

Freelancing Accelerates Ahead!

By: Parveen Panwar

Business beyond Boundaries

As businesses race ahead in search of increased profits and larger markets, they increasingly need to hire experts with minimal training & management costs. They also want to retain the freedom of employment flexibility i.e. ability to change experts on hire, should the business plans change suddenly. Hence freelance experts are a smart decision for a growing majority of corporate in today's era of globalization where people talent and not geography is the limiting factor. These freelance experts are hired across levels, departments and countries where technology is fully harnessed to share insights/knowledge/expertise in a mutually beneficial relationship.

As the world of virtual/freelance employees gains momentum businesses everywhere are recognizing the benefits of this democratic way of working. What's driving this trend? Business owners are discovering that there's often a better value for their dollar when they hire freelancers. And they're able to choose from an almost unlimited field of skill-sets for each specific project they need help with. With the freelance industry worth millions of dollars worldwide, as a freelancer, you have the ability to start a profitable business with a very low investment as well as have the flexibility to work almost anywhere, anytime.

Omnipresent Freelancing

More recently, however, a more fundamental change in the organization of work has been made, encapsulated in the concept of continuous change in the flexible firm. In this workplace of today which thrive on continuous improvement of quality and productivity thanks to empowered freelance / consultants / experts who do not want to be weighed down by designations and other hierarchical blockades. In this fluid arena of high growth there is a need for both higher and broader skills which is easily filled by a growing band of specialized free agents / freelancers because of the following:

- i. human resources: people, especially, the young, are much better educated than previously and more ready to take stretch initiatives and responsibilities.
- ii. markets: consumers are now more demanding and no longer willing to accept simple, standardised services/products, but are looking for innovation, variety, novelty and high quality –the specifications of which are continuously evolving.
- iii. new technology: especially IT/Telecom have begun a virtual revolution making global collaboration on a real-time basis a functional reality. This has led to a fundamental shift in the rate of skills renewal / multitasking, transforming the earlier of the way work management.

Win-Win Freelancing

Until recently, there was a definite stigma attached to freelance recruitment. Freelance was often associated with words such as inexperienced, unfocused, risky, etc. However, due to the boom in the requirements of skilled candidates in almost all sectors and new screening processes brought on by recruiters, and other specialized skills marketplaces/portals -'freelance' has taken on an entirely different connotation. No longer are freelancers judged as the people who cannot get a permanent job.

The new perception is that freelancers are highly skilled and efficient workers who can easily deliver miracles – there is a definite newfound sense of trust and confidence in the services that freelancers provide. Growing number of freelance options and talent is available at third party marketplaces which provide ideal linkages to both ends of the value chain i.e. service seekers as well service providers. Within any industry, freelance has become a very realistic and desirable option for many candidates – even candidates who are leaving permanent positions are now happy to look at freelance work – demonstrating a marked change in old employment models. For some, freelance has truly become a way of life – mirroring the work life balance issue that has become very prevalent in many other professional occupations.

Organizations are also starting to realize that freelance recruitment can offer them an economic advantage and sometimes give them an "edge" – a necessary thing to have in this very competitive market. Using freelance workers means that there is less financial commitment on a project-by-project basis, and less investment is needed – with a limitless ocean of skill sets with unmatched levels of scalability which is a great financial incentive for any organization concerned with its bottom line.

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