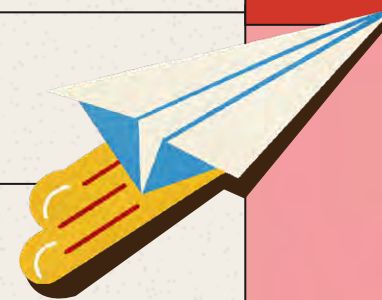
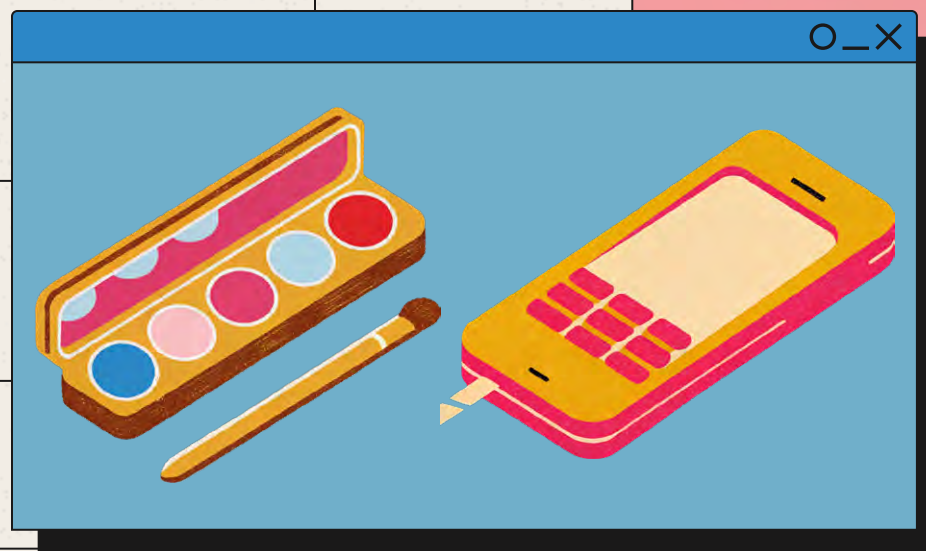
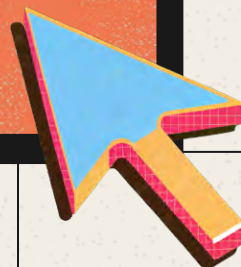
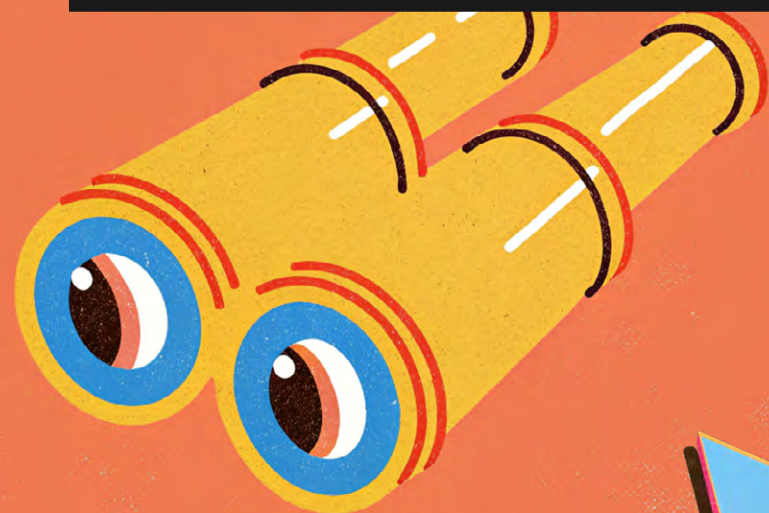


A Q U E N T

Freelance Hiring

The ultimate handbook to securing top freelance talent

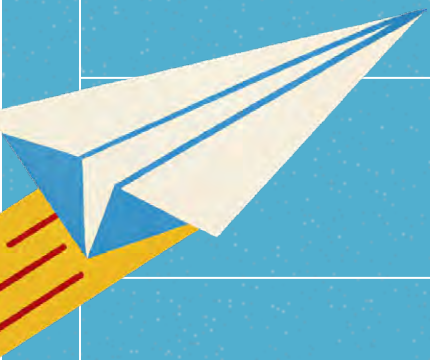
The Guide



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Understanding the World of Freelancers



In 2025, freelancing continues to attract a multitude of professionals in search of autonomy, flexibility and development opportunities. This section explores the profiles of today's freelancers, their aspirations and the reasons why they choose this path. We will also look at how these self-employed workers are adapting to changes in the market and how they organise their day-to-day professional lives, between working remotely and continuing training.

