RES FORUM

VISION 2030 RESEARCH

# GIG ECONOMY

Weichert WORKFORCE MOBILITY

Gallagher

Harmony Relocation Network

# GIG ECONOMY DOMINANCE

## VISION 2030 SCENARIO ANALYSIS - II

In January 2025, the RES Forum released a research paper that considered many of the challenges and possibilities that mobility might encounter by the year 2030.

***Vision 2030 - the future of Talent Mobility***

The key output from this research was a focus on three scenarios:

- The remote-first world
- Gig economy dominance
- Sustainable, global careers

Based on interviews with a broad mix of Global Mobility (GM) and HR experts and leaders, each scenario attempted to predict the world of international work in 2030. Written as a guide for mobility professionals to help them navigate this potential future, each scenario came with its own set of self-assessment criteria. These were intended to gauge readiness for the given scenario, and help mobility professionals devise effective strategies to manage under those circumstances.

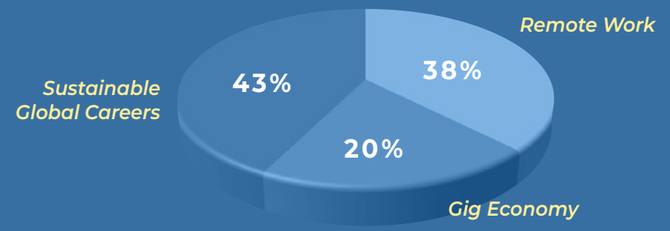
## WHAT DID YOU THINK?

Over the intervening months, we spoke to more than 800 companies from multiple industries and numerous countries. We heard from in-house professionals, as well as the suppliers and consultants they rely on. And we heard from the people who live and work in countries other than their own.

This included a call for written responses to the three scenarios - 3 bullets, 3 sentences, 3 paragraphs. We toured a workshop from London to Amsterdam, through Helsinki and onto Malaga. We also visited Hong Kong and Singapore, before returning to London for the annual FEM conference. Plus, we took several polls on LinkedIn, and we ran a survey on International Remote Work for a RES Forum member.

The first LinkedIn poll (May 2025), asked where GM could see the biggest opportunity to expand its impact:

- Remote Work and the management of a distributed workforce - 38%
- Gig workers, international freelancers and contingent workers - 20%
- Employer Value Proposition and shaping a Sustainable Global Careers proposition - 43%



## VISION 2030 / SCENARIO 2:
## GIG ECONOMY DOMINANCE

***The gig economy has expanded significantly, with a large portion of the workforce engaged in short-term, project-based work rather than traditional full-time employment. This shift has transformed the GM landscape, as organisations increasingly rely on a more flexible, on-demand workforce to meet their business needs. The dominance of the gig economy requires companies to adapt their GM programmes to accommodate the unique demands of gig workers, who often require different forms of support, technology, and compliance management. Organisations must be agile in their approach, ensuring that they can attract, integrate, and manage a diverse and transient workforce while maintaining efficiency and compliance across multiple jurisdictions.***

## IT'S 2030 AND THE NATURE OF INTERNATIONAL WORK HAS EVOLVED.

As people seek more flexibility, without giving up the chance for global experience, traditional longer-term assignment models have become increasingly redundant.

In their place, gig work is thriving.

Global organisations are adapting their talent acquisition and retention strategy to accommodate this shift.

As for Global Mobility, there are significant challenges in balancing the interests of the gig workers with those of the organisation.

**With that in mind, where should GM teams focus their efforts, if they are to effectively support gig workers, while still looking after the best interests of the organisation?**

