

36 - Laura Gil

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

My name is Yuriy. I'm growing the freelance market at Freelancer Map, an international platform that's been connecting top independent professionals with companies for over 20 years. And my guest is Laura Gill, a business manager and freelance and delivery partner for Microsoft Product Group, who helps lead a global freelance-based customer support program involving around, oh my God, 900 professionals across more than 50 countries, and also who turned frontline insights into more than 200 products improvements, all these crazy numbers-

while also making the program more efficient, engaged, and scalable. So, welcome, Laura

Laura Gil: [00:01:00] Hi, Jurij.

Yurii Lazaruk: Happy to meet you. Thank you for

Laura Gil: having me. Yeah, yeah, a pleasure.

Yurii Lazaruk: Happy to talk to you. After the conversation with Nuri, I asked, like, "Who is someone I should continue this conversation with?" He was like, "Laura.

Definitely go talk to, to Laura. She's doing all this amazing stuff. She's keep on building this community of freelancers at Microsoft." And I'm like, "Yeah, okay, let's do it." So here we are. So let's start with a easy-peasy, the first questions that you definitely know everything about. So tell me a little bit more.

Okay, Nuri told, but I'm curious about your story. So tell me more about the programs, the freelance-based delivery programs that you run in Microsoft.

Laura Gil: Yeah. This program is like a connection. I always describe it like a, a, a link, a connection between the, the, the customers and the product group.

It's like we're trying to do it, uh, from the customer, get insight from them to the, to the product group, uh, so they know what is happening with the product, and then, uh, go the loop back, uh, from the product, giving the, the customer [00:02:00] what they are needing.

So it's this 360, um, loop, uh, between the product, the development of the, of the product, and the customers, and customer support trying to, to make something insightful from every query a customer has. Like, okay, this is not working. Okay, this is not working, but, mm, we can try to, to, to turn this in, into a positive, uh, conversation with the customer.

So th- this is kind of the, of the final end of the, of the program.

Yurii Lazaruk: And how do you do this? I mean, like, you know, sometimes it's h- very hard to build this loop, especially when you're working with independent professionals, when you are working with customers. Like, what are some... Okay, let's, like, three key points that helps you to do it in, in the best way.

Laura Gil: Yeah. Well, everything, it's to be traceable. Uh, it's about data. Like, mm, of course, uh, the, the, the front-end people [00:03:00] that it's talking with the customers, like the support, you can call it, uh, the, the supporters that are, that are working with the, with the customers, uh, they having this conversation with them, and they need to tag everything, uh, with, with that.

And, and that point, AI, it's been, like, crazy for, for doing this. At the beginning it was like more like a nightmare at, at the beginning, but now it, it's, it's improving. Um, and, and once that you have all the, all the input, then we need to, to, to categorize them and to establish them. But one of the challenges is actually how to do the end-to-end of, of this, uh, in- insight that we have given to the product group and how this turned into a product development itself.

Like the, okay, we say that and now, mm, you can do this in, in Outlook. Uh, sometimes it's challenging because of course, uh, in, in very big companies, um, they input, you, you receive, uh, receive a [00:04:00] input from different sources, not only, not, not only us. So doing the traceable, the traceability of, of this kind of projects is, is complicated as, as, and is huge.

W-

Yurii Lazaruk: what is the hardest part of working with freelancers?

Laura Gil: Oh, one of the main challenges is, has always been, like, um, security. Uh, and, and we, we have to face some, some, uh, situation about fraud with, with, with, uh, freelancers. Now I'm talking, like, a freelancer, working with freelancer at a scale, not, not one, well- Yeah

one single freelancer that, that you can build this one-on-one relationship. But what, when we are talking about, uh, working with freelancer at a scale, because this program, uh, was, uh, in a very large, uh, number of, of people, uh, involved, it's, it's about, uh, security, avoiding fraud. Uh, that was one of the key challenges.

And [00:05:00] also, find the talent, the, the enough, uh, and the, and the, mm, the skills that you need and how to w- make that work with your own compliance in, in your company. So that's will be the, the main challenges of working with freelancers.

Yurii Lazaruk: And when, when you are talking about security and fraud overall, like, m- maybe you can share with me some kind of example.

Like, what do you mean exactly by saying fraud? I mean, like, I- Mm ... I kind of understand it, but I'm curious, like, from your experience. Sure.

