



HOW THE BLENDED WORKFORCE IS **TRANSFORMING THE TELECOM INDUSTRY**



INTRODUCTION

Today, the old career expectation of “40 years and a gold watch” seems almost impossibly quaint. Modern companies long ago shed that somewhat paternalistic posture toward workforce management. Lifetime employment is out, replaced by new ideas that center around flexibility, mobility and greater independence. While “one worker, one job” may have made sense in an era when one had to live close to the office (or even be physically present there), the internet and other digital technologies have rendered those concerns moot, forever freeing us from the “tyranny of proximity.”

This transformational change, along with the need for modern corporations to maximize shareholder value, has helped create a new model for the management of human capital: the blended workforce. Offering a hybrid of traditional full-time employees supplemented by independent workers, the blended workforce has grown increasingly prominent in recent years. This development was supported by the creation of on-demand digital worker platforms (Uber being the most famous), that made independent work more accessible to the public than ever before, creating what is often referred to as the “Gig Economy.”

The promise offered by this new model is alluring: Businesses, already contending with the competitive pressures of a globalized economy, could reduce labor costs and theoretically improve services by tapping into a liquid digital marketplace of talented support workers.

Those workers, on the other hand, would gain freedom and independence, work on their own terms, and become small-scale entrepreneurs.

” On-demand platforms, for their part, would play a key role in solving inefficiencies in the labor market, matching skilled workers with companies in need.

For the telecom industry, historically struggling to keep pace with consumer demand for its services, the blended workforce seems like a natural fit. By using on-demand workforce platforms, telecom companies can enable the rapid mobilization of skilled engineers and other workers to handle projects as they arise, at any point across the globe.

To better understand how we’ve reached this point and how telecom firms can take advantage, let’s take a closer look at the growth of the Gig Economy, the benefits offered by the blended workforce model, and the specific challenges telecom companies are facing in regard to workforce management.

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THE GROWTH OF THE GIG ECONOMY

In a relatively short period of time, global workforces have experienced an unprecedented restructuring that includes a much greater dependence on contract or independent workers. Data from the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics shows that the United States currently has:

- 10.6 million independent contractors (6.9 percent of total employment)
- 2.6 million on-call workers (1.7 percent of total employment)
- 1.4 million temporary workers (0.9 percent of total employment)
- 933,000 workers provided by contract agencies (0.6 percent of total employment)

To place the scope of these numbers in context, consider that the steel and coal industries in the U.S. collectively employ about 230,000 workers — or only about one-seventh as many as are employed in the Gig Economy.

Other estimates have placed the number of people working independently much higher. A report from McKinsey estimates that 20 to 30 percent of the working age population in the United States and the EU-15 are involved in some form of independent work. By some estimates, the number of people working in on-demand roles could double by 2020.

A shift of this size raises an obvious question: Which factors are driving the move to a Gig Economy or blended workforce model? The answer is found in the convergence of two developments: the evolution of the modern company (which places the highest premium on delivering shareholder value) and the evolution of modern technology (which has given businesses the tools to create more efficient workforce models). In today's hyper-competitive landscape, businesses must be lean and agile without compromising on quality. Maximizing profits and shareholder returns requires the rigorous elimination of inefficiencies and the ability to tap into hidden or unrealized assets.

Because labor represents such a significant part of a company's operating expenses, firms have always sought new methods for keeping productivity high and costs controlled. It's a difficult balancing act and one of the eternal challenges that companies face.

Fortunately, technological solutions have made this needle much easier to thread.

The internet, cloud computing and VoIP allowed for communication and collaboration across vast distances.

The rise of Big Data and the Internet of Things allowed companies to optimize processes and unlock extraordinary efficiency gains through data analysis.

Machine learning and automation allowed companies to automate repetitive tasks and free up human workers to focus on higher value work.

And, perhaps most importantly for the Gig Economy, software platforms facilitated the move to an on-demand staffing model that allowed companies to satisfy labor needs with greater precision, while providing people the flexibility to work on their terms.

While these larger trends conspired to push businesses toward a blended workforce model, the global financial crisis of 2008 accelerated the process. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the number of temporary employees in the U.S. spiked by a staggering 65 percent following the 2008 crisis.

With companies desperate to stay viable during a severe economic downturn and millions of displaced workers seeking a new path after the old system failed them, the table was set for the emergence of the Gig Economy.

BENEFITS AND CONSIDERATIONS

The blended workforce model is attractive to enterprises and workers for myriad reasons, as it delivers benefits that are unavailable with the standard full-time employment model.