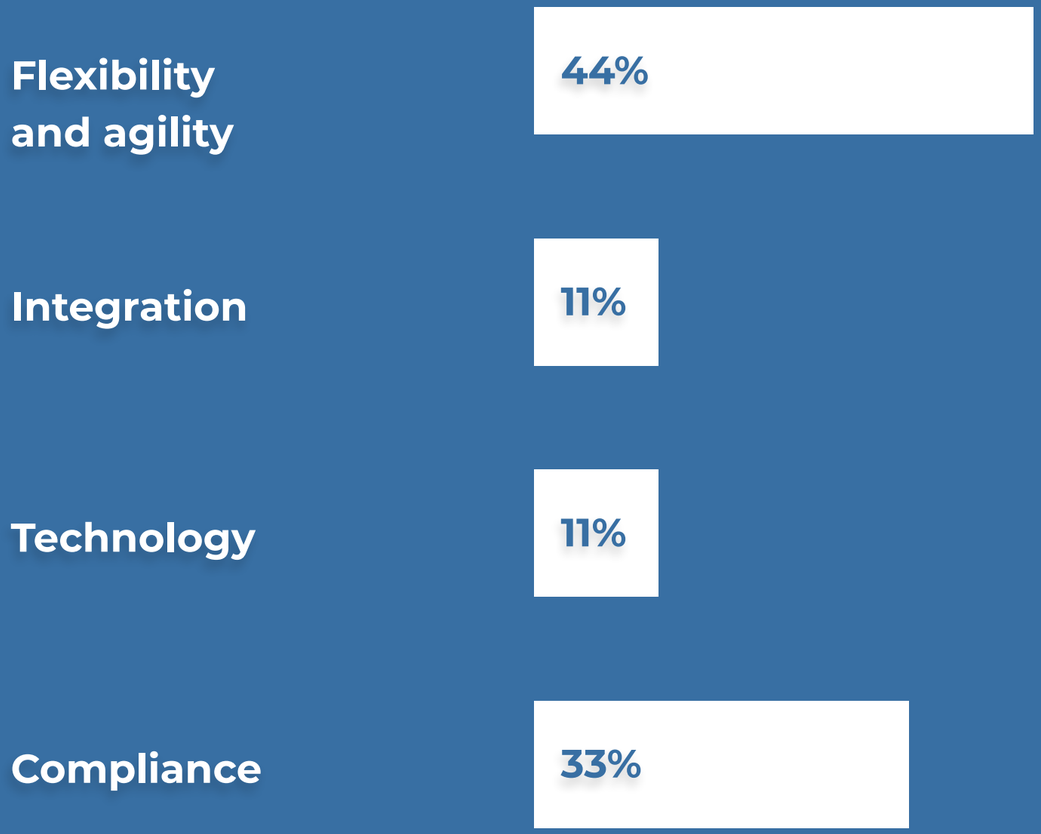
***Flexibility and agility -*** Fast, scalable processes for short-term, cross-border hiring

***Integration -*** Fair treatment and development access for contractors / freelancers / EOR hires

***Technology -*** Tools for seamless project management and collaboration across borders

***Compliance -*** Contracts and systems to meet complex, evolving legal and risk standards

THE RESULTS...


Flexibility and agility
44%
Integration
11%
Technology
11%
Compliance
33%

## VISION 2030 CONCEPT GRID

To help guide the conversation during the various in-person workshops, the RES Forum shared a concept grid that picked key points from each of the three scenarios. This both summarised some key trends, and spelled out some useful opportunities. Some of these topics will feature throughout the paper. Others are worthwhile considerations to bear in mind as you read through the opportunities and challenges identified among the many contributions.

| PILLAR | KEY CHALLENGES / TRENDS | AI OPPORTUNITIES | SUPPLIER ECOSYSTEM EVOLUTION |
|---|---|---|---|
| **GIG ECONOMY** | • Growth of freelancers, contractors, EOR staff<br>• Compliance risks (classification, tax, benefits)<br>• Lower loyalty, higher turnover<br>• Generational differences in flexibility expectations | • AI-based compliance monitoring<br>• Predictive workforce analytics<br>• Automated contracting and onboarding | • Expanded vendor networks (freelance, EOR, payroll)<br>• Global compliance integration<br>• Standardised digital contracts and benefits provisioning |

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

There is a profoundly personal connection to the Gig Economy for everyone involved in the production of this paper. The founders of the RES Forum have all been involved in gig work at one point or another. As freelancers, both the writer and designer are also sat in this section of the workforce. As a result, we are deeply invested in what everyone has to say on this subject.

Neither as strongly nor broadly debated as the remote-first scenario, the gig economy feels like it could be the most disruptive. The overriding view, for this scenario to become a reality, is that change is needed. From a governmental point of view, this involves streamlining and coordinating cross-border requirements. From a corporate perspective, things are more varied and complex. In both cases, compliance is a significant focus.

For gig workers, this brave new world is filled with risk and opportunity. Perceived risks amount to uncertainty and inconsistency. The opportunities, however, are everywhere, so long as you're willing to search for them. Those more opposed to the risks can find a growing number of gig opportunities within many organisations. From short-term gigs, to career defining projects, the internal gig market offers plenty of possibilities. Some with an international element.

The mobility industry must be prepared to embrace this change as well. In the paper, we hear from a founder and CEO within the relocation business, who sets out some opportunities of the gig economy. Their key message being that it's time to embrace this new way of working, or risk being left behind.

For in-house GM, there is broad scope to extend your influence, and not all of it relates to compliance. Policies, governance, global talent strategy and the internal gig economy. Plus, as Francine Smith said in response to a 2025 LinkedIn poll, "always COMPLIANCE!"

To complete the paper, we've included a Gig Economy Readiness checklist. Aimed at in-house corporate mobility, the checklist will help you review your approach and prepare your organisation for a world in which the gig economy becomes increasingly dominant.

