



# New Year, New Resolutions for Companies Looking to Tap Into the Gig Economy

Insights

1.27.17

For many, a new year brings new resolutions – a forward-looking plan and commitment to resolve issues, implement changes, and create new strategies for success. Businesses are no different. The gig market has been on the rise for several years now, and shows no signs of slowing down. Companies using little-to-no gig workers may want to reconsider their business plans, as these workers can provide many benefits to all different types of organizations across varying industries.

What should your company be doing in 2017 to tap into the gig workforce?

## **Resolution #1 – Assess Your Need and Ability to Utilize Gig Workers**

Different industries have used non-employee services for years – creative work, i.e. editors, graphic designers, and web designers, routinely utilize the services of freelancers. IT-related companies often use contract workers. The legal field, also, uses contract attorneys at times for large projects such as document review.

We've been forecasting that corporate America would begin to embrace the on-demand economy, particularly in 2017 (see [here](#) and [here](#)). Corporate America: prepare to be "Uber-ized." The gig economy now encompasses all types of roles, not just lower-level or nonprofessional positions, which makes 2017 a prime time for you to begin to explore this workforce. The number of senior-level independent consultants is expected to continue to grow this year, due to limited job security and changing attitudes towards working across varying industries. For example, Merck turned to networked consultancies to provide a wide variety of digital skill sets to support their ongoing digital transformations.

Integrating gig work into an organization makes it more agile and responsive to the market for a number of reasons. Companies can onboard new talent and off-board unneeded skills without the burden of employment taxes and paperwork. Companies can also hire professionals faster for gigs because it requires fewer internal hoops. Who doesn't love that?!

## **Resolution #2 – Source Talent More Effectively**

One way employers can test out gigging is by using the idea of gig economy inside their companies. For example, a company may provide opportunities for existing employees to choose assignments in different areas or different departments on a project or trial basis. This could help an organization

better determine not only what type of projects are well suited for gig workers, but also what types of skills may be necessary and required from a gig worker.

Another way companies can source talent for gig opportunities is through “networked” professional service firms. Several of these firms, made up of independent consultants possessing highly specialized skills, have emerged in recent years. These firms provide management consulting, marketing, research, and creative services to various industries, and have gained success by offering efficient, on-demand access to expertise that their clients lack in-house. For example, PWC launched “Talent Exchange” to match gig workers to PWC projects.

Organizations looking to utilize gig workers can also think about partnering with gig companies who have a product or service of use to that organization. For example, Chipotle and Starbucks have partnered with Postmates, an on-demand courier, to help them get burritos and coffee to their customers as quickly as possible.

### **Resolution #3 – Onboard and Manage Gig Workers More Seamlessly**

Gig workers have the same needs as regular employees when beginning work with an organization – purposeful work, clear objectives, recognition, and respect. Companies looking to onboard gig workers should ensure that those needs are met.

Companies also should have tools, technology, and practices in place to connect in-office employees with remote or gig workers. However, tools, technology, and practices to track project details, such as projects that need attention, which gig workers are assigned to those projects, and what the project deadlines are, is equally important.

Lastly, companies should consider working with their internal legal departments or outside attorneys to develop an approach to managing freelance workers that ensures legal compliance and safeguards the benefits of freelance labor – speed and flexibility. This means balancing laws governing contract workers with how a company may prefer to manage those workers.