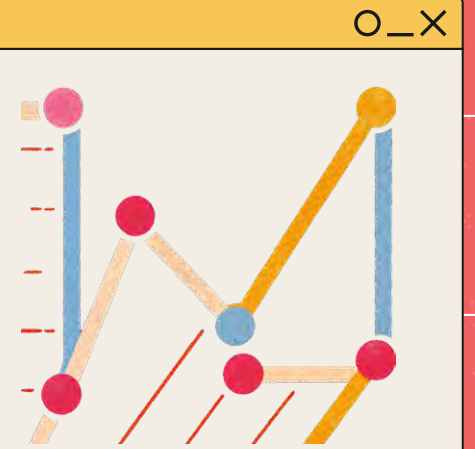
What does the UK freelance market look like?

The world of work is undergoing a profound transformation, with flexibility and innovation redefining professional practices. In a competitive market shaped by economic shifts and technological advancements, freelancers have become key players in the modern economy.

In 2025, the UK freelance workforce is expected to exceed 2 million, spanning various sectors including technology, marketing, and design. These professionals offer highly sought-after expertise, helping businesses remain agile and competitive. Drawn by the freedom to select projects that align with their values, freelancers contribute significantly to organisational success.

Aquent, with over 35 years' experience in connecting businesses with the right marketing, creative, and technology talent, provides a freelance recruitment service that meets the rising demand for specialist expertise, rapid response, and flexibility. We help businesses build agile, high-performing teams tailored to today's dynamic market needs.

This guide will walk you through optimising collaboration with freelancers, from defining your needs to selecting the right skillset. By following this step-by-step approach, you'll have the tools to establish a successful freelance strategy and ensure a seamless recruitment process.



Who is freelancing in 2025?

The freelance landscape in the UK is rapidly returning to its pre-pandemic state, with more professionals embracing independent work across a range of industries. Freelancers are shaping the future of work in new and exciting ways.

As businesses increasingly turn to freelance talent to access specialist skills and adapt to changing demands, understanding who these professionals are and what motivates them has never been more important. In the sections ahead, we'll explore the key characteristics of UK freelancers, their working habits, and the value they bring to the modern workforce.



General characteristics of UK freelancers

Age and experience

65%

The majority of UK freelancers are between 40 and 59 years old, bringing with them a wealth of industry experience. Around 65% have over five years of professional experience before going freelance.

Source

Sectors of activity

Freelancers in the UK are highly active in three key sectors:

30%

Tech & Development:
incl. Software engineers, data analysts, and AI specialists.

28%

Creative Industries:
incl. Graphic designers, UX/UI specialists, and video producers.

24%

Marketing & Comms.:
incl. SEO strategists, content creators, and digital marketing

The motivations behind freelancing

Freelancing attracts professionals for a variety of reasons. Here's why many choose this path:

1

Autonomy and Flexibility

Freelancers enjoy the ability to set their own schedules, work from locations that suit them, and select projects that align with their expertise and personal interests. This autonomy enables them to shape their careers on their own terms, allowing for a tailored work-life balance that traditional employment often lacks.



2

Work-Life Balance

With the freedom to choose their workload and working hours, freelancers can better integrate personal and professional responsibilities. Whether it's spending more time with family, pursuing personal interests, or simply having greater control over their day, the majority of UK freelancers report improved work-life balance compared to traditional employment.

3

Choice of Projects

Freelancers are not bound to a single employer, giving them the ability to handpick assignments that align with their skills, interests, and long-term career goals. This freedom not only enhances job satisfaction but also allows them to work with companies and brands they are passionate about.



