

# how to engage your contingent workforce: three key considerations.



building talent communities, flexing your employer brand and thinking long term will lead to better results.



With the global labour market growing increasingly complex, your workforce is likely undergoing its own transformation. Specifically, the use of flexible talent – whether it’s the human cloud, traditional temp staffing or independent contractors – is becoming a more strategic contributor in getting work done. But just as you need to build an attractive employer brand to engage with your permanent employee population, it’s more important than ever to make sure you do the same to attract the best contingent talent.



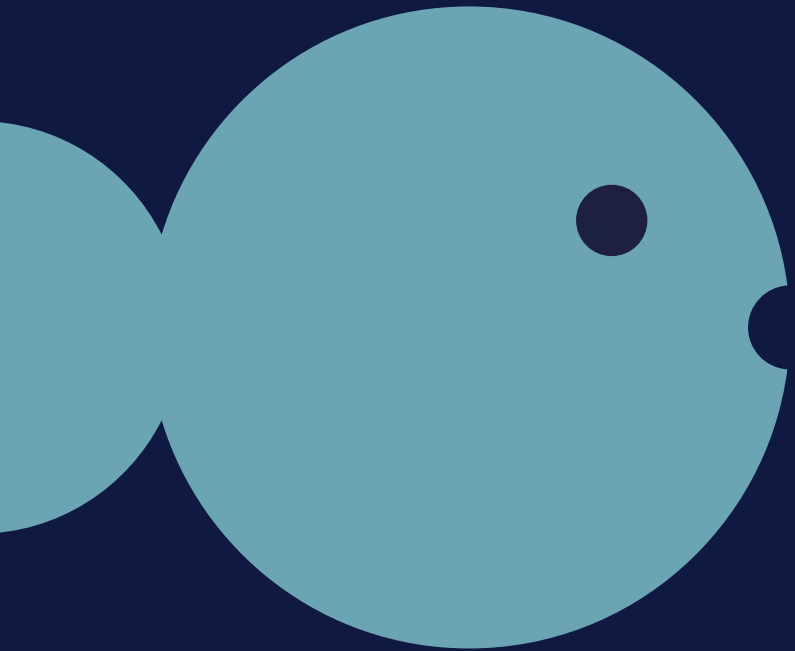
According to **McKinsey**, up to 162 million people in Europe and the United States – or as much as 30% of the working-age population – are performing some kind of independent work.

**Staffing Industry Analysts** predicts that the U.S. staffing market will exceed \$150 billion this year, a significant increase from just 2017. In Japan, 1 in 3 companies with 100,000 or more workers expect 30% of their workforce to be contingent by next year, according to EY.

There's no question that contingent labour usage is growing, spurred on by a number of market dynamics. The rise of the gig economy, the adoption of total talent management models, the widening of the skills gap and the digitalisation of business are all leading employers to think about and view talent in a different way. By employing flexible workers, they can access resources more quickly, become more agile to business needs and reduce overall costs.

Employing flexible workers brings many benefits, but there are unique considerations in how you engage with them. Because they aren't part of the permanent workforce, contingent talent need more nurturing to ensure they are open to future assignments with your company after completing their current one. Also, consider how your employee value proposition (EVP) needs to be different for a flexible workforce since those sought out by permanent talent might not apply here. Taking the time to understand their preferences and making investments to address their needs will yield a loyal and sustainable pipeline of flexible workers.





To increase engagement with your flexible talent, focus on these three areas: establishing a talent community, enhancing your contingent talent brand and nurturing long-term relationships. By having an effective strategy for strengthening each of these areas, you are more likely to be an **employer of choice for flexible workers**.

# 1. a thriving talent community

Companies around the globe are investing in **talent communities today**. According to the 2019 Randstad Sourceright **Talent Trends** survey of human capital leaders in 17 countries, 85% say they are creating specific talent communities and content plans to engage and nurture future pipelines. This was up from 69% the year before. The rising interest is indicative of the pressure employers face to not only quickly find and acquire talent for their current needs but to also build a pipeline for the future.



A robust and well-managed contingent talent community can support a significant portion of your resourcing needs. Whether you require seasonal payrolled workers, statement-of-work contractors or temp staff workers, such a community can also reduce labour costs by enabling you to directly fill roles. Furthermore, you are assured that community members are familiar and engaged with your business.

