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# WIDENING THE TALENT POOL

Practical contingent workforce management in a changing world.

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Emerging systems, tools and channels mean new strategies for managing and leveraging contingent talent pools and the people who benefit from them.



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## SEISMIC SHIFT IN THE GIG ECONOMY

The gig economy continues to leave its mark on businesses across the globe, forcing a seismic shift in attitudes about worker attraction and retention in every industry — and the talent marketplace is no exception. The worldwide evolution of the contingent workforce over recent years means that talent is now the single most important competitive differentiator for organizations of all sizes, according to University of Oxford's Platform Sourcing report<sup>1</sup>. For professionals in charge of resourcing talent, the message is loud and clear: adapt to this "new normal" or miss out as desirable workers offer their time and skills to competitors.

As the traditional way of doing business recedes into memory, talent and resource acquisition professionals the world over are pivoting to meet the new demands with creative solutions. Still, for many the questions remain: how do global organizations use emerging channels to best meet their needs in this new landscape? In short — what is the best way to do business today? And what does the future hold?

<sup>1</sup> Source: <https://www.oii.ox.ac.uk/publications/platform-sourcing.pdf>



“THERE'S A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN FINDING AN ANSWER THAT WILL HELP PRACTICALLY SOLVE THE BUSINESS CHALLENGE AND ONE THAT LOOKS GOOD ON THE PRODUCT WEBSITE.”

Sarah Koshiol  
VP, Consulting Services  
Brightfield Strategies

## TACKLING EMERGING CHANNELS

An awareness of differences among emerging channels is the first step toward being able to successfully leverage them for talent acquisition. According to Sarah Koshiol, VP of consulting services at Brightfield Strategies, “There's a difference between finding an answer that will help practically solve the business challenge and one that looks good on the product website. Finding a balance for the whole organization is key.”

Different channels supply a variety of talent based on need. You have public online staffing platforms (Upwork, WorkMarket), specialty talent clouds (HIRED, Shiftgig, and Toptal), and crowdsourcing options (Gigwalk). These emerging talent channels have noticed a marked increase in demand for talent from Fortune 500 companies in recent years — up 26% in the 2016-2017 year alone<sup>2</sup>.

The exciting developments on the emerging channel front gives those looking to source contingent talent worldwide an opportunity to fill positions with a geographically agnostic filter. This opens up opportu-

<sup>2</sup> Source: <https://www.oii.ox.ac.uk/publications/platform-sourcing.pdf>

nities to ethically hire workers from across the globe, affording skilled individuals the chance to advance their careers while benefiting organizations through potential cost savings.

In order to use these channels well, it is crucial for talent acquisition professionals to have a solid grasp of the type of worker they're looking for. "People sourcing contingent workers are often only looking at a sliver of the picture. Getting them information to help them make critical decisions is the missing piece of the puzzle," says Jill Parrino, VP, solutions and innovation at Geometric Results, inc. Companies with a well-defined understanding of the nature of the work — and the necessary skill sets of workers they're sourcing — are then able to leverage emerging channels with the most success.

## CRAFTING A TALENT ECOSYSTEM

One of the most common challenges facing companies during this shift away from traditional hiring is the conflict between the need for full-time employees and the pressure to quickly fill open roles with contingent workers. Without an efficient talent system in place — made up of



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reliable vendors, well-matched talent, and established processes — hiring managers are performing triage under pressure to drive savings, making snap decisions that may not be well-informed.

How do organizations that rely on contingent talent manage this ever-increasing pressure? Leaders who have already made this transition provide excellent examples of how to move from legacy systems and strategies to multi-touch, single-function specialized ecosystems that accomplish complex and critical tasks by working flawlessly together.

### From Firm to Flexible

This shift away from legacy source systems to collections of systems is similar to a shift that corporate marketing functions encountered ten years ago. During the early technology transitions, large investments were made to ensure that best-in-class, monolithic tools tackled all of the challenges a department would face. Today, those monoliths aren't nimble enough to respond to changing technology and quick shifts in organizational strategy or to serve the

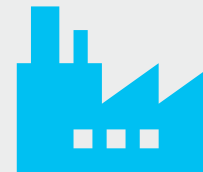
needs of the organization's end users in the way they've become accustomed (e.g. Facebook-level ease of use). Marketers responded by demanding that companies that provide tools or systems that specialize in doing one or two functions perfectly and that they interface seamlessly with the other tools in an organization's suite.

As tools, platforms, and vendors became more sophisticated, marketers were able to focus on insight rather than tasks. More data and analytics armed leaders with insights, shifting the way they staffed. Proof that the investment was a good one came when marketing-driven business insights started to offer real value to the executive offices.

### Shifting Tides

Professionals who source contingent talent can draw clear lessons from the marketing example. As they move from monolithic systems to flexible ecosystems, deeper insights emerge, presenting leaders with the question: how important are the right tools to an organization? Incorporating the contingent workforce into a company's talent

### CONTINGENT TALENT SOURCING THEN



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and business strategy means starting with a deep understanding of the internal needs of the business. The technology framework that will serve those specific needs could mean the department difference between being seen by the business as a strategic partner or just simply a cost center.

