and I got a call from my son's school to say.

It's a lockdown, come and collect your son and for the next number of weeks, you know, we, none of us knew what we were dealing with. It, it was just the, the level of disruption was terrifying actually. Really. And it was terrifying for

people in lots of different ways, obviously. Um, but there was a part of it that I was.

Kind of exhilarated by, because certainly in my lifetime I had never seen this level of disruption pre, you know, in previous generations possibly they had with wars and, and whatnot, uh, world wars. But you. You know, this was the first major global event of my remembrance that completely changed everything.

And so there was a part of me that was like obviously horrified that what was going on. But there was another part of me that was really curious to see what sort of innovation [00:03:00] and creativity was going to come out of this disruption. Because we all know that we are hardwired as human beings to adapt.

And we all know that, you know, to use that. Leonard Cohen. Line, there's a crack in everything and that's how the light gets in. And I was sort of curious to see where the light was going to come from. What was it going to create? I didn't for a second think that I would create anything. I was just sort of a bystander looking at everything.

And after a few weeks, you know, I was. So I've worked my whole career since I was, you know, kind of 19 years of age while I was still in college. And I've always worked. Um, so I was starting to get agitated and a bit bored. Um, and I wanted to do something to really, 'cause my, my, my pipeline had disappeared.

There was nothing happening. Um, so I decided, you know, I was very inspired by what was going on on the front line and. People really kind of going over and [00:04:00] above and beyond to support other people. And I was very inspired by that and I figured, you know, I had had a previous 15 year career as a freelancer that was really good and the industry was very good to me, and I had brilliant clients and I had a fantastic network.

And I felt that there was some way that I could kind of give back, uh, in the short term. Basis until the kind of the dust settled and things would get back to normal. And so I decided, I, you know, I had no plan. I was swinging in a hammock here in my back garden. There was, it was a beautiful sort of sunny day and I thought I, there must be something that I can do.

So I decided I was going to put a, a kind of a call out on LinkedIn to my network to say any freelancers out there who are struggling at the moment. Give me a call or, or drop me a note. I'm gonna put a list, uh, together of people of

freelancers who were available for work and that was it. And I thought nothing more about it until the next day.

I saw my LinkedIn had completely blown up [00:05:00] and I was getting messages from everywhere. And I, you know, I was surprised at that. I was very energized by it. I started to work on putting this list together. More and more people started to join. It started to kind of build a bit of momentum. Then some of the media started getting.

Uh, uh, contacting me to find out what was happening and what was I doing. And so all of this was creating this kind of momentum that literally was the wind at my back. Um, now I had worked as a freelancer for f for 15 years. Before that, I knew how difficult it was to get something new off the ground, and I figured this was an opportunity to do something really, really disruptive within our industry because in Ireland there wasn't, you know, a.

A business, like the indie list existing. There was a lot of people who would say to me at the time, um, oh, I had that idea years ago. And I was [00:06:00] like, okay. Did you do anything about it? No. Okay. Well then, you know, so it's kind of like this idea of, um, there was a great line that one of our former presidents used.

A field never gets plowed inside your own mind. You actually have to get up and do something about it. And um, so one of the first things that I did was I cont, well actually he contacted me. A former former colleague of mine contacted me who was working as a. A self-employed marketing consultant, and he said, I think you're onto something with this idea.

Can I go on your list? And I said, well, you can do one thing better and you can come and join me on this journey and help me build it. So I managed to co-opt his help and he became my co-founder. So we. We had been working on it as a pro bono business for a number of months, and then in July, 2020, on the 4th of July, which of course is Independence Day, we used that [00:07:00] to launch the indie list as a mark.

We called it a marketplace at the time, but we don't really call it a marketplace now, but we, we called it a place where freelancers could find work, but they also could become part of a like-minded community, and they could. Find out ways to thrive as a freelancer, as John Young always says, you know, we, we built a freelancer first business that helped people start out strong, and that was a very important part of what we wanted to do because as a former freelancer, I realized.