What are the key requirements for building one? The most important consideration is demonstrating value to entice workers to join. A talent community isn't just a pool of pre-identified candidates; rather, they are interested in your company because of your nurturing efforts. Regular communications on company developments and career opportunities are important for maintaining a high level of engagement. Additionally, resources should be available to answer questions and for talent to pose questions to.

## 2. your brand matters

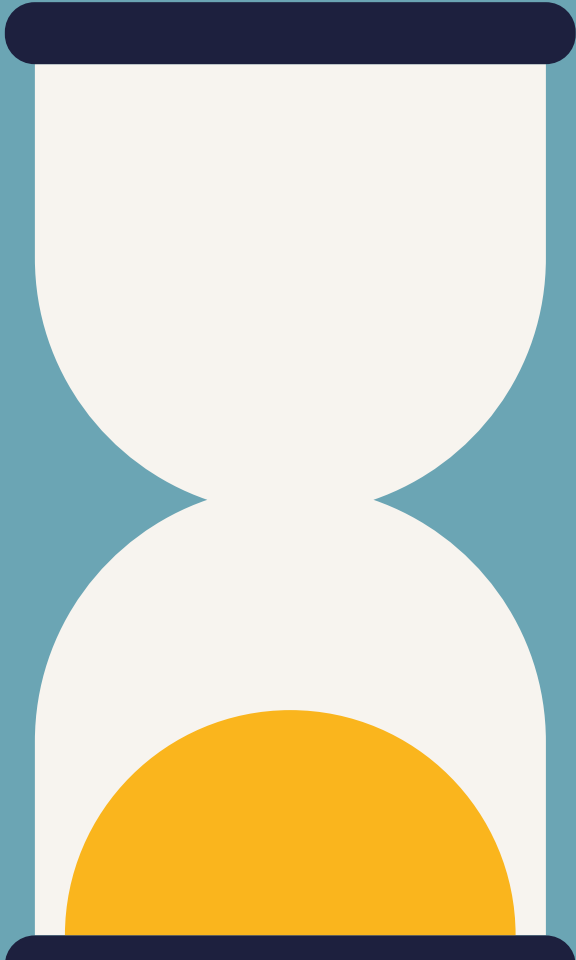
One reason for building a talent community is to help elevate your **employer brand**, which can be a critical asset for attracting talent and motivating them to join. Companies have long invested in their employer brand to attract permanent hires, but the growing use of contingent talent means you should also consider how to leverage your existing talent community to support flexible workforce needs.

For instance, if you are perceived to be a desirable employer, applicants you've passed over for permanent roles may still be interested in a contract position. This is an ideal way to deploy qualified bronze and silver medalists in your business. Furthermore, they may also serve as ambassadors for your brand to their networks. What's important is to have a brand strategy that addresses all work arrangements at your organisation.

This includes specific measures you should implement to address your contingent talent. While your corporate mission and values are the same when addressing all populations, how you activate your brand may vary. As mentioned earlier, you may want to reinforce the EVPs that matter more to contingent talent, such as healthcare benefits in markets such as the U.S., where insurance is usually provided to permanent workers but not contingent. Other benefits that may be appealing could include paid time off, family leave provisions and free or discounted meals at the office.



# 3. make relationships last



You may also want to offer opportunities to transition from contingent to permanent status for some workers. Many companies currently do this, but as the number of contingent staff grows, and the types of arrangements vary, your business needs to develop a thorough strategy for determining how to engage them over a longer period of time. For instance, do you have SOW workers that would be ideal permanent hires? Can remote gig workers qualify for a position internally? Are you engaging with talent soon to come off of one assignment about taking on another at your organisation?

The demand for good, skilled workers today is exceptionally competitive, and your business should not consider contingent talent as disposable. Instead, nurture these relationships for the long term, and make sure your recruiters consider them first for any permanent position. This may save you time and money since you are already familiar with this pool.

The use of contingent talent is one of the most effective ways for your organization to gain access to skills. By nurturing your talent communities, employer brand and existing relationships, you can increase the engagement with this important resource.