4

Financial Independence

By setting their own rates and working on multiple projects, freelancers have greater control over their earning potential. Experienced professionals in high-demand industries can command higher rates, negotiate better contracts, and scale their income based on workload and expertise.

5

Creativity and Passion

Many freelancers choose independent work to follow their passions and focus on projects that inspire them. Without the constraints of a fixed job description, they can explore creative opportunities, experiment with new ideas, and work on projects that bring them personal and professional fulfilment.



6

Career Development

Freelancing provides continuous opportunities for skill development. Working on diverse projects across multiple industries exposes freelancers to new challenges, emerging trends, and cutting-edge technologies. Many also invest in further education, certifications, and networking to stay competitive.

7

Remote Working and Mobility

Technology has made remote work more accessible than ever, and freelancers are capitalising on this shift. Whether working from home, in co-working spaces, or while travelling, freelancers can maintain a flexible work environment that suits their lifestyle.



8

Networking and Collaboration

Freelancers actively build professional networks to secure new opportunities and collaborate with like-minded professionals. Through online platforms, industry events, and co-working communities, they expand their reach, gain referrals, and establish long-term client relationships that sustain their business.

Where and how do UK freelancers work in 2025?

63 %

**work remotely
(at home or abroad)**

For most, remote working is the obvious choice. Working from home (or overseas) allows them to take full advantage of their flexible status, reduce commuting time and create a tailor-made work environment conducive to productivity.

22 %

**work at client sites for
better integration**

This choice favors total immersion in projects. By working closely with their clients, these freelancers benefit from a better understanding of specific needs, which can enhance the quality of their contribution.

15 %

**use coworking spaces for
networking & collaboration**

These spaces offer a stimulating working environment and encourage professional interaction. Freelancers can thus take advantage of a collaborative environment, conducive to exchanging ideas and expanding their network.

Flexibility is one of the main assets of freelancing, and this is reflected in the way these professionals choose to work. Above is an overview of how freelancers are working in 2025. This diversity of working styles highlights the adaptability and creativity of freelancers, who make the most of the possibilities offered by their status.

The importance of lifelong learning

In an ever-changing professional environment, ongoing training is crucial for freelancers. To stay competitive and reinforce their value in the marketplace, freelancers invest in training, especially in sectors such as tech and design. This enables them to keep abreast of technological advances and meet new business expectations.

For those in Tech & Development, this might mean mastering AI integration or blockchain applications, as well as staying updated on programming languages and security advancements. Freelancers in the Creative industries are sharpening their skills in UX/UI design, motion graphics, and augmented reality, as businesses increasingly demand immersive and interactive content. Meanwhile, Marketing & Communications professionals are expanding their expertise in data-driven strategies, SEO evolution, and social media trends, ensuring their campaigns remain impactful in an algorithm-driven landscape.

This commitment to lifelong learning not only enhances their skill set but also strengthens their credibility and earning potential in an increasingly competitive gig economy.



Defining Your Needs: The Key to Successful Collaboration

Successful collaboration with a freelancer begins long before a contract is signed. It's crucial to define your expectations and needs precisely before you start looking for a freelancer. From the choice of key competencies to the harmonisation of soft skills, each stage must be carefully thought through to ensure an appropriate match. In this section, we explore the essential steps for structuring your project and recruiting the freelancer who will fit in with your team and add measurable value.



Step 1

Clarify project objectives

Before you start looking for a freelancer, clearly define the objectives of your project. Ask yourself these questions:

- What are the expected deliverables?
- What are the deadlines?
- What specific skills are needed to carry out this mission?
- What is their place in the team and who will manage the freelancer?

By specifying these elements in advance, you'll facilitate not only the recruitment process, but also the management of the freelancer once the assignment is underway.

Step 2

Identify skills you'll definitely need

Once you've set your objectives, it's time to precisely define the skills you'll need to successfully complete the project.

For example, rather than thinking "*I need a digital marketing specialist*", identify the specific skills that will really be useful to achieve your objectives. Ask yourself if you need someone with expertise in SEO to increase your site's visibility, in advertising campaign management (Google Ads, Meta Ads) to capture more leads, or in data analysis to better understand your customer journey and pain points. Rank skills according to priority: which are essential, and which are nice-to-haves?