Freelancing is great. It gives you great freedom and great flexibility, but it is not a walk in the park. And you have to be wired in a certain way to thrive as a freelancer, and you have to be okay with uncertainty and you have to be okay with being the boss of everything. And so we felt that our role was not just to help them find work.

To help them with the more difficult aspects of self-employment, which can be very challenging for lots of people. And so we started off with, um, 30 [00:08:00] people on a very badly formatted Excel spreadsheet. Now, sort of six years later, we have over 2000 people signed up on a smart piece of technology at the back end that allows us to house all of our people and get all of their information, all of the information that we need in order to be able to make those precision matches that we.

Have become known for. So that's the story of how the Indie List started, and it's been a fantastic journey. My co-founder Peter left at the end of 2024, and I brought in a fantastic, um, new partner to help me take the indie list to the next stage of its growth and development. And we're super excited about what comes next.

Yurii Lazaruk: You know, it's amazing that you started doing stuff during COVID because I heard so many stories of amazing businesses started specifically of because of COVID. And you know, some people saw it as a blocker and like, oh my God, like, [00:09:00] what's going on? You know, and they just were just frozen. They didn't do anything.

And some people like, huh, okay, I can't do this. I can't do that. What? I can do. And then they start trying, as you've said, accidentally messaging, accidentally trying to help some people and then accidentally start amazing businesses. Yeah. So kudos for starting that. And also, oh,

Una Herlihy: thank

Yurii Lazaruk: you. As you've said, six years later.

So marketplace, platform, community. What's in the list right now?

Una Herlihy: The indie list right now is a community. Um, what we do is we connect brilliant, independent marketing professionals. Those people who have chosen. Freedom and independence and agency over their own careers, over the corporate ladder, and we match them with brands and businesses that need their

expertise on a short term, medium term, or sometimes a long term, longer term basis.

But we're not a jobs board. We're not a marketplace. We're not [00:10:00] a staffing agency in the traditional. We're a community, we're a support system, and we're a matchmaking service rolled into one. And so on the one side, we have our members who are the experienced freelance marketers across every discipline that you could think of.

And on the other side, we have our, our clients who are, who are brands and businesses who need access to the right talent quickly without the complexity of permanent head count. And our job is to sit at the middle and make sure that. Uh, that both sides genuinely win. And we talk about it as being a triple win.

It's a win for the customer, a win for the freelancer. And when those two things are in place, it becomes a win for us.

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 lance talent fast, or a freelancer ready to find your next big.

Project Freelance Map connects the right people with the right work. No endless job boards, [00:11:00] no guesswork. Just direct access to verified experts and opportunities across the globe. Visit freelancermap.com and start building your next success story today. Let's dive a little bit into the process of matchmaking.

So how does it work? Um, from both sides, uh, from freelancers and from companies. How exactly do you do this matchmaking?

Una Herlihy: Yeah. Well, I guess, you know, the first thing really I think is to talk about the changes that I've seen in, in the wor in the, the candidate side. So when I became a freelancer, that was 2005.

When I told people that I was going to go freelance, they thought I was absolutely crazy and they discouraged me. My family discouraged me, my friends discouraged me. But I'm the youngest of five children and I was never good at being told what to do. So I decided I was going to do it anyway and show people that it could be done.

And uh, what I have seen [00:12:00] over the last 15 to 20 years is that people's. Uh, experience of work has changed and their feelings about work have changed dramatically, and it is causing more and more people to decide that

they have had enough with the corporate life and they want to take back control and agency.

I spoke to a guy the other day who three times has been made redundant and he, in his previous role, which is in one of the tech. Firms, he just permanently felt this sort of damn ccle hanging over him and it really affected his mental health. And he decided he was never going to put himself into that position again.

And he wanted to take back control. Um, I think people's psychology about work. Changed dramatically because of COVID, because people had started to reevaluate what good looked like for themselves, for their family. They prioritized things, they put things into a different [00:13:00] order, and work did not occupy the same position in people's hearts and minds as it had previously.