# THE GIG WORKER: AN ESSENTIAL TILE IN THE WORK ECOSYSTEM

**WRITTEN BY SUSAN GINSBERG, FOUNDER AND MANAGING PRINCIPAL, SRG ADVISORY**

The Gig Economy, in its simplest form, is a labour market characterised by freelancers, independent contractors, or temporary jobs that are not permanent positions. Due to various reasons, including geopolitical concerns, immigration uncertainty, nationalism, the demand for talent, and cultural division, the gig work trend is increasing. Gig work can range from quick, one-time projects to longer-term, sustainable work relationships.

Amid geopolitical and economic turbulence, navigating uncertainty remains our only certainty. The RES Forum's Vision 2030 research states that gig work could account for 30%-45% of the global workforce.

How do we view the rise of the gig economy and optimise its influence?

# THE GIG WORKER: AN ESSENTIAL TILE IN THE WORK ECOSYSTEM

BY SUSAN GINSBERG, SRG ADVISORY

## EXPLAINING THE MOSAIC METAPHOR

Think of the contemporary workforce as a mosaic – diverse, adaptive, and rich in texture and impact. Each tile piece, regardless of size, has an essential role in completing the mosaic picture. Without it, the mosaic is incomplete.

A gig worker, or independent contractor, is no longer an extra, nice-to-have; she plays a vital, strategic role in the work ecosystem.

A mosaic consists of many small pieces or tiles, often less than 2 inches by 2 inches, to form a larger pattern or image that can be simple or complex. These pieces, called tesserae, are made of materials such as stone, glass, ceramic, or metal, and are mounted for installation. The beauty of a mosaic lies in its interconnectedness.

A work ecosystem is an integrated approach to workforce management that includes a diverse group of employees, contractors, and freelancers working together in an interconnected and interdependent way. This collaborative business model maximises the value of achieving desired outcomes for the organisation.

The gig worker is an essential piece of a larger picture that brings a common goal together. Independent contractors, like mosaic tiles, come in different shapes, colors, and sizes. Their roles can be short-term, project-based, or retained to fill gaps in the organisation where their skills are most useful. These contractor roles offer flexibility, provide time- or project-specific expertise, and help companies stay agile.

# THE GIG WORKER: AN ESSENTIAL TILE IN THE WORK ECOSYSTEM

**BY SUSAN GINSBERG, SRG ADVISORY**

## OPTIMISING GIG WORK

Employee and independent contractor roles can overlap and support each other. Gig or contractor expertise should be complementary, not competitive. Clear and consistent communication is crucial for aligning capabilities with organisational goals. This alignment helps individuals feel fulfilled and productive, which in turn can fuel organisational growth.

Placing the gig worker in a role that optimises her skills and benefits the company's objectives is essential. Each piece of the mosaic completes the overall picture – if a piece is missing or out of place, the mosaic loses its purpose, balance, and beauty.

Horst Gallo at Indarra Ventures shares, “After years in corporate life, I have seen how independent consultants add something special - a unique piece in the puzzle very often. Their fresh thinking, flexibility, and unique skills can help organisations see possibilities they didn’t know were there."

## SHIFTING THE MINDSET

By inviting the contractor to become part of the interdependent work ecosystem, she gains clarity and a broader perspective. The feeling that she matters sparks creativity, boosts productivity and well-being, and fosters a sense of belonging. This approach shifts the outdated mindset of viewing gig workers merely as temporary, lower-value project workers to seeing them as an agile yet vital part of the work ecosystem. This updated perspective elevates the gig workforce and supports the demand for talent.

For the independent contractor and work ecosystem to thrive, there must be mutual understanding and respect. Consider advocating for gig workers’ clear onboarding and inclusive professional development practices, and fair treatment.  Placing her in a role that contributes to the rhythm of the work ecosystem will enrich the company culture. At the same time, this mindset supports gig workers’ desire for flexibility, independence, and enriching career development opportunities.

## COMPLETING THE PICTURE

In conclusion, to build a truly resilient and dynamic future of work, organisations need to include gig workers as a valued part of the entire work ecosystem. Independent contractor flexibility will enable companies to respond and scale to the shifting definition of the future of work.  Her role completes the overall work ecosystem of the future. When every tile piece is valued, that is when the work mosaic becomes a masterpiece.

## WHAT DOES THE GIG ECONOMY MEAN FOR GLOBAL ORGANISATIONS?

*Changes are happening, organisations must adapt*

"The future of gig workers is poised to disrupt and redefine traditional employment models."

This statement comes from an SVP of global strategic services in the relocation industry. It's borne out by many of the statements and contributions received on the Gig Economy scenario.