Laura Gil: It's about, uh, sometimes identity fraud. Like, uh, when, when, freelancer, it's, it's about relationship. We know that. And once you are working with, with, with one freelancer, that person can talk to, to another freelance- to a, to a colleague and, and say, "I'm working this way," so if you want to, you, you, you can become a, a, another freelancer if you want to.

So sometimes, uh, we have seen, uh, like, uh, people [00:06:00] that, uh, has, uh, committed, like, fraud identity, saying that they are different, a different person, or they have different skills that they really have. Mm. Uh, and, and we needed, it was a o- a one core thing in, in, within this program to, to ensure that, uh, the security measures were, um, were enough to, to warranty that the people that, the person that, uh, you think you're working with, it, the, is the real person you're working with.

But as I said, I'm talking about a, a very large, uh, program, so you cannot know everyone in that, in that program, and everyone is working on their own, from their own home. Uh, and, um, most of the time you do- you cannot even, uh, see their face. It's like, "Okay, please, uh, turn on your camera so I can check you're, you're really who, who you are."

So sometimes this can be, uh, some of the challenges, uh, in these kind of huge programs for, for [00:07:00] freelancers.

Yurii Lazaruk: How do you deal with them? Like, how do you overcome those challenges?

Laura Gil: Uh, about security, it's, well, it's about technology. And, uh, in, in Microsoft they have the technology, it's just, um, the problem is actually not the technology.

They, they already, uh, have it. The, the situation, it's more related with all the papers that you need to do, uh, on how to deliver that on 900, uh, peoples. You need like a huge plan to, to do that. I mean, uh, a lot of people are involved in, in, in, in having that m- security environment that, that you need. Once, uh, that is set, that is, um, the...

We, we got the approval that, uh, these are the measure that we need, um, th- this kind of, uh... Will not go, go so technical in, in the kind of desktop that you need to have or, uh, cloud, uh, computer, th- these kind of [00:08:00] things. Um, but actually, uh, the partner that, uh, mm, that work with, with Microsoft for, for, uh, the, the freelancing relationship, uh, they need to deliver that because at the end of the day, the relationship is with the partner, not, not with Microsoft itself.

So, uh, it's a lot of conversation with the partner. The partner need another partner for, uh, doing the technical stuff. So at the end of the day, you, you are building like a whole map of, of partners that doing this or that. And, and the implementation of this kind of, uh, technical measure is, is complicated.

It get times and as you know, in business, everything is for yesterday. We need it, and it was top, um, measure, top priority. Uh, we need everyone, 900 people from today for tomorrow, uh, in this new system and warranting that, uh, that they are [00:09:00] double-checking their identities, all, all these kind of measures, that it's complicated.

This is also one of the things, um, because we need it for, for working. Uh, that was like the, the, the rules of, of working, uh, uh, within the program. But, uh, it also make very complicated or more challenging at least, uh, to onboard people because it take more time. It take more, more steps. It takes more, more, um, measures, uh, and, and step to doing on the onboarding part.

So it's, it's-

Yurii Lazaruk: Yeah, you know, I feel like if someone is listening from the company, from the business who wants to create some kind of a program and start working with independent talent, they might think, "Oh my God, it's so hard." Yeah. "There are so many steps, and like it's, it's close to impossible." Yeah. So, but once again, you didn't start it from, like, yesterday.

You've been doing, like, I, uh, Noori told that he was doing, like, for, for years. And, like- Yeah ... before, like, why, [00:10:00] why to go all this lengths? Like, why to go through all the challenges? Why not just hire some, like, bunch of full-time professionals and, like, put them in the office and everything ok- is okay? Why to go through such amount of challenges to start working with these freelancers?

Laura Gil: Well, because at the end of the day, it, it worked, and, and, and, and it worked much better than with other kind of traditional brick-and-mortar partners, like call center. Of course, they have all that kind of a structure that's on the market. You, you don't need to, to break your brain for, for, for working with that.

Um, but working with freelancer, there is, um... I always say that working with freelancer is the most honest way of working because it's like you know the task that, that you have, you know the project that you are working on, and you have to deliver on that. It's, it's your relationship. You, you... It's what it's building, uh, um, the, this, the, the [00:11:00] relationship.