A detailed skills analysis will enable you to find the ideal freelancer, capable of meeting your exact requirements.



Step 3

Don't neglect soft skills

Soft skills are essential for successful collaboration with freelancers. It's crucial to determine which profile fits in with your company's values and culture, and in particular with the team they'll be joining during their assignment.

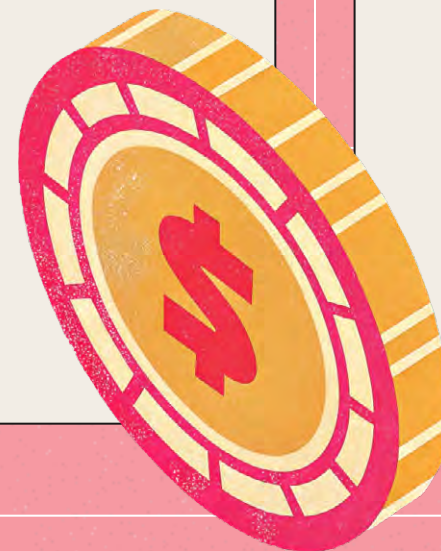
These interpersonal skills promote smooth integration, rapid onboarding and effective collaboration. By choosing a freelancer who shares your team's values and dynamics, you maximise the chances of productive, collaborative work.

Step 4

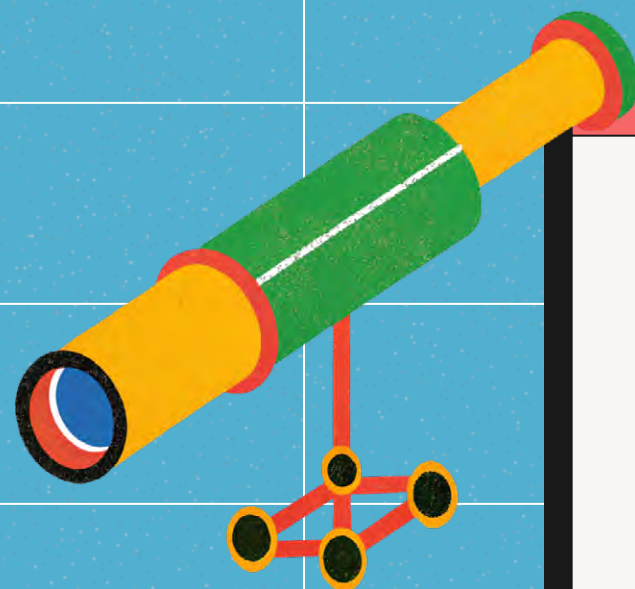
If needed, get a realistic budget signed off

Once the key skills and profile have been clarified, the next step is to secure financing for the recruitment. It's essential to demonstrate how this investment will generate a return for the company. If you're not the final decision maker, make sure to gather solid evidence on the potential ROI of this position to strengthen your case to management.

Once you've got the green light, it's time to start looking for the talent you need to compliment and energise your team!



Freelance Rate Card



These day rates are meant as a guide of what you might expect to pay a freelancer in the UK. Exact job description may affect these figures. The salary data is compiled based on roles that we have filled in these areas during the past 12 months.

For ease of reference, the day rate figures quoted here are inclusive of any Aquent fees.

O _ X			
Design and Creative		Project and Account Management	
Creative Director	£400 - £600	Digital Project Manager / Product Manager	£300 - £450
Art Director	£320 - £450	Print Project Manager	£300 - £400
Graphic / Digital Designer (Junior)	£220 - £300	Studio Manager	£300 - £400
Graphic / Digital Designer (Midweight)	£250 - £350	Traffic Manager	£300 - £400
Graphic / Digital Designer (Senior)	£300 - £420		
Packaging Designer	£250 - £350	Experience and Product Design	
Artworker	£230 - £350	UX Designer / Product Designer	£330 - £600
Retoucher	£250 - £350	UX Architect	£400 - £600
3D Visualiser	£350 - £450	UX Strategist / UX Lead	£450 - £650
Video Editor	£280 - £400	User Researcher	£400 - £600
Motion Graphics Designer (Midweight)	£300 - £450	Front End Developer	£350 - £500
Motion Graphics Designer (Senior)	£350 - £500	Mobile App Developer	£400 - £600