The world has changed. Technological advancements meet the demand for specialised digital skills. Meanwhile, Gen Z increasingly pursues flexible working arrangements that fit their lifestyles, as well as opportunities to continuously develop new skills. Besides this, expectations around fair pay play off against a desire for purpose over profit.

The outcome is a demand for multinationals to adopt more agile, project-based staffing models, if they're to remain competitive in the modern world. Naturally, this presents both risks and opportunities.

## RISKS

The SVP quoted above is among the many contributors who identify compliance as a major risk of the international gig economy. To mitigate against this, robust frameworks are required, alongside carefully balanced benefits and protections that ensure fair and sustainable terms.

A GM Manager in renewable energy offers several examples of compliance risk, with tax, social security and immigration regulations remaining "the most significant challenge." The Vision 2030 workshop in Helsinki flagged further risks around Employer of Record agreements for gig workers.

Especially in markets where the legislation is restrictive, the use of international gig workers can become a significant compliance risk, making the model costly and time consuming. The burden of this sits substantially with GM, "who are tasked with gathering legal guidance, evaluating risks, and presenting viable options to the business." In these markets, it's likely that employers would shy away from the use of gig workers. While this approach avoids the potential compliance issues, it also risks missing out on opportunities presented by this growing employment model.

In several Vision 2030 workshops, gig worker integration and company culture were raised as potential risks of using gig workers. One delegate at IBIS 2025 in Malaga suggests this begins with the recruitment process. At RES Connect Hong Kong, it was raised that this issue must be consistent across all workers.

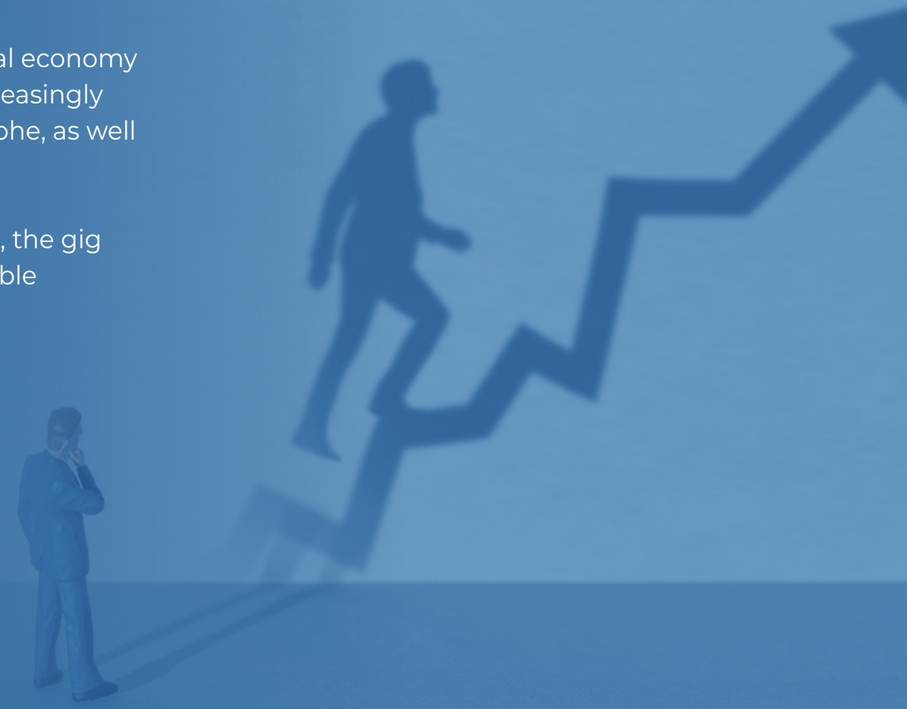
More recently, in a 2026 blog post - Part 1: Hong Kong's gig economy - Lewis Silkin explore the question of whether gig workers are considered to be employees or independent contractors, then set out the consequences of misclassification. At least, as far as Hong Kong is concerned. "With upcoming policy reforms and a regional shift toward stronger worker protections," they say on LinkedIn, "the issue of gig-worker classification is becoming increasingly important." As we explore later, there are other significant considerations from a regional point of view, and it's essential for organisations to accommodate these regional variances. For both domestic and international gig work.

## OPPORTUNITIES

As one HR VP succinctly put it, "the power of freelance talent lies in its agility." The "workforce fluidity" this offers provides a new dimension to the labour market, combining diversity, flexibility and global reach, without the long-term commitments linked to traditional employment models. Each of these has "the potential to reshape how businesses operate and compete globally," suggested one contributor.

Besides this, a global workforce that can be quickly scaled will help businesses remain competitive, particularly in a global economy where organisations are susceptible to events and influences beyond their control. The world is already experiencing increasingly volatile geopolitics, with substantial impact on societies and economies. Add to these a looming environmental catastrophe, as well as the rampant and inexorable march of technological change, and these events and influences quickly mount up.