So. We now, as I say, have 2000 people signed up on our platform. They are all highly experienced marketers who have, um, you know, earned their stripes over many years in different organizations. They are highly skilled at what they do, and they want the opportunity to, uh, apply those. Skills in new and creative ways and really add value wherever they go.

Um, and a lot of them actually don't refer to themselves as freelancers. And it's kind of interesting 'cause I was listening to one of your previous guests, rich Wilson, who I know pretty well from gig and he was talking about this term freelance and. I would have the same thing to, to say about that is like a lot of people don't, [00:14:00] a lot of people within our community don't consider themselves freelancers.

And in fact, when I was freelancing, I didn't really call myself a freelancer, call myself a marketing consultant. Um, and I think the reason was that freelancing can carry. Some sort of the term freelancing can carry some negative connotation. It can be seen as sort of quite short term, quite low value, quite transactional.

But that isn't the case at all. 'cause actually, if you think about where the term came from centuries ago, the freelance was the most experienced soldier on the battlefield. They had seen everything they were called into. Slayed the Army and they had just seen and done everything that, you know, the standing army hadn't seen before.

So, um, we believe that now the role of the freelance is even more important than it was in previous, in previous times, because the rate cha and the rate and pace of change within. All industries, and particularly in the marketing industry,

which [00:15:00] is our, which is our area of expertise, it's so fast, it's so ev it's ever changing.

It's so evolving that you need people who have, um, those specialist skills that can be parachuted in very quickly. Um, and they go in. They're able to survey the system, um, really quickly. They are not reliant on a huge amount of handholding or onboarding because they've been across multiple industries.

They've worked across multiple problems. They've experienced different teams in different cultures, and they're able to go in and hit the ground running. And that is the skillset that I think a really experienced freelancer brings to the table. That somebody who is new to freelancing or has worked in.

In an organization for a long period of time. They have different skills, obviously, but they don't have that ability to kind of go in and basically hit the ground running. And that is what we look for when we are doing this [00:16:00] precision matchmaking. What I have found is that when I've placed people into roles that where they are new to freelancing, their expectations of how they will be supported in this.

Role are outta step with the reality of, of what they're facing. And they come back to us and they say, well, you know, you know, the client hasn't done this, or the client hasn't done that. And we say to them, well, look, that is your job to manage. You know, you have to, you can't rely on somebody kind of, you know, holding your hand throughout this engagement.

You are there to add value, to solve problems, and to lead the client in a situation where at the end of the engagement they're saying. Bring them back. We need them back for round two. Um, so, uh, so when we are in a matchmaking, um. Uh, engagement with the client. The client will come to us and one of two things will happen.

Either they will be very [00:17:00] clear on what they need. They have a gap in their team. Somebody is going on maternity leave. There's a big project coming up, and there's a head count freeze. So they know specifically the job to be done, the skills that they need and the outcomes that they're hoping to achieve.

And that's very easy for us to. Straightaway get working on a search. Um, the other, the other way a client will come to us is they'll come to us with, um, not a huge understanding either of what they need, number one or what problem they need to solve. And sometimes they will come to us with a, a sort of a predetermined view of what they need.

So I'll give you an example. A client might come to us and they'd say, I need somebody to do my social media. And we go, okay, talk to us about that. Why do you need somebody to do your social media? What is the problem that needs to be solved? [00:18:00] And when we peel that apart like an onion, you're peeling away the layers.

You get to the crux of the problem and the problem I. Ultimately is not something that is going to be solved by somebody just coming in to do their social media. In fact, the problem may be they don't have a brand strategy, they don't have a marketing function. They have a, they have a, a, a low understanding of what social media is going to do for the business or the brand or the particular problem.

So we then kind of break that down for them, and then we help them. Build it up into a brief of what it is we're looking for, what problem it is that needs to be solved, what skills need to be, uh, in place to solve that problem and what the engagement looks like. So we're very happy to work in, in both of those situations.