So

at the end of the day, at the end of the day, um, all the, all the complications of the concern, it, it was worth it because, uh, uh, the results that the program delivered was far better than, uh, the other, um, partners could, could, could make it. It was more agile. It was, um, more, more cost-effective. I mean, it, it worked in all the dimensions that they, they measured the program.

It worked better

Yurii Lazaruk: So am I hearing correctly that, uh, even z- that you have to go through different challenges and build this whole structure of different partners, it's still worth it working with freelancers?

Laura Gil: Yeah.

Yurii Lazaruk: Got it. And let's, let's turn back, let's come back a little bit to this, like, partner system.

Okay. Because you told that you cannot work with, like, individuals one-on-one and you have to go s- to work through a partner or through a platform. So how does it work? So for example, let's imagine there are [00:12:00] 10 freelancers who wants to work with Microsoft. So what should they do to start working with Microsoft?

Laura Gil: Yeah. Uh, at this point, it's like all the freelancing relationship in Microsoft, it's, it's done by Upwork. That is one of the biggest, uh, up- uh, freelancing, uh, companies. Just because, uh, at the end of the day, Microsoft is so, so big that they need a very big company to, to build a relationship, so if anything happen, it's, it's, it's the partner who deals with it, with it, not, not Microsoft, of course.

Um, so, um, if you want to, to become a freelancer for, for Microsoft, uh, you need to go to that partner, uh, and, and start working with them, and they are always trying to find a new, new, new talent. So definitely, uh, there, there are always open positions for working, uh, as a, as a freelancer for, [00:13:00] for Microsoft, uh, in customer support in this, this kind of, uh, initiative.

Um, it's, it actually is one of the challenges to find the talent, the, the amount of talent that they need. Um, but at some point, it's like working with that partner is, is I wouldn't say that it's not enough. It's like if you're in this, the, the, the nature of this program is like you need people from day one to day, mm, from yesterday to tomorrow, and you need, mm, 20 people that, uh, speak, I don't know, mm, Russian.

Yeah. Uh, that speak, uh, languages that are not English, you know? Uh, so, um, at some point it- it's also challenging for them to, to find that kind of talent, so they are also building their own, um, cycle, their own ecosystem of, uh, of partners. And, and even if it's not [00:14:00] enough, and sometime it has happened, you need to find...

At the end of the day you need to, to, to, to give the results. If the, your partner is, is not being as agile as you need at, at this point, uh, you need to, to find a, another partner, partner yourself. So at some point we build a whole ecosystem of another partner that go through Upwork that was like the, the compliance way of, of doing it.

Uh, but it's like, mm, we, we have talked with, I mean, every partner, every freelan- freelancing pr- platform that it's on the market. Uh, we have talked, trying to, to provide this talent that, that we needed I can name it, like, mm, at least four or five, like, mm, gig, uh, AI, mm, I don't know, pro teams, shakers, different ones.

And because also there are some country limitations, uh, that sometimes, um, not wor- uh, [00:15:00] hiring a freelance- a freelancer is not, um, legally available for one specific country. You need to do it in a, in a certain way. You need to do it, uh, through an employment of record or this kind of a solution that they are, like, middle part, uh, within the ecosystem.

So that's also part of, of the, the equation that you need to work with.

Yurii Lazaruk: Am I understanding it correctly? So for example, if you work with pro teams, they still have to go through

Laura Gil: Upwork?

Yurii Lazaruk: Yes. Ah. It's the craziest part, you know? And it's interesting because, um, I'm talking to different people, like from the hiring industry and from the business side, and also for freelancers, and there is a huge conversation going about, like, platforms like Fiverr, Upwork, like somewhere where people kinda compete for the rate, and it's, like, not very healthy for freelance.

Of course, for businesses it's good because, you know, you still can hire, like, good talent for, like, uh, normal money. Yeah, it's okay. Everyone is [00:16:00] happy. I mean, like, businesses is happy. Um, and I hear that more and more professionals, they're going to other, more, like, niche platforms where they are not competing for the rate, and I feel like it's getting harder and harder, and what you've told also, to get this talent because, you know, at some point they just don't want.

If you really want to give, get great professionals, they don't want to fight for the rate. They know their price. They know that, hey, if you hire us, we can deliver you the best results. So I'm curious, how do you find those professionals?