Content, Copy and Social	
Content Strategist	£325 - £400
Community Manager	£300 - £400
Social Media Manager	£300 - £400
Copywriter	£250 - £400
Copy Editor	£250 - £300

Marketing and Communications	
Digital Marketing Manager	£350 - £450
Insights Analyst	£350 - £500
Marketing Data Analyst	£350 - £450
Event Manager	£300 - £450
CRM Marketer	£320 - £450

Technology and Development	
Data Engineer	£500 - £550
Data Analyst	£350 - £500
Data Scientist	£350 - £500
Software Engineer	£400 - £500
Full Stack Engineer	£400 - £500
Java Developer	£350 - £450
Python Developer	£500 - £600
Tech Support Analyst	£350 - £400
Business Analyst	£300 - £400
BI Reporting Analyst	£300 - £400
Technical Program Manager	£500 - £600

Freelancers: A Strategic Asset for Companies



In a marketplace searching for innovation and flexibility, freelancers are positioned as strategic allies for businesses. More than just a back-up, they represent an agile response to the specific needs of organisations, whether it's providing cutting-edge expertise or handling peaks in project work. Find out why and how these individuals are redefining collaboration models, breathing new life into thousands of projects.

Why do companies use freelancers?

Freelancers are a dependable strategic option for companies. Here's why:

1. Immediate specialised expertise

With specialised skills that are often difficult to find in-house, freelancers can offer immediate expertise for specific assignments. This allows companies to adapt quickly to project needs without wasting time.

2. Flexibility and agility

By integrating freelancers into their teams, companies can easily adjust their workforce to meet fluctuations in demand. This agility is crucial in an ever-changing market.

3. Lower fixed costs

Working with freelancers means paying only for what you need. There are less of the costs associated with permanent employees, such as National Insurance or pension contributions. This makes for more efficient and targeted budget management, especially when it comes to project-specific needs.

4. New perspectives

Thanks to their varied experience, freelancers bring a fresh perspective and innovative solutions. They can challenge your methods and stimulate creativity within your team.

5. Time-saving and responsiveness

For urgent needs, using a freelancer is often the quickest solution. Their immediate availability means that projects can get underway without waiting, which is crucial in a dynamic environment.



Types of organisations capitalising on freelancers

Startups: Often looking for specific skills without the commitment of full-time employment. Freelancers allow startups to remain agile, scaling resources up or down as needed without the overhead costs of permanent hires.

SME: Ideal for managing projects without permanently increasing the payroll. Freelancers provide specialised expertise for short-term initiatives, helping SMEs compete with larger firms by accessing high-quality talent without the burden of long-term contracts.

Large companies: For temporary projects or strategic initiatives requiring specialised expertise. Freelancers bring niche skills to complex projects, ensuring large organisations can innovate and execute without disrupting existing teams or operations.

Marketing & Communication agencies: To complete their teams according to their customers' needs. Agencies turn to freelancers for fresh perspectives, access to niche skillsets, and the ability to meet fluctuating client demands without expanding their permanent workforce.

Non-profit organisations: To benefit from specialised skills without a large budget. Freelancers allow non-profits to access services—such as design, marketing, and strategy—on a flexible basis, ensuring cost-effective high-impact solutions.

Technology sector: For projects requiring precise technical knowledge, often rapidly evolving. Freelancers with expertise in software development, AI, and security help tech firms stay ahead of innovation cycles, allowing them to rapidly adapt to new trends and emerging technologies.