## END TO ONE-STOP SHOP MENTALITY

Data and analytics play a significant role in ensuring that contingent workforce management becomes a strategic business force — a proactive effort rather than a reactive one — and should be considered an important part of a healthy ecosystem.

As companies experiment with alternative hiring channels, including direct or self-sourcing and talent clouds, it is imperative that they capture and evaluate data about their hires to make sound business decisions. Jennifer Barker, the vice president of procurement operations, Enterprise procurement at Ameriprise Financial, says that her group's ability to evaluate data meant they could make intentional changes that served everyone. "When we were able to efficiently collect feedback from both managers and candidates, we were able to respond. This allowed us to provide the best experience and get the

## TAKE ACTION ECOSYSTEM STRATEGY

While it can feel like every challenge facing contingent talent acquisition is unique, the shifts in strategy, technology and data are unfolding business organization by business organization. Companies can glean lessons learned from other business functions to reduce costly mistakes and streamline transitions. Functions can use better data to drive strategies and build business insights to respond to market demands with these big takeaways:



### HAVE A SINGLE SOURCE OF TRUTH

With so many channels and services in the mix, having a single source of truth (VMS or other technology platform) to collect data to craft insights is vital to make sure reporting doesn't become a full-time job in and of itself.



### INTEGRATION IS CRITICAL

Ensure that each channel integrates with pillar systems on which your organization relies. They'll need to feed into the single source of truth to reduce the amount of manual labor and keep visibility comprehensive.



### RESOURCES FOR MAINTENANCE

Ensure that you have trained experts to help you keep data clean and your single source of truth updated. Lapses cost money and quickly impact tight budgets.



### DEMONSTRATE VALUE

Reporting must enable administrators to craft a cohesive story across the organization that demonstrates clear value to leadership.

best talent."

An effective vendor management system (VMS) will not only provide the full procure-to-pay process for non-employee labor, but also provide the data and analytics business leaders need to make sure they're meeting business goals.

This will vary from organization to organization. A company that is most concerned with hiring in high volume will require bulk/mass requisitions, approvals, screening, and assessments. If the organization is hiring for specialized skills, they will rely more on building talent pools and re-engaging former workers, along with re-evaluating silver medalists, and using referral-based hiring.

Much in the same way that no single system will serve every one of an organization's requirements, no single supplier can be relied on to meet every talent acquisition need — particularly at the enterprise level. Management service providers (MSPs) work with a variety of managed suppliers to design the best solutions for their clients based on their needs.

When looking to partner with an MSP, companies should go in with their eyes wide open and be ready to take some educational risks. MSPs work with their clients to identify problems, determine short-and long-term needs, and establish solutions (which can include VMS technology, new

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Jennifer Barker, SSMBB  
Vice president-  
procurement operations  
Enterprise procurement  
Ameriprise Financial

talent channels, and supplier networks). Building a strategic, customized contingent labor ecosystem allows a company to meet a wider range of needs.

Beyond technology, best practices dictate

standardizing day-to-day operations as much as possible when it comes to talent acquisition and vendor management. Providing foundational stability in the realm of operations and process will allow flexibility and room for iterative learning when testing new methodologies.

## LOOKING AHEAD

The "big picture" goal for companies is to begin looking at talent holistically and identifying the correct mix of full-time employees and contingent workers for their organization's needs. Certain critical elements must be in place to support and work toward that goal:

- A clear understanding of the company's needs, based on the current state
- One or more leaders to spearhead the testing and adoption of new methods and technologies

- Clear measurement for business benefits, and a system to rigorously measure and analyze the changes in those metrics

- Program stakeholders who can communicate the benefits of the chosen methodology to demonstrate value and generate demand

Looking ahead, businesses are already transforming the way they approach talent engagement. With the gig economy expected to be 43% of the workforce by the year 2020<sup>1</sup>, businesses of every size will benefit from preparing scalable, contingent workforce-friendly solutions — if they aren't already prepared.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.nasdaq.com/article/the-gig-economy-2020-freelance-workforce-predicted-to-rise-to-43-cm803297>



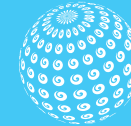
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## GET IN TOUCH

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Interested in partnering with us?

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**Remodista**  
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Remodista is a social think tank examining disruption in global business. Our mission is to provide insight, education and innovation to global brands through collaborative research and analysis.

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Jeni is responsible for establishing policies, processes and systems to support the end-to-end supply chain process. She is responsible for transforming an informal network into a robust and highly functioning contingent labor program.



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For 12+ years Sarah has displayed leadership skills in key roles ranging from designing, implementing, optimizing and managing global contingent workforce programs to leading a MSP Client Services organization.



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With 19 years of staffing and MSP/VMS experience, Jill currently serves as the leader of GRI's Solutions and Innovations team. She is focused on creating industry differentiation with GRI's unmatched MSP services.

## ABOUT OUR PARTNERS



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GRI is the world's largest independent extended workforce solutions provider, with \$4 billion in non-employee labor spend. Maintaining an independent staffing supplier and VMS technology position allows us meet the multi-faceted program needs of some of the world's largest and most complex companies. Our industry-leading solutions include MSP programs, enhanced SOW management, talent clouds, and advanced analytics.



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