While there is still much to be done to address the compliance concerns, at both organisational and governmental levels, the gig economy represents a significant opportunity to global companies finding their way through an increasingly unpredictable world. The question is, how do you make the most of these opportunities, while navigating the various risks?



### *How to embrace the opportunities*

The consensus across the various contributions is that changes are required to make the most of the opportunities presented by the gig economy. Governmentally, this involves streamlining cross-border requirements to reduce risks linked with compliance. Organisationally, these changes are more wide ranging.

## COMPLEMENTARY, NOT COMPETITIVE

"Matching skills to roles is key to successfully leveraging a gig economy." This means using gig workers in roles that make the most of their skills and experience, while meeting the organisation's objectives. As Susan Ginsberg pointed out in the opening piece, this means ensuring employee and gig worker roles are "complementary, not competitive." In other words, consider the talent available within the business, then build a pipeline of skills based talent to fill the gaps.

## INTEGRATION, INCLUSION AND BELONGING

Susan also talked about overlapping responsibility and support for employees and contractors. This involves integrating gig workers into the organisation, ensuring they have clarity of company goals and objectives, and clearly defining and communicating their role in delivering them. Essentially, moving away from the view that gig workers are "temporary, lower-value project workers," to seeing them as a vital part of the ecosystem. Part of this relates to clear onboarding and inclusive professional development practices. It also calls for fair treatment, which "supports Gig workers' desire for flexibility, independence, and enriching career development opportunities." Another crucial element of this is to find the right balance between remote vs. on-site work. While many contractors and freelancers choose this lifestyle for the flexibility and freedom it provides, some face-to-face interaction is important: in-person and / or via regular video calls.

## PERSPECTIVE AND CLARITY OF PURPOSE

To help gig workers feel fulfilled, respected and integrated into the work ecosystem, clear and consistent communication is essential. In turn, your contractors will have clarity of their purpose and an understanding of how their work meets the organisation's broader goals. This is hugely motivating for the gig worker, while allowing the organisation to fully benefit from the breadth of experience a contractor brings. After all, an experienced contractor has seen a lot of different organisations and learned an awful lot about how they operate - good and bad. That insight is priceless for any organisation willing to tap into it.

## SYSTEMS AND TOOLS

One experienced GM manager pointed out that, "for gig work to emerge as a sustainable and inclusive employment model of the future, concerted efforts are needed." This includes investment in systems that support an agile and compliant integration of external resources, whether in-country or cross-border.

## THE INTERNAL GIG MARKET

One topic that came up in several pieces was the possibility of gig work within the organisation. A former COO and CHRO talked about the possibility for "employees to take on international gigs to gain both professional and personal development can be a valuable retention tool for organisations as well as matching skills to roles, anywhere." This can be a lower cost option vs. the mobilisation of employees. It also provides a chance to broaden and enhance skills, knowledge and experience, while driving engagement among your existing employees.

## WHAT ARE THE OPPORTUNITIES AND RISKS FOR GIG WORKERS?

Across the many pieces, there were several that spoke about the opportunities and risks for gig workers themselves. As will become immediately apparent, the view is that the risks outweigh the opportunities quite substantially.
However, it's worth bearing in mind that the vast majority of respondents are full-time employees. As someone with experience on both sides of the fence, it's clear that the gig worker lifestyle is worth the risks. Even if it can be stressful from time to time.

## FLEXIBILITY AND VARIETY

The main positives come from autonomy and flexibility, as well as the variety of work afforded to freelancers and contractors. The chance to gain experience and knowledge across a range of industries and organisations, coupled with the opportunity to gather a broad range of skills. Speaking from personal experience, I've learned more in my time as a freelancer than I ever did as a full-time employee. This relies on me being motivated to learn for myself. However, from my perspective, this is a quality shared by a lot of gig workers.

In the age of the Digital Nomad, the opportunity to live and work in a variety of countries is another significant benefit of gig work. As a senior relocation professional put it, "this new form of mobility will be driven by highly skilled professionals who seek the flexibility to live and work in different countries on a short-term basis." Alongside this, they gain exposure to a diverse range of organisations and environments, as well as the chance to build a global network. Sometimes, they even get to share boastful shots of a beach-side office, complete with golden sand and palm trees.

## UNCERTAINTY AND AMBIGUITY

One significant risk for gig workers is where they sit within the priorities of the organisations they work with. In a LinkedIn poll from last year, the option of "Inclusion - equal access to development and fair treatment for gig workers" received no votes. That's not to say that organisations don't believe in fair treatment of gig workers, more that compliance, flexibility and technology sit much higher in terms of priorities.