Knowing when to hire a freelancer: the right times

Knowing when to call in a freelancer can make all the difference. Here are the ideal situations to take advantage of their expertise:

Short-term or urgent projects

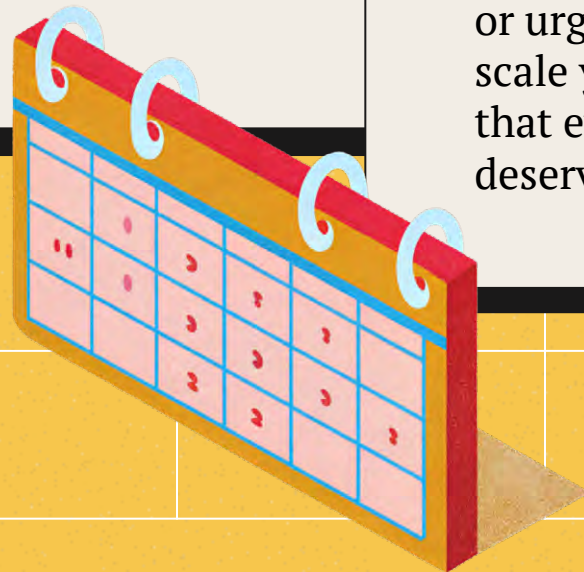
For assignments with a specific deadline, such as launching a marketing campaign or redesigning a website, a freelancer is often the ideal solution for guaranteeing quality and meeting deadlines.

Scaling up during peak periods

Faced with a temporary work overload or urgent needs, freelancers allow you to scale your resources quickly. This ensures that every project gets the attention it deserves, without sacrificing quality.

Specialist expertise unavailable in-house

When you need very specific skills that don't justify hiring a full-time employee, freelancers are there to provide the necessary expertise without any long-term commitment.



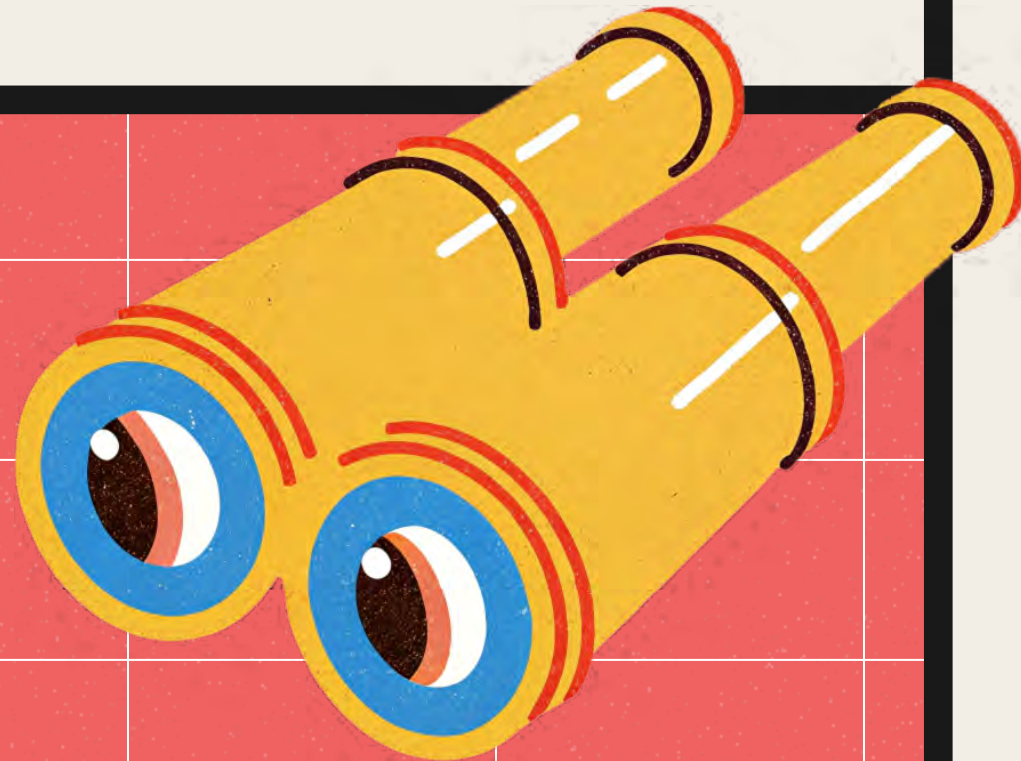
Why Choose Aquent? Your Partner of Choice



Freelancers are strategic assets for companies looking for expertise and flexibility. With our network of specialised talent and substantial experience, Aquent makes it easy to connect you with the right profiles, while taking care of all the administration. Read out how Aquent can become your partner of choice for successful freelance assignments.