Some of the most important of these benefits include:

- **Scalability.** Labor demand is notoriously difficult to predict, as many variables (including fast-changing financial conditions) can lead to greater or reduced demand for products and services. Using on-demand workers gives companies the nimbleness to quickly adjust to changing conditions. If highly specialized skills are needed for a particular project, companies can bring in someone on a short-term basis without having to offer a traditional employment contract.
- **Cost Reductions.** The process of recruiting, hiring and onboarding employees — and the salary and benefits packages that come with these roles — requires deployment of significant resources, both in terms of time and money. Using contract, temporary or on-demand workers allows businesses to reduce or eliminate many of these expenses, lowering labor costs and creating a healthier bottom line.
- **Greater Flexibility.** Hiring the wrong person is a waste of time and money. Additionally, the process of fully vetting new hires is time-consuming. Moving to an on-demand model allows firms to avoid getting bogged down in these tasks. Instead, candidates are pre-vetted and can be moved in and out with maximum flexibility. This allows enterprises to complement their existing staff with vetted, on-demand workers who have the requisite skills to do the job at hand.
- **More Freedom and Independence.** Today's Gig Economy workers prize mobility and independence. The on-demand model allows them to work when they want, how they want and how much they want. They also have a dynamic entrepreneurial spirit that makes them well-suited for the complex challenges faced by modern workforces. Independent workers may also earn more than they would in a salaried position.
- **Job Satisfaction.** Those who work independently by choice rather than due to financial pressure (so-called “free agents”) report higher levels of satisfaction than do traditional full-time employees, according to a McKinsey study.

- **Macro-Economic Benefits.** Transitioning to a blended workforce model may have a positive impact on economies. On-demand platforms have made independent work much more accessible to the public, which may lower unemployment and raise productivity.

While these benefits are substantial, there are also some key considerations of which businesses and workers should be cognizant.

First, independent workers require tax classification changes, and these changes can vary widely across jurisdictions.

Second, for companies using a blended model, effective integration is vitally important. This means that smart management of on-demand or contingent workers should be an organizational priority, whether these workers are remote or on-premises. This should include everything from scheduling issues to clear work expectations and mandates. Independent workers should also be made to feel part of the team.

Finally, accurate compensation tracking may present a challenge, though many on-demand platforms automate this process, making it relatively painless.



THE BLENDED WORKFORCE AND THE TELECOM INDUSTRY

The shift toward independent work has impacted nearly every industry sector — and telecommunications is no exception. Blended or hybrid workforce models have become increasingly popular as operators seek to reduce the costs associated with deploying network infrastructures. Telecom companies are using blended models in order to gain the flexibility to quickly ramp up when projects are underway, then cut back once projects are complete.

The increasing prominence of small cell infrastructure — which needs to be completed at lower cost in order to be economically viable — is another factor responsible for greater dependence on blended workforces in telecom.

Businesses in this industry have historically struggled to keep up with surging consumer demand. Technological advances (such as the widespread introduction of 5G) are likely to exacerbate this state of affairs in the near-term future.

Blended workforces will have a critical role to play in helping telecom firms keep pace with rising consumer demand. Telecom companies have a service that people desperately want, yet they are too often struggling to deliver it in a timely fashion.

Engineers, on the other hand, have the ability to help deliver these services, but they are too often relegated to the sidelines, simply due to the inefficient nature of the labor market.

Today's telecom companies must also compete in an environment that is truly global and affected by complex and ever-changing technological requirements. The task of keeping an in-house staff sufficiently skilled (and sufficiently mobile) to meet these demands is difficult and resource-intensive.

Connecting these dots would help both telecom companies and engineers make more money — while keeping consumers satisfied. Fortunately, there's a straightforward solution to the problem of telecom demand outpacing the ability to deliver services: a digital, on-demand work platform that delivers workers with the right mix of skills anywhere and anytime.

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HOW FIELDENGINEER.COM HELPS TELECOM COMPANIES BENEFIT FROM A BLENDED WORKFORCE

Digital on-demand work platforms have played a key role in the emergence of the Gig Economy — just consider the omnipresence of Uber, Upwork and countless other such enterprises.

Yet the truth is that we're still in the earliest phase of this transformation. According to a McKinsey study, only about 15 percent of today's independent workers have earned money by using a digital-matching platform.

As these platforms scale and achieve network effects, we could see a profound reordering of the modern workforce: a new incarnation that is project-focused and hyper-efficient in terms of matching the skills of workers with the needs of businesses; and a workforce supported by digital marketplaces in which skilled labor is truly liquid, allowing firms to fill roles with great rapidity, finishing projects faster and under budget.

[FieldEngineer.com](https://www.fieldengineer.com) is one such platform, using an on-demand staffing model to serve the needs of telecom businesses by matching them with vetted and qualified technicians.

The platform serves as a true one-stop shop for systems support and telecom firms, as it offers on-demand, project-based hiring of talented engineers and technicians. Telecom service providers, value-added resellers and system integrators all use FieldEngineer.com as their preferred solution for professional staffing needs.