Laura Gil: Uh, that actually wa- was, uh, one of the challenges. Uh, what we, what we have done, I don't know if well or not, is, like, um, hire them through this niche, uh, platforms and then as things work in the, in the way they work,

we need it also to, to hire them through Upwork in a, in this special [00:17:00] way.

So, but at the day, at the end of the day, it's, it's not even fair within the community because you are creating different kind of, of people that you have hired i- in a different way, so it's not even, um, very, mm, fair way of, of working. So, uh, yeah, at the end of the day, everything is challenging, but, uh, you need to, to, to build things and, and it's a, it's a tr- trial and error, uh, most of the time.

Like, okay, we are trying this way, it's working. No, uh, we have this new challenge. We are create... Th- this is ca- called the future of work because actually we are working with the, with the future of work, so we are creating th- this, this new way of working. Um, and it's not written how, how to, to proceed with everything.

So, yes, uh, we have solved it, uh, [00:18:00] th- this way. Of course, the ha- uh, it has bring very good professional, but new challenges also for, for working with, with, with that.

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 freelancermapping.com and start building your next success story today. Yeah, and I feel like, you know, it's future of work is already now of work. It's already happening because, like, ev- of, out of every conversation that I have, like, with guests here on the podcast, I learn about something that's already is happening and, like, happening for, like, 5, 10 years.

And for someone it's new, even though it was, like, on the market for ages already. And, you know, it's interesting, [00:19:00] you, you were talking also about this ecosystem of agencies and platforms and freelancers. So if someone is an agency, or le- let's imagine recruiting agency, and they have good talents and they know that their talents are worthy and they are professional and they can work with Microsoft, like, what is the way for them?

Like, how should they contact Upwork, or should they contact you? Like, what is the way of starting to work with Microsoft as a recruiting agency?

Laura Gil: I would say that, um-

Up, up to my knowledge. Um, if they need to- as they need, uh, to go ahead through, through Upwork, uh, they can of course, uh, contact Upwork. But, but the best way it will be like, uh, or how we have done it is like the, the Nuri in that case, or, or the one that is running the, the program, uh, is the one that tell Upwork like, "Okay, I need, uh, I have this, [00:20:00] this, uh, bunch of people that want, uh, to work, I want to work with them, uh, this recruiting agency."

So Upwork start working with, uh, with them, so they do all the, their own stuff or their own papers on, on, on how they are going to, to work. Because what- also what happen is not all agencies work in the same way. I mean, um, some of them w- works on project-based rates. Another works on hourly rate that it's different.

Uh, w- another way it's based on outcomes like. So, mm, they also need to speak the, the same language and, and to see how, how to make, um, everything works in the, in the best way or in a, in, in a feasible way for, for them.

Yurii Lazaruk: And also, does it mean that if there are, for example, two companies, let's say once again Upwork and someone else, does it mean that it will be like two extra rates [00:21:00] on top of freelancers?

What I'm talking about, because Upwork they are getting a percentage and it's like, this is how all the platform work. For example, if we add in like Shakers on top, so Shakers will have percentage and Upwork will have percentage, so Microsoft will have to pay like double price for that? Yeah. Oh my God, it's crazy.

Like, uh- It's crazy, it's

Laura Gil: crazy. At some point it's like, mm, you have to, to see the numbers. That, that's That's not, not sustainable. Like, it's, it's not working for, for, for everyone. But what is the, the, the alternative for that? The alternative, uh, will be that, uh, you can build, um, relation- di- legal relationship directly, uh, with, with the agencies.

But, uh, in big co- uh, corporation, I'm not talking about co- uh, Microsoft in this way, but, I, I mean, this is, uh, it has happened to me in different companies, uh, too. Like, um, all the papers, all the compliance, all the legal, uh, [00:22:00] support is complicated. So only big, uh, platforms has the, the,

the background to, to, to, if anything happens, to, to, to, to say, "Okay, I, I am serving for, for that."

And that is what big corporations need. So, mm, sometimes, uh, creating a, a PO, like a purchase order for, for a little agency, it's more complicated to, to, to get the approval for, from your, uh, compliance, your legal, uh, team in, in, in, as a provider that, than working with one platform and everything goes, uh, through it.

Yes.

Yurii Lazaruk: I,

Laura Gil: I- But it's part of the, it's part of the roles of the, of, of how it's working right now.