Um. What we then do is we, we define the brief, we articulate [00:19:00] what are, what are the requirements or the skill sets, what are the, you know, what does the engagement look like. We then put that on our internal jobs board. Um, people who have signed up with us get an opportunity to apply for that. We will look at a long list and we'll, we'll, we'll sort of screen that and we'll start our curation process.

And, um, some people will apply because, you know, the way it goes, like people will apply for everything and they may not necessarily have the right skills. So it's easy to do a, a sort of a first round cull. Um, when we get to a long list, that's when things start to get. Kind of meaningful. So we will schedule a call with the freelancer.

We'll talk to 'em about a brief. About the brief. We'll get to assess the level of experience that they have relative to what's required. We'll talk to them about their [00:20:00] level of proficiency in the various. Um, areas of expertise that the client is looking for, and we'll make an assessment and a judgment on all of that in order to determine do these people have the right skillset for this particular role.

But I think the thing that is really, really important is, um, understanding. What good is going to look like for the client, not just in terms of the skillset that they're looking for, but the attitude that the individual is going to bring. So that's

about culture fit, it's about personality type. Um. You know, we've all in our careers worked with difficult people and I'm in my career long enough to know it doesn't really add anything to the mix.

It actually taints everything. So we are very, uh, determined at the indie list that. Not only are we putting somebody forward who has the right [00:21:00] skillset and the right quality of skills for the role, but actually also that they're going to be a really fantastic addition to the team, that they're going to work really, really well with the client and uh, that they're going to really sort.

Fit very well into the culture of the organization. And that is, I suppose, our matchmaking process, which sets us apart from a lot of the other bigger companies that operate in this space. Like the, the big giants like Fiverr and Upwork, you know, uh, um, where there's a self-serve, uh, uh, option for customers.

You know, clients come to us. Not for us to send 20 or 30 profiles of people who might be right for the job. We are sending them the profiles of two or three who we think are spot on for the job. Um, and, and typically it turns out that we're [00:22:00] right.

Yurii Lazaruk: So two types of clients. First, those who understand who they need, what to do, like it's a easy peasy.

And the second one who is coming with like this vague understanding of what they need to deal with. And then you kind of like consult them and then you do a lot of work. And I'm curious, what is the percentage of first and second types.

Una Herlihy: Ooh. Um, I would say when I think it's moved over the last few years, certainly when we started off, first of all, um, it was sort of like, um, the type of business that we had would be, you know, we get a phone call and it would be, we need a copywriter in a hurry.

Who have you got? Or we would have to sort of turn it around in a few hours sometimes, and that might be a very short engagement. [00:23:00] And similarly, we might have somebody coming on saying, I need somebody to do my social media. And we go, do you really need somebody to do your social media? Let's pull that apart and let's sort of see, actually no, you need somebody to do your marketing strategy.

Let's put somebody in. Those types of interactions tend to be smaller, lower value, and, um, shorter. Um, the, as the years have, have, you know. Rolled on

and we've become more mature as a business. The type of customer that we have has changed very significantly. We do less of the, I need a copywriter in a hurry.

Who have you got? That is a very small part of our work. And even though I love that kind of work because it's, it's high energy, um, it gives you a real sort of buzz when you get it right, when you can pull a rabbit outta a hat really quickly. [00:24:00] Everyone is delighted. So I love that kind of work. But the work that we get now is definitely more strategic.

Uh, we're, we're, we're more involved in the HR conversation. Um. At the beginning, um, we're working with clients where we're trying to define what are the gaps over the course of a year or a period of time. And we're working more in that kind of blended workforce model where we are supporting a marketing function with different freelancers to carry out different jobs.

So I would say, to answer your question, it was. In the beginning it was probably about 80 20 and it's now moved to, uh, 2080. So 80% being more clients coming to us, knowing exactly what they want. And, um, and you know, there may be some kind of consulting required on that because sometimes clients come and, and they [00:25:00] are looking for everything they're looking for, you know, essentially a unicorn.