Aquent's expertise at your service

Whether you're looking for a freelancer for the first time or on a regular basis, finding the ideal profile can be a complex process. As your trusted partner, Aquent simplifies the process with our network of qualified talent and over 35 years' experience in matchmaking.



The Aquent Advantage

Client Satisfaction: Aquent has been ranked in the Best of Staffing for 13 years running and won ClearlyRated's 2025 Diamond Award.

Specialised Consultants: Our experts, with backgrounds in marketing, technology and design, provide a concrete understanding of your needs.

Countless Successes: We secure hundreds of freelance contracts globally every year.

In-Depth Industry Knowledge: We keep on top of market trends and needs, guaranteeing quality solutions in line with your business' needs.

How does working with Aquent work?

The simplified process for hiring a freelancer.



Business Knowledge

For all your needs, you'll be accompanied from brief to completion by one of our talent agents, and you'll benefit from their knowledge of the tech, marketing and creative professions to identify the right freelancer.



A Long Term Partner

We're committed to understanding your business objectives, as well as the challenges the particular role poses for any given project. As your long-term partner, we are committed to helping you achieve your business goals.



A Bespoke Selection

Adapted to your needs, our selection processes, based on know-how and interpersonal skills, enable us to put you in touch with the talent who meet your particular criteria and who will fit into your team.



A Selective Network

We meet and select all our freelancers to present you with the best talent, equipped with the skills and mindset needed to complete your projects on time and on budget.



Flexible Working Conditions

Our freelancers adapt to your needs and are able to work to your specific requirements: whether part-time, full-time, for short assignments or over several months, remote or on-site. We tailor our recommendations to your needs.



Reactivity

We put together a selection of freelancers available at short notice, so you can respond quickly to fluctuations in workload or urgent needs.



Benefit from an expert eye

Freelancers often bring a fresh perspective and innovative ideas as they work with different companies and industries. This can stimulate creativity and innovation within your company.



Free yourself from administrative tasks

From negotiating rates to sending quotes and invoices, and including administrative management with the various freelance affiliation funds, we take care of everything.

Prompt payment: Aquent ensures freelancers are paid on a weekly basis so that work can continue without a hitch.

Our tips for a successful freelance collaboration

Identify a pool of freelancers ahead of time: Don't wait until a project gets the green-light to start your search. Be prepared by looking for creative freelancers who are a potential match for your organisation and clients ahead of time and keep their details to hand ready for when you need them.

Create a solid reporting structure: Your freelancers should know how to contact you and you should set clear reporting guidelines and expectations for how they should complete work. If you allow freelancers to work from home or outside the office, you'll want to first talk about any potential issues that could come up.

Set strong definitions for the scope of the project: Brief freelancers on projects just as you would your in-house staff. It's important to define the project clearly and explain the scope of work. Answer initial questions and discuss any loose ends before work begins.

Check in regularly: Set specific times for check-ins and updates, but if something isn't going the way you expected then reach out immediately. Nothing is more frustrating for your freelancers than having to redo work because they were unclear about your expectations.

Make them part of the team: Your freelancers should always feel welcome and part of the team, even if their roles are temporary. That means making them feel like they're more than just contractors. Invite them to meetings on their projects and make sure to introduce them to their coworkers like you would any new hire.