Yurii Lazaruk: You know, I can already see, like, such a huge field for different AI implementation, where you can help easily to deal with all this compliance and all the things. I feel like, you know, there is exactly the challenge to be solved, because I can't imagine, [00:23:00] like, why these things as compliance and, uh, security.

Okay, yes, it's very important, but once again, like, we are not in the Stone Age. People know how to deal with this stuff. Like, it's all about the paperwork, but people know how to do paperwork. People know how to make it automatized and then, like, yeah. But anyway, I feel like it's totally different conversation.

And still, you, you talked about, like, building these relationships and that's, you've told that you like working with freelancers, and it's specifically because of these relationships, and honesty, and connections. So why, why is it important to build relationship with freelancers?

Laura Gil: Well, because- Once w- you have worked with, uh, one freelancer, I always say that one freelancing lead to another freelancing, like lead you to the, to the other one.

And I was talking with o- one of my, uh, colleagues, uh, in, a former colleague in, in Microsoft as a freelancer, that now he is, uh, on other project, and he's [00:24:00] also working with another freelancers that have worked for, for, for our common project. So it's like... A- and I was so happy, eh, listen, uh, when, when he was tell- uh, telling me about that, like, okay, it actually w- we, we did well because we are building the community.

We are b- building the connections, and this is for me how freelancing, i- is about. Like, um, maybe at some point you're working for this project, but, uh, it ends or, uh, you don't want to continue or whatever, uh, it happens, but they know how you work. They know o- on what you are expert. You have built this, this trust.

So for the next time I heard something that, um, someone need m- a technical guy that does this, I would call you because I know how you work. Um, so I think this is, uh, the, the main thing about, uh, freelancing and, and the important thing of building this relationship. And one of the things that, uh, we tried to do [00:25:00] in the program was t- trying to build this community, but building a community for 900 people, everyone in the, uh, part of the world with different cultures, with different mindset, i-i-it was challenging, hard.

You can you can say the, the way you want, um, with different schedules. The, uh, because, uh, actually what we wanted was to, to give them this opportunity. For us, it was easier to just do your job. I will pay you for your outcome, and that's, that's all. But, uh, we wanted to give this extra mile, like, uh, we are building something else.

Um- Um, and because, uh, of the importance that, that, that we see on, on that, on how we do it, we can talk about it if you want it, but, uh, yes, answering your question, uh, yes, um, building relationship is, is key, uh, for, for relation- for freelancing. Yeah,

Yurii Lazaruk: you know, I feel like building relationships and building a community is, like, the [00:26:00] whole, like, the topic itself because, for example, I have another podcast called The Community ROI where I talk specifically about how to build communities for businesses and then, um, I have a little bit of, like, conversation with people about human connections, about how much you actually have to invest, and I really loved how you framed it that we are going extra mile, and that's exactly something that you might not even get paid for.

It's something that you are doing as a human, not as, like, the type of your role or job description. It's like you, you have to have it in your heart. And I remember that Nuri was, uh, sharing the thing that here, like, you know, there are community builders by title and they're building community and there are community builders by heart.

So I feel like you are exactly also the community builder by heart. So yeah, that's, that's, that's how it works

Laura Gil: E- yeah, i- because one of the thing, uh, and this is very connected with working remotely, um, it's like at the end of the day, we are everyone in our home, uh, with our own stuff [00:27:00] and this kind of thing.

And, and the only way to be, to feel connected, to feel part of something is, is building this kind of relationship, mm, writing someone like, "Okay, you are okay today?" Or, "How are you doing?" Or, "Do you want to, to have a quick chat on, on what is happening on your, on your side?" Uh, and not always personal side, also professional.

"I know that you are facing this challenging, I know you have these goals and how you are doing this, that." To be this, this human part, it's, um, is what make the difference and, and what make people feel part of something else. And, and I really feel that people are grateful, uh, of, of being part of this program because of, of the opportunity they have, not only to earn money, b- because of course we are all here for earning money, but, uh, for, for, uh, the ability of being part, part of, of building, i- st- bu- building something and to [00:28:00] be, uh, meeting p- people that, uh, at the end of the day, uh, they are happy to, to meet with.

Uh, actually, freelancer, uh, I always say that the, the best one, they're always freelancers because they can do it. I mean, um, and, and the opportunity to be working with so extraordinary people, it is like an... something to be grateful.