FieldEngineer.com uses an advanced A.I.-supported algorithm to match telecom businesses with the best independent engineers, project managers and technicians. Businesses simply post a job, review the candidates who apply and then assign work.

The platform features real-time engineer tracking, rapid A.I. candidate matching, API integration and is optimized for mobile. Businesses posting jobs can read talent reviews, evaluate bids and monitor jobs as they progress. All potential candidates are fully vetted via a background check, giving businesses the necessary peace of mind.

FieldEngineer.com has a pool of more than 40,000 qualified, on-demand engineers across 170 countries. The world's leading telecom businesses use the Field Engineer platform to support their blended workforce model, hiring qualified on-demand engineers as needed anywhere across the globe.

HOW TO USE THE FIELD ENGINEER PLATFORM

Now that this paper has outlined the basics of how FieldEngineer.com works, let's take a closer look at how companies can get started using the platform.

 The simple, step-by-step process for using Field Engineer Platform is as follows:

- **Create an account** at www.fieldengineer.com.
- Fund the account via credit card or PayPal (our secure network holds funds in escrow until money is spent or a refund is needed).
- **Post a Job.** These jobs may be part-time, full-time or temporary, and they can be located anywhere across the globe. During this process, businesses list all relevant job requirements and information (payment mode, job description, etc.).
- **Review Bids.** Once a job is posted, qualified engineers and technicians will submit bids on the order. Businesses can seamlessly navigate the evaluation process via FieldEngineer.com's intuitive and simple-to-use dashboard.
- **Choose Between Pricing Models.** Businesses can choose between fixed-price, per device or hourly payments. Businesses pay freelancers only after work is completed and approved.

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By using the Field Engineer platform, businesses typically save 30 percent over the cost of hiring full-time employees. Additionally, businesses can establish longer-term relationships with preferred freelancers on the Field Engineer platform, helping to stay under budget and on top of customer demand.

FIELD ENGINEER'S SYSTEMS AND PRINTER SUPPORT

In addition to the work outlined above, FieldEngineer.com specializes in enterprise-grade systems and printer support for companies such as HP, Dell, Brother and Xerox.

For devices such as printers, laptops, desktops, mobile devices and tablets, FieldEngineer.com offers the following:

- Proactive, daily monitoring of network-attached devices for toner and other alerts, ensuring performance continuity.
- Restocking or replenishment of consumable items.
- Training for team members to ensure competent use of equipment and features and assistance with device mapping.

FieldEngineer.com also offers peerless service and support to its clients and partners. Our service and support features and principles include:

- Hardware repair for all included (non-network) devices.
- Unceasing commitment to high-level customer service.
- Rigorous focus on customer needs and timely responses to all requests.
- Dedicated post-sales follow-up and service delivery support.
- Rapid response to service, sales and technical queries.

By combining a firm commitment to world-class customer service with our market-leading on-demand digital work solution, FieldEngineer.com helps businesses across the globe work faster and smarter for less.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The Gig Economy is booming. According to one estimate, 20 to 30 percent of U.S. or EU residents have engaged in some form of independent work. These figures are expected to grow significantly in future years.
- Modern organizations are gravitating to the blended workforce model.
- The benefits of the blended workforce model include: Scalability, flexibility, cost control and worker independence.
- Independent workers who pursue the work by choice rather than financial necessity report greater job satisfaction.
- On-demand digital worker platforms have made independent work more accessible to companies and workers.
- Telecom firms have historically struggled to meet consumer demand and keep up with changing skill requirements.
- The on-demand model provides telecom firms with the ability to quickly hire qualified workers to satisfy unmet demand and complete projects faster.
- The on-demand model allows telecom firms to mobilize engineers anywhere in the world with great rapidity, while also reducing the need to train or retrain existing staff members.
- FieldEngineer.com is the world's leading digital freelance marketplace for telecom professionals. It offers a true one-stop shop for systems support and telecom firms.
- Working with FieldEngineer.com can save businesses 30 percent on labor costs, while also helping ensure that consumer demand never outruns the supply of qualified workers.

CONCLUSION

As outlined, the priorities of today's organizations — and the emergence of on-demand digital marketplaces such as FieldEngineer.com — are having a profound impact on the composition of the modern workforce.

Modern businesses are improving services, lowering costs and increasing profitability by implementing a blended workforce model supported by on-demand platforms such as FieldEngineer.com.

Telecom firms that stay perched at the vanguard of these changes are ultimately best positioned for success — and FieldEngineer.com can play a key role in that process.

Please [visit our website](#) today for detailed information as to how FieldEngineer.com can help you leverage the competitive benefits of on-demand telecom hiring.





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