Aside from their seemingly lower priority, uncertainty was considered to be a major concern for gig workers. "This risk becomes even more pronounced for individuals supporting families or with considerable financial obligations," adds one contributor. An HR VP in the automotive sector elaborates on this point, referencing a World Bank report which states that "online gig work - which spans nearly 435 million individuals globally - frequently leaves workers without safety nets like retirement plans." In certain markets, this applies to almost three quarters of gig workers.

Finally, as illustrated in the previous section, inconsistency between different markets means gig workers can find themselves in a legal grey zone, "lacking classification and labour protections." Again, referring to the online gig market, the HR VP mentions that platforms in the EU are growing ahead of regulations, which leave the freelancers who use them in "precarious situations."

## IT IS 2030 AND THE 3-YEAR EXPAT ASSIGNMENT IS OFFICIALLY DEAD.

Global talent wants flexibility and international exposure, without the red tape, the relocation packages or the long-term commitment.

Enter: the Gig Economy goes global.

Contractors. Freelancers. EOR hires. Here to deliver - and leave.

Global organisations are racing to keep up. Global Mobility? It is at a crossroads.

***If GM is to stay relevant in this new world of agile, borderless work, where should it focus?***

## REGIONAL VARIANCES

One contributor, an HR Strategic Design and Project Management lead from the automotive industry, shares their perspective of gig work by region.

Their summary is that it is "less likely for Europe, somewhat likely for APA and Americas, very likely for USA." This is one perspective and may not reflect the views and experience of people in different industries and territories. It's certainly an interesting area to explore in more detail.

### Central, Northern and Western Europe

"Most of the gig work is done either in the high hourly rate tier for very specialised high-skilled labour such as IT services, consulting and coaching, or in the very low hourly rate tier, like food delivery. In the high tier, the gigs are often an additional income to a salaried job and not intended as main income. The question is how these side-gigs will be impacted by genAI, as legal consulting, coaching and to some degree even coding services can be replaced by genAI tools. If anything, this might lead to a decrease of high tier gig economy jobs or a shift to new services. In the low tier, a decrease might take place not due to AI, but increasing efforts to regulate the low wage sector."

### APA and Americas

"There might be a trend to more gig work, especially for services who are catering to rising local industries or can profit from price advantages due to cost-differences between countries. However, there is a big impact of each national culture on the acceptance of gig work careers, as there are countries where other jobs are favoured by society, such as government jobs in China, for example."

### USA

"The increasing deregulation seems to favour gig economy jobs of any kind due to several factors. One is the reduced need to provide certifications, etc. for specific jobs. Another is the increased reliance on local production and services. And last but not least the deregulation of the (already pretty loose) labour market, e.g., efforts to circumvent minimum wages, leads to the existential need of low tier job workers to take on pseudo-self-employment jobs."

# WORKFORCE MOBILITY
## and the Gig Economy

**WRITTEN BY A CEO AND FOUNDER IN THE MOBILITY INDUSTRY**

### A GROWING ECONOMY

Workforce mobility has greatly benefited from the gig economy. Destination service companies utilize gig workers to enhance their on-the-ground presence, while cultural awareness firms employ contract workers for training. Adding movers, attorneys, title companies, and relocation networks creates a robust economy with diverse players, ranging from sole proprietors to large corporations, all contributing to an ecosystem focused on placing the right talent in the right location at the right time.

According to Daniel Martinez's "Gen Z And the Gig Economy: Flexibility Meets Independence," about 56% of Gen Z workers are engaged in freelance or independent work, compared to 36% of the overall workforce. Projections indicate that more than 80 million workers will be employed in the gig economy by 2027, up from the current estimate of around 50 million. A 2020 Intuit report also noted that 80% of large corporations plan to increase their use of freelancers in the future, and workforce mobility is no exception.

There are numerous reasons to consider freelance employees. It is more sustainable, as people can work from their homes or local areas, reducing their carbon footprint. The overall cost and risk associated with full-time employees are also lower. Quality of life improves as individuals can provide services they are passionate about, and control their workload, leading to a better experience for transferring employees and their families. Additionally, using gig workers as service providers gives employees immediate access to local resources, helping them acclimate more quickly.

## IS MOBILITY BEING LEFT BEHIND?

Our industry has been slow to change and innovate, but the current climate demands that leaders think outside the box. Various technological solutions can help find the right resources to enhance the overall experience while reducing costs. Procurement platforms like Supplier Gateway and Coupa allow members to search for local small businesses that offer services such as home cleaning, landscaping, moving, mental health and wellness coaching, and more. Many of these companies are solopreneurs who take on short-term projects or retained services, providing exceptional and localized support to employees and their families.