And we have to sort of. You know, work with them to really understand what are the non-negotiables about this role, and what are the things a client is prepared to, you know, separate out of the scope and perhaps bring in another freelancer to address those particular, um, gaps.

Yurii Lazaruk: Those people who know what they need, it's like amazing.

I would say it's like the best clients because they understand you're speaking the same language and I believe it's also easier for you to get them the best freelancers. And still we have other people who have no idea what they need. Exactly. Who they need. And I'm curious. Why do they go to you and ask you for freelancers instead of going to the job market and hiring a full-time expert?

Una Herlihy: Yeah. Um, they come to us because. There, there's a few reasons. Okay. So they come to us because [00:26:00] we're very experienced in the marketing industry. Um, you know, obviously Ireland is our, is our primary market. Although we, we do have a lot of business in the uk and, and we're planning on, um. Going further afield as well.

But we're very well known in this market. Uh, uh, I think we're very well respected. Um, certainly, um, I would've always been known as somebody who had a little black book of contacts. So before I set up the indie list. Uh, people would come and say, una, do you know, you know, a really good designer who can do X, Y, and Z?

And, um, I would be able to pull a name out of a hat really quickly. Um, I think the other reason that people, um, are coming to us is that. They're trying the job boards and LinkedIn and you know, some recruitment companies as well, and they're just not getting the results that they need and they're not [00:27:00] getting them quickly and they're not getting the quality, so you know what they're getting.

Particularly, let's say from LinkedIn is just hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of applications that they can't go through. They don't have the time to go through it. There's a, there's a lot of, you know, the wrong candidates applying for those roles. And then on the other side, LinkedIn creates a very bad experience for the candidates who are applying for jobs who, you know, are literally applying into a digital void.

Um, so, um. So they're coming to us because they know that we know what good looks like. They know we have a really experienced talent pool. Um, they know we can work really quickly, and they know that. I mean, essentially we are the only business in Ireland that has this talent pool. And the talent pool is growing every day in terms of the numbers and the quality.

Um, and I think, you know, [00:28:00] operating in a small market has been. Uh, a fantastic advantage for us because, you know, we've become very well known very quickly, and I think that comes from our collective reputations in the industry.

Yurii Lazaruk: What are the main blockers for companies to hire freelancers that you presented to them?

Una Herlihy: The main blockers, um, I think. I, I actually think the block is a mindset. Um, I think they think that freelancers are not reliable, um, that, um, that they're not committed. Um, that they're not as talented as maybe some internal folk and, um, and I think they just don't really consider it as an option. [00:29:00] They feel that.

They're just going to distribute the work among their existing team, but their existing team is going to burn out. And, um, and so, and I always kind of say to

clients who I, who are, where I suspect there is this mindset or this attitude about freelancers. And I would say, you know what, what, what, why do you think freelancers are like this?

And, you know, when you pick it apart, they can't really answer it. And I would say, you know, as a, as a former freelancer, I can tell you that the Holy Grail for freelancer is tenure. They want to be engaged for as long as possible. And a particular project. Just because they choose independence and flexibility doesn't mean that they're not gonna turn up for work tomorrow.

You know, they still are completely [00:30:00] committed to, to your, your piece of work. I think that's actually the thing. They feel that freelancers are not committed to. Successful outcomes and and I suppose I can understand that because I have seen some freelancers who don't tend to go. Over and beyond where employees always would, um, and that they perhaps have this attitude of, well, I'm working nine to five, I'm only being paid for nine to five, so therefore when five o'clock comes, I'm hanging up my.

Tools as a, as a freelancer, I never worked like that because I always believed that as a freelancer, I am only as good as my last job, and if I have to work, you know, 25%. Extra hours that I'm being paid for, then that's on me [00:31:00] and I have to do that because I've been trusted to do this piece of work. And if I want them to come back to me, I've got to, in some cases, over deliver to secure that.

Tenure and that repeat business, because repeat business is the greatest, in my view. It's the greatest sign of a successful freelancer if they keep on getting callback for, for additional work. So, so yeah, I think, I think it is a mindset thing that stops people from hiring freelancers in the first place.

