



The gig economy, characterized by short-term contracts or freelance work as opposed to permanent jobs, has been gaining traction in all sectors, especially with the current skills shortage. But none more so than in the engineering sector.

This shift has been driven by the need for specialized skills, flexibility, and cost-effectiveness. As companies increasingly rely on gig workers to fill skill gaps and meet project demands, it is imperative for them to adapt their recruitment strategies to effectively source, assess, and integrate freelance/contract talent into their teams.

Let's start with the basics. What exactly does 'gig' mean in the context of the labour market?

In simple terms, the gig economy refers to a labour market characterised by short-term, flexible, and freelance work arrangements, where individuals, often referred to as gig workers, engage in temporary or project-based assignments. The 'gig economy' accounts for about one third of the world's working population. In the UK its worth around £20 billion - which is the same as the aerospace industries contribution!

In the engineering sector, this translates to companies leveraging the expertise of independent contractors or freelancers to address specific project needs, such as software development, civil engineering, mechanical design, and more.

The engineering sector has witnessed a significant surge in the utilization of gig workers, driven by the demand for niche technical skills and the dynamic nature of project-based work. Companies are increasingly turning to contract talent to bolster their teams with specialized expertise, fill short-term skill gaps, and adapt to fluctuating project requirements.

This shift has redefined traditional notions of employment, offering both companies and talent greater flexibility and agility in navigating the ever-changing needs of the industry.

- **Expand Your Talent Pool:** Engage with specialised recruiters tailored to engineering talent. They can do all the heavy lifting for you; referencing, vetting and ensuring qualifications etc a all in place before putting them forward. Not to mention they have a ready pool of candidates they work with that you would not hear of otherwise, ensuring you get the precise skills you need for your projects.
- **Emphasise Specialisation:** Look beyond generic job descriptions and seek out professionals with a proven track record in niche engineering disciplines, ensuring a tailored fit for your project requirements.

- **Evaluate Track Record:** Scrutinize past project outcomes, technical prowess, and industry relevance to ascertain the suitability of gig workers for your specific project needs.
- **Cultural Alignment:** Assess the potential for seamless integration of contract talent into your team dynamics and overarching project objectives.

Integrating Freelance Talent

- **Clear Communication:** Define project expectations, deliverables, and timelines upfront to align the freelance talent with your team's objectives from the get-go.
- **Facilitate Collaboration:** Leverage digital collaboration tools and establish open channels of communication to ensure seamless integration and knowledge sharing within your project teams.

Case Study:

To illustrate the impact of gig workers in engineering, let's consider a case study. Our Client, a London-based leading multi-disciplinary consultancy, faced a pressing need for expertise for a project that they did not have in-house. They did not want to hire as the skills needed were very specialised and not something they had a need for often.

Instead of embarking on a lengthy hiring process, they opted to engage a freelancer based in Europe with a proven track record in their specific industry niche. This strategic decision allowed to swiftly integrate specialised skills into their team, resulting in accelerated project timelines, enhanced product insights, and ultimately, a competitive edge in the market.

The gig economy has significantly reshaped the engineering talent scenario, presenting both opportunities and challenges for companies seeking to harness specialized expertise for project success.

As a recruitment business, it's crucial to adapt our strategies to cater to the evolving needs of companies navigating the gig economy. By effectively sourcing, assessing, and integrating freelance/contract talent, companies can bolster their project outcomes, enhance agility, and stay ahead of the competition.

Adaptability is key in the gig economy, and by embracing the potential of gig workers, companies can access the precise expertise needed to propel their engineering projects to new heights of innovation and success.

By adapting recruitment strategies to effectively source, assess, and integrate freelance/contract talent, companies can harness the full potential of the gig economy, enabling them to thrive in an evolving and dynamic global marketplace.



Bringing **technical** people together