By building local relationships through gig work, companies create economic opportunities, community partnerships, brand enhancement, sustainable practices, and cost savings for their clients. Moreover, younger generations are adept at using technology to stay informed, enabling contracting companies to address issues or areas for improvement promptly.

Solopreneurs are also emerging to fill specific roles within the ecosystem. For example, Bloom Relocation offers customizable checklists for people moving, while Mia Bazo helps employees track their carbon footprint and travel to mitigate compliance risks. Platforms like Runner and Upwork provide freelance executives for short-term projects such as creating employee handbooks, conducting voice-of-the-customer / focus group consulting, leadership development, policy writing, and RFP management. These roles can be fulfilled by fractional resources or experienced gig workers.

## TIME TO EMBRACE THE GIG ECONOMY?

Barring compliance issues, an interesting question is ***what it would look like for an RMC to employ a home / host model domestically and use gig workers as local consultants, creating a more personable experience for the employee and their family?*** As benefits change, and margins tighten, this could be a way to create a contingent workforce when you need them, reducing overall costs while improving overall value.

By embracing the gig economy, the workforce mobility industry can adapt to changing demands, leverage diverse talents, and create a more flexible and sustainable future.

## WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR GLOBAL MOBILITY?

***"GM has historically focussed on long-term expat assignments - the future may see a rise in international gig work."***

As demonstrated throughout the report, gig workers value the flexibility of short- to medium-term projects. From an international perspective, this flexibility is combined with the ability to work from anywhere. For GM, this opens possibilities to extend influence within the organisation, specifically around policies and governance, global talent strategy and compliance.

## POLICIES

The Managing Partner of a GM consultancy describes this scenario as "probably the most disruptive one," on the basis that the entire relocation model must adapt to accommodate a dominant gig economy. "The old approach - long-term contracts, standard packages - would just not fit anymore to the requirements."

For GM, this means the opportunity to create and own new, more flexible, policies. Policies that distinguish between employees and contractors. Policies that balance "the benefits of agility with regulatory and human considerations," as one senior HR professional puts it.

A senior Global Talent Mobility Manager based in APAC continues the theme. "These resources may span different locations and industries, which can increase employee mobility." In some cases, traditional assignment models remain relevant. However, "we're already seeing a shift to highly flexible, project based, short duration, recurring trips." To manage these, GM needs to "get creative with mobility and compliance solutions," which provide for employee and contractor needs, while meeting the financial and strategic objectives of the business.

## COMPLIANCE AND GOVERNANCE

Continuing the point made above, GM needs creative solutions to the changing face of international assignments. This includes considerations around compliance and governance for international gig workers. Here, compliance with visas and work permits sit alongside the challenges around classification and clarity of employment.

As one GM Manager says, "for cross-border gig workers, compliance with tax, social security, and immigration regulations remains the most significant challenge." These requirements can be costly and time consuming and they place a "considerable operational burden" on GM. They also present an opportunity for GM to take a strategic lead, by gathering the requisite guidance, pro-actively evaluating risks and providing viable options to the business.

During several Vision 2030 workshops, the topic of "employee control" and contract definition was raised. At IBIS 2025 in Malaga, the audience saw variations by region, industry and generation in terms of approach to permitting gig work and / or engaging with contracts and freelancers. Several people also mention the challenges related to employment definition and compliance with specific legislation linked to tax and social security, such as IR35 in the UK. Here, GM has an opportunity to define and manage compliance and governance around these issues. This will help mitigate risk, while also cementing GM as a key strategic partner in the organisation.

## GLOBAL TALENT MANAGEMENT

The Founder and Managing Director of an HR consultancy raises the question of ***"how gig workers can be effectively integrated into broader talent strategies."***

A former COO and CHRO answers the question succinctly with "matching skills to roles is key to successfully leveraging a gig economy," before going on to say that, for international 'gigs', "skills matching isn't enough." Here, GM must work closely with their HR counterparts to "build a deep and wide set of data to capture skills, performance, compliance / ability to work in certain locations, etc." This requires the use of strategic workforce planning tools that will inform quick, effective and transparent decisions about how best to use gig workers vs. permanent employees.

During RES Connect Helsinki, this need for flexible and agile workforce planning and global workforce management also came up as an opportunity for Global Mobility teams. As one senior GM Manager put it, "companies will need to consider how to manage and leverage a pool of skills based talent." With a central role in policy, compliance and governance, GM is well-positioned to take the lead on global talent management and the role of gig workers within it.

The final common aspect of global talent management is that of cultural training for gig workers. Broadly recognised as more complex than for full time employees, it offers GM another opportunity, particularly where there is an international element. Pro-active / pre-emptive training can be incorporated into the on-boarding process, offering gig workers a clear understanding of the organisation's general and specific GM policies. Not only does this mean your organisation is properly represented by contractors and freelancers, it also helps fully integrate gig workers into the business.