Yurii Lazaruk: And how do you deal with all the things as compliance, invoicing, payments, and other bureaucratic things that usually blocks also this collaboration.

Una Herlihy: Yeah, so it's a great, it's a great point, Yuri, and it's getting more and more complex all the time. Um. And certainly when we started the indie list, we didn't really think about stuff like that.

Um, but, but when we, when we started to grow up a little bit more, we [00:32:00] realized that not having the compliance part of this process tied up was creating our real risk for the client, the freelancer, and us. So we very

quickly, you know, kind of adapted the business to, to, uh, reflect that. So. We are effectively onboarded as the supplier to the company.

Um, so we have to, in some cases we have to tender for the work. Um, we have to go through very rigorous, um, procurement, onboarding, um, processes where we have to supply a huge amount of information, case studies, testimonials. Insurance details. Um, we have to bring in lawyers to make sure that everybody is protected in the arrangement.

Um, so we have a contract with the client, and then if we bring a freelancer [00:33:00] into the, uh, arrangement. We have a contract with the freelancer. In some cases, the freelancer needs to be set up under a limited company structure or an umbrella company structure to ensure that particularly if they are engaged for a long period of time, that um, there isn't a lien on the company for unpaid, um, what we call PRSI, you know, kind of employers, um, uh, insurance that gets paid to the revenue.

Um, so, uh, and then the other thing that we have done is, you know, like we are a community first and foremost. And, um, and, you know, we have built up relationships and partnerships with, uh, businesses, um, that are relevant to our members but are complimentary services. So we have a partnership with, [00:34:00] uh, a. Big, uh, independent, um, accountancy firm that specializes in working with contractors and freelancers.

Um, and, uh, for, for freelancers that need to be set up under an umbrella company structure, they can do that really, really easily. Which means for the freelancer that there's complete compliance from a tax perspective. There's compliance from an insurance perspective, and also they get the benefit of. Of having somebody doing all their invoicing, all their tax returns, all their VAT returns, and chasing money for them.

So we always say to our freelancers when they sign up, um, the first thing you've gotta do is get a really good accountant. You know, and if you don't have a good accountant, then we have a great one that we can introduce you to. Um, but it is the, I would say for anyone thinking about freelancing, it is the first thing that.

You [00:35:00] need to do is to sort out the finances and sort out your compliance around, around money, and we're all over that.

Yurii Lazaruk: If you could remove one barrier from client side to smooth freelancer collaboration and what would it be?

Una Herlihy: One barrier. God, you ask difficult questions. Um.

One barrier. If I could remove one barrier from the, to help clients work with freelancers, um, I guess it, it would be, it would be less about removing a barrier and maybe putting something in place so it, it would be about. Uh, treating the freelancer as a, as a valued member of the team as opposed to somebody who sits on the [00:36:00] margins.

Um, so I would say it would be about, um, proper onboarding, um, proper team collaboration. Like if there are team events going on, team training, social events. Outings, bring your freelancer with you, treat your freelancer like they're a member of your team, not somebody who is almost like a second class citizen within, within your organization.

And I think what that does, it just helps the freelancer, um, feel really invested in the success of the work and, uh, really kind of feel part of, part of the effort and, and of the team. Sorry. That was, that was a hard question.

Yurii Lazaruk: It's kind of like extended family. It's still

Una Herlihy: family.

Yurii Lazaruk: Yeah.

Una Herlihy: Yeah, exactly. Not like the, you know, the weird cousin who, you know, sits at a, at, at the children's [00:37:00] table.

Yurii Lazaruk: You know, una, I wish to have the sky as a limit, but time is limit all. Yes.

Una Herlihy: Yes.

Yurii Lazaruk: Conversation. So the final question, what advice, it's actually two questions in one. What advice would you give to companies just starting to work with freelancers and to freelancers entering the market?

Una Herlihy: Okay, so, um, freelancers first, um.