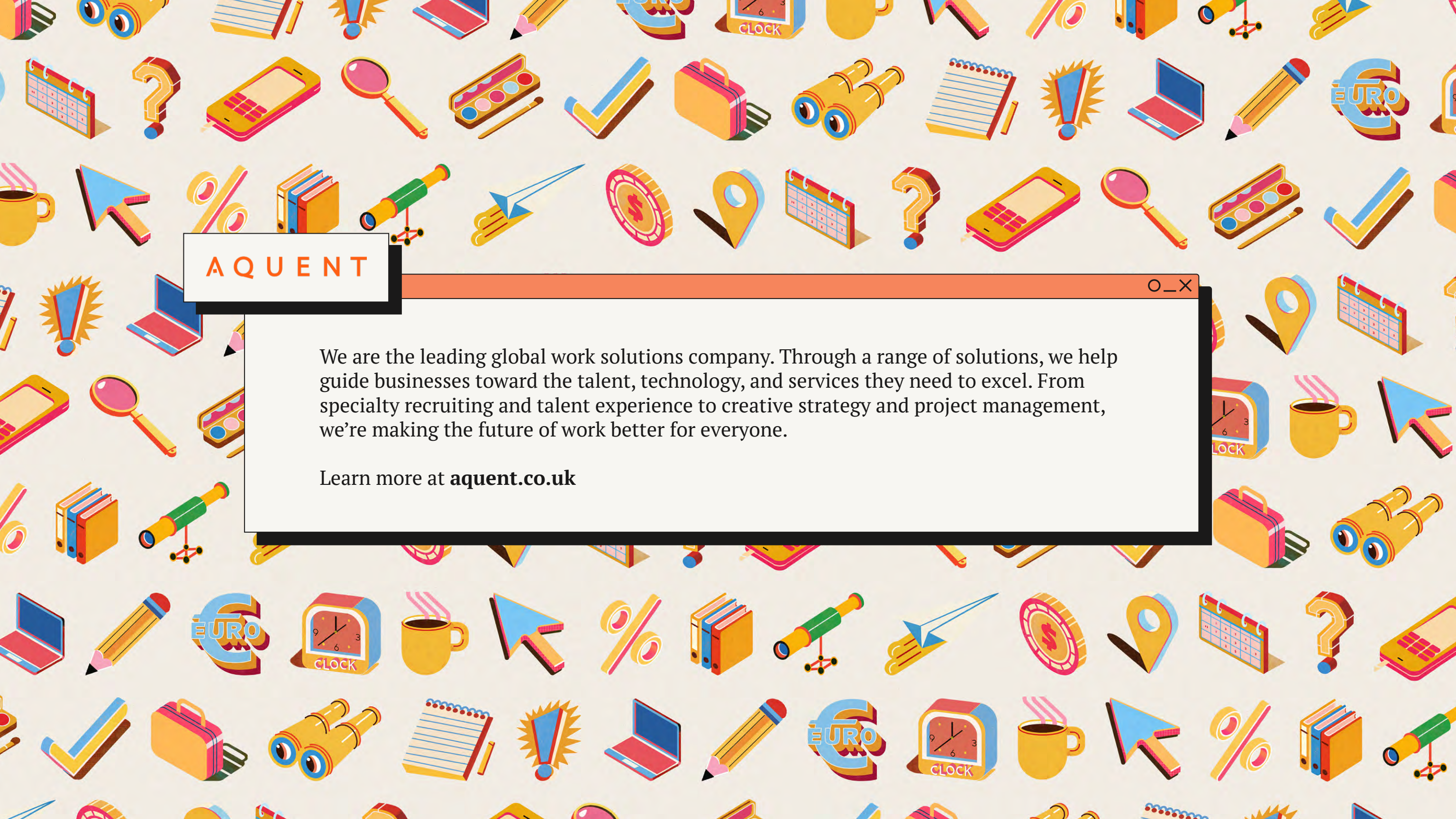
Conclusion



Using freelancers is not only a response to the current transformation of the labor market, but also a winning strategy for companies wishing to remain flexible, tap into specialised skills, and keep costs under control.

Beyond flexibility and expertise, freelancers bring innovation, fresh perspectives, and the ability to quickly adapt to changing market demands. Whether it's integrating new technologies, launching creative campaigns, or scaling operations efficiently, freelancers offer businesses the agility needed to thrive in today's dynamic landscape.

With the dominance of remote work and digital collaboration tools, finding and managing experienced freelancers has never been easier. Aquent is committed to helping businesses connect with exceptional freelance talent, ensuring the right skills are in place for every project. To find out more about how Aquent can support your freelance recruitment, get in touch!



A Q U E N T

We are the leading global work solutions company. Through a range of solutions, we help guide businesses toward the talent, technology, and services they need to excel. From specialty recruiting and talent experience to creative strategy and project management, we're making the future of work better for everyone.

Learn more at aquent.co.uk