Yurii Lazaruk: You know, I, I, I still continuously talk about why you have built relationships with freelancers, and you framed it, that you told that when you connect with one person, they connect you with another, and with another, and with another.

Because I cannot actually imagine it that, like, the full-time experts connecting, like, this way. I mean, like, yes, they do. They have some friends. But what I hear from my friends who are working in, in, in corp- companies, usually you don't have a lot of friends on your workplace. And, you know, you are connected with, like, a few people, and yes, you can, you know, move them [00:29:00] upfront if you hear about some position or job offer, whatever.

But freelancers, as you've said, they survive in communities. They connect. They know the whole world. When you know just one freelancer, they can give you access to, like, dozens and maybe sometimes even hundreds of other freelancers, and that's the beauty, you know? And they're kinda not competing with each other.

Yeah, of course, if there is one position and someone to be hired, they will be- will compete. But once again, the best will win. Because if you are better, yeah, it's like, that's how it works. But once again, like, from your perspective What is the main, main, main, main benefit of building these relationships?

Why I'm asking, because some people, uh, who are starting working with freelancers or maybe working with them here and there, they don't care. They think about freelancers like something that they, they just put to bridge some gaps and that's it, and we will never meet again. But I feel like they're wrong, and I'm curious, like, what is the [00:30:00] most and the best thing why should people invest into these relationships?

Laura Gil: Because it's w- how opportunities come to you. I mean, um If you are a very specific, um, technical or, mm, very, mm, you know, so- some very niche, uh, professional, um, maybe you get, uh, your freelancing opportunity because someone knows you, but, but it's difficult to, to be known as a freelancer. Only if you have, you are building this kind of relationship, you know people, if people know you, if, if they know what you do, uh, it's your way to, to, it's your, how, how you show yourself to, to the rest of the, of the, of the people.

So at the end of the day, it's how you get the work. Of course, platforms are, are here, and you can postulate yourself. Uh, you, you have s- you see, uh, one, uh, job, um, post, and you apply [00:31:00] to that, your rate, uh, your project, and this kind of thing. That work, of course, uh, that's, uh, the base of the, of the platforms, but, um, not all the freelancing opportunities are driven by the platforms.

There are some other, mm, kind of, uh, job task that are not driven by agencies and, and only if you are building this kind of relation. Even if they are driven by agency, it's not the same that you know how the, that agency know, uh, works, and you have the name of the account manager of the, of that agency, and you can, uh, tell, okay, mm, now I, I'm open to new p- new positions.

And so, so they know how you work, h- which is your profile, your, your, your value, so they will find you a, a good project. It's not the same that, that they call applying for the platform, okay, we'll see, uh, which, uh, one, because you don't know how many people have applied to that position and all this kind of thing.

So [00:32:00] at the end of the day, building, uh, uh, relationship is how you get the opportunities. And also, um, because, I mean, it can be quite lonely if not.

Uh, like, mm, you don't have coworkers. You don't, you don't go to an office there. So h- how you relation, relate yourself with, with other people, how to see what they are facing.

They are facing the same challenges that, that you. So, mm, building this relationship is the way to manage and to, to, to be part of, of all of it.

Yurii Lazaruk: And, and, and it's when, when we are talking about freelancers, and if we are talking about, like, recruiting side, why should they build relationships with freelancers?

Laura Gil: Well, because they are the talent pool. I mean, it's, it's, no, um, freelancing, it's, it's, like, uh, on trending. Like, w- we are, we, [00:33:00] every day it's, it's, it's getting bigger and bigger. But it's not the main option, uh, in the market, I, I believe. I don't have the numbers, but... So, uh, it's difficult to find people to become, uh, to, to, to be a freelancer.

Most of the times, uh, recruiters, uh, they need to, to prospect people that are working for regular companies, like, uh, nine-seven, mm, full-time job, I don't know, um, and tell them, "Hey, you want to, uh, become a freelancer?" Uh, sometimes it's hard to, to have this kind of conversation. You, you really need to be very, very convincing, uh, for them.

So if you have a good talent pool of, of people that you know that work well, like, well, you are gold. You are goldmine because, um, companies like Microsoft, whatever, big corporations, they will need the talent. And, and the first thing that they are working to you is like, "Show me, what is your [00:34:00] talent pool?"