Get an accountant, get advice on, on that part of, uh, of your business. And I think then the second thing is, um, don't tell people what you do or what your

title is. Tell 'em what problem you solve. Um, because the world of freelancing is getting much more competitive. And if you tell me you do social media.

That gives me no reason why I should hire you versus somebody else who does social media. Um, so be very clear what problem you [00:38:00] solve and how you go about that. Um, I think, um, the hard thing about freelancing is isolation. So I would say build your tribe, build your network, um, uh, hunt and pax and, um. And, uh, and you know, look, it sounds self-serving and it probably is, but join the indie list because, um, you know, we are a business development, uh, channel for freelancers.

Um, and as I always say to people who are signing up with us, you know, if you are sitting back waiting for the Indy list to get in contact with you, then you're probably going to be waiting. You need to be proactive. You need to hustle, you need to be hungry, and you need to kind of get yourself out there.

Um, so that would be the advice for anybody thinking of freelancers, for customers who are thinking of hiring freelancers. Again, I would say come to the indie list because we've got the best freelancers, [00:39:00] um, uh, around, uh, but, um, it's, it's like. It's, again, it's be really clear about what you, what the brief is, what you need them to do.

What does success look like? I think, um, bringing somebody in and not putting KPIs against what they're expecting to do is only going to set yourself up for failure. I think be really clear about the, the KPIs, the deliverables. Um, I would say pay fairly and on time. Because, you know, freelancers have their own bills to pay, and creating pressure around cash flow is something that is just not sustainable for a freelancer, and therefore causes a problem for you as the, as the person engaging that freelancer.

Um, yeah. And, and treat them as part of your team

Yurii Lazaruk: to keep the conversation going. Name two people I should reach out to, to talk about the independent workforce.

Una Herlihy: Yeah. Okay. So there's, there's, um, a person, uh, in my network. [00:40:00] His name is Connor Lynch, and he has just written a book, um, uh, and it is really about how your career is changing and how you.

To build, uh, assets outside of, uh, you know, your regular career because, you know, there are more and more people who are going to be working independently much earlier on. So he would be one. And, uh, the other that I

would suggest you talk to the other person is Mary Casey, who runs. On company in Rally North Carolina and Mar Mary has been running on company now for 10 years and it, she works in the kind of the creative, um, independent talent space.

And, uh, she is an absolute legend and somebody that I really admire and look up to in terms of what she's doing.

Yurii Lazaruk: Last but not least, [00:41:00] what is one question that I should have asked you about the freelance market, but I didn't.

Una Herlihy: Um, what is the first question? Are the, uh, yeah, I think, I think a question is around skills development for freelancers.

Why is that important? Um. And the reason that I think it's very important, by the way, is that when you are working for a company, you get, you know, your, your professional development is part of the package. Um, when you don't, when you leave, uh, a salaried job and work for yourself, skills development, professional development is something that you need to, uh, do yourself and, um.

And I think that the, the, the risk is that freelancers look at that as being a cost [00:42:00] to their business, but they have to change their mindset around that. It is an investment in yourself, and as I said previously, the rate and pace of change in our industry is so fast that if you're not keeping your skills up to date, you're just going to lose relevance.

And then it's really hard to regain that ground.

Yurii Lazaruk: Yeah. Thank you so much for this conversation. First of all, thank you for being brave and from your hammock on the backyard coming to what you are having right now. The number one platform for free marketing free answers, and also thank you a ton for first of all, having this conversation and also for.

Building and connecting two things that's very, very deep to very, very personal, specifically to my heart, community and freelancers. And thank you for creating this safe space for people to develop and also to connect with each other and keep investing into growing this industry.

Una Herlihy: Well, Yuri, thank you so much for all that you do [00:43:00] for, for this movement and, and I think we are part, part of this global community.

Um, I. Uh, I'm really grateful for the opportunity to, to join this podcast with you and, and, uh, very flattered that you asked me. And, uh, thank you so much for, uh, for reaching out and, um, and let's keep in contact.

Yurii Lazaruk: We definitely do. And, uh, yeah, 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 work in. 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.