## INTERNAL GIG WORKERS

A few contributors reference the internal gig worker as an opportunity for GM to extend its influence within the organisation. Linked to the previous point around talent management, the GM Leader of a Silicon Valley tech company suggests this offers GM "a strategic opportunity to facilitate global experiences and career growth while ensuring compliance and alignment with broader talent strategies."

Meanwhile, a senior HRBP in the Life Science industry continues the theme in reference to their own "global Talent Market Place," where AI matches skills to opportunities, opening possibilities for colleagues to broaden their knowledge and experience. Here, GM plays a critical role in supporting cross-border engagements from a policy point of view. More than that, however, GM is there to help navigate compliance issues and as "the enabler that takes care and stays on top of this evolving landscape."

## GIG ECONOMY READINESS CHECKLIST

***India-based Head of Global Mobility at a major FTSE All-World Index international tech and telecoms company***

***When employing gig workers in your organisation, consider the following:***

### 1. FLEXIBLE ENGAGEMENT MODELS

- Offer project-based contracts with clear deliverables and timelines.
- Allow gig workers to choose their work hours and locations when possible.
- Use modular onboarding tailored to short-term or remote contributors.

### 2. CLEAR COMMUNICATION AND EXPECTATIONS

- Define scope, deadlines and performance metrics upfront.
- Use collaborative tools (e.g., Slack, Asana, Trello) to maintain transparency and alignment.
- Provide regular feedback and recognition, even for short-term contributors.

### 3. TECHNOLOGY-ENABLED OPERATIONS

- Leverage platforms for sourcing, onboarding and managing gig talent.
- Use AI tools to match skills with project needs and automate compliance tracking.
- Ensure gig workers have access to necessary tools and systems.

### 4. LEGAL AND COMPLIANCE MANAGEMENT

- Correctly classify workers (contractor vs. employee) to avoid legal risks.
- Stay updated on local labour laws, tax obligations and visa requirements.
- Use digital contracts and e-signature platforms for efficient documentation.

### 5. INCLUSIVE CULTURE AND INTEGRATION

- Include gig workers in team communications and virtual events.
- Foster a sense of belonging through shared goals and values.
- Offer optional access to learning resources or community forums.

### 6. COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS INNOVATION

- Provide competitive pay aligned with market rates and project complexity.
- Consider offering optional benefits (e.g., health coverage via third-party providers).
- Enable fast, secure payments through digital wallets or gig platforms.

### 7. DATA SECURITY AND IP PROTECTION

- Use secure platforms for file sharing and collaboration.
- Include IP clauses in contracts to protect company assets.
- Train gig workers on data privacy and cybersecurity protocols.

## IN ASSOCIATION WITH...

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Weichert Workforce Mobility is a global leader in corporate relocation services, helping companies move talent seamlessly worldwide. As the third-largest provider in the industry, we combine award-winning technology—our Weichert Go platform—with personalized service to deliver exceptional employee experiences. With 12 consecutive years of highest customer satisfaction ratings, we partner with mid-market and enterprise organizations to make every relocation smooth, efficient, and cost-effective.

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As part of Gallagher Multinational Benefits and HR Consulting, our Global Mobility advisory teams are specialists, who can help clients translate intent into practice, by simplifying the complex, fast moving, costly and time-consuming world of Global Mobility. We work with our clients to identify opportunities for implementing the most practical approach for their company when redefining and developing agile strategies.

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A global cooperative network of moving companies and destination services providers, upholding strong family values through generations of heritage, brought together in one truly global and solid infrastructure, providing the same level of high quality services, local expertise and personal commitment, the world over.

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# RES FORUM

*The RES Forum has the **tools**, **knowledge** and **community** to help mobility professionals keep pace with changes in the industry, and help the industry keep pace with the needs of mobility professionals.*

*Through research, analytics, eLearning, events, and policy templates and consultancy, we provide support and guidance to help mobility professionals navigate the ever-changing GM landscape.*

*We enjoy the exhaustive knowledge of our consultants, academics, Strategic Advisory Board and Technical Partners, as well as our international community of senior in-house HR and GM professionals, which includes 1,000 members in over 45 countries.*

*In conversation with leaders and experts from across the industry, our academics study the most pressing topics within the world of GM and cross-border working.*

*Then we share their collective insight to provide clarity, tools and advice to help our members through the many challenges they face.*

*The RES Forum is an independent organization. We are not influenced by external parties or third-party vendors.*

*References available on request.*

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*WITH THANKS TO EVERYONE WHO CONTRIBUTED THEIR INSIGHT AND KNOWLEDGE. WITHOUT YOU, THIS REPORT WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE.*