Do you already have the, the talent?" Because if what you're going to do is, like, through LinkedIn, finding the, the, mm, the talent, you're, you're going to, to become late. Like, uh, I need it right now, and if you need to prospect everyone, uh, they do the interviews, it's, you are not, not, not, not the solution that I needed.

Uh, so, mm, it's, having a talent pool is, is, um, the gold of the, of, of the agencies.

Yurii Lazaruk: And also, like, to your point, uh, having a talent pool of freelancer is different of having a talent pool of full-time experts because, once again, the process is so much faster. And for example, if you need a freelancer, you need them yesterday.

But if you need, like, a full-time expert, companies can spend, like, three, six months just for interviewing and hiring and, like, assessing people, and then maybe they can hire someone or maybe not. But freelancers, it's a little different story and, [00:35:00] you know, I, I, I totally get what you're talking about. And you know, I really wish to have the sky is the limit our conversation, but time is the limit.

So

the final question, what advice would you give to companies just starting to work with freelancers and to freelancers entering the market?

Laura Gil: Okay. For companies, it's like you need to change the mindset. Freelancers, freelancing is working, and the, the, the results, uh, talk by the, by their self. Um, there will be challenges, of course, but, uh, the outcome that you get, the agility, the, the new, uh, perspective that you get, um, they will be- Totally worth it to, to start working with, with freelancers.

And you don't need to work a 900 pe- uh, mm, freelancer program. Uh, you can start working for a, a specific, uh, project that you don't find, uh, the talent [00:36:00] and, and you need it for now. Nowadays with, uh, AI, uh, freelancing is getting up, up, up because you need the talent and you don't find it, uh, mm, very quickly in the, in the market.

Um, that for the companies and for the, for the freelancer them- themselves, the key is, is to find a, to find a job is to expose yourself, is, is to showcase how you're working. Of course, you can have your, um, portfolio online and all the... They will, they will need it, of course, that's super key. But, um, they need to, to build this kind of relationship.

If not, they are, it, it's difficult to find them. And very, very specific, uh, advice is to know very well on what you are good. I mean, uh, freelancing, it's, what I'm seeing, it's for, for a specific task, for a specific, um, [00:37:00] project. So I, and I need A, B, C, D. If you are good in A, B, C, D, this is yours. But you need to know on what you are good, so, so I can match.

That would

Yurii Lazaruk: be good. Yeah, exactly. Yeah, I feel like it's, uh, it's something I hear more, and more, and more, that if you're a freelancer you have to know your value, and you have to know what you're doing, and then talk exactly

about this. Not like, "I can do everything, just hire me," but specifically, "I'm an expert in this, this, and this.

That's why you should hire me," because it's- Yeah ... like, huge difference. And last but not least, name two people I should reach out to to talk about the independent workforce.

Laura Gil: Hmm. I would say, um, mm, mm, mm, mm. I have a, a friend that is working, uh, for a startup, and she has worked on, on, with freelancer for very little, uh, project.

Uh, the name is Rebecca Rico. Um, I will put you in contact with, with her. [00:38:00] And also, uh, Miguel, he has worked for, for Microsoft, but he's the one that I was mentioning that he has building their own project, and now he's built- working with new, uh, freelancers. And for me, he's the best also, so I will give you their contact.

Yurii Lazaruk: Got it. Please do. We'll be more than happy to talk to them. And, uh, you know, Laura, it's so interesting that I, even during this conversation, even though we are speaking online and, like, through camera, I can still see the passion in how you are talking about freelancers. Like, I see your eyes are, like, just-

shining because, yeah, you totally believe in this community. You totally believe in building these human relationships. And you also believe in the independent workforce because you can see specifically from your experience in building this program and talking and working with these people, that you see that they are a little bit different, that they are a little bit more motivated, that they want to deliver exactly what they are hired for.

Because otherwise, like, it won't work for [00:39:00] them, you know? They're here to deliver work, not to just get hired, and that's, that's a huge difference. And thank you so, so much for sharing your experience with me.

Laura Gil: Thank you, Yuriy, for all this conversation. It's been a pleasure.

Yurii Lazaruk: And, uh, yeah, see independent workforce 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 talents. If you enjoy this conversation, subscribe to learn even more, and share it with your colleague. And remember, the future of work is now.