

6 Questions to Ask a Prospective Contingent Worker



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Screening questions for your contingent workforce

It is projected that in 2027, freelancers will make up 50.9 percent of total U.S. workers. The steady growth of the freelance workforce, especially on the heels of the pandemic, is transforming how enterprises engage and deploy talent.

Talent pools and contingent workers are a significant part of the future of work. Business leaders evaluating potential contractors need to adapt traditional methods of screening permanent employees to focus on and capture the information they need to evaluate shorter-term and project-based workers.

We spoke with professionals in various roles and industries to uncover the most effective questions to ask when evaluating a contractor for a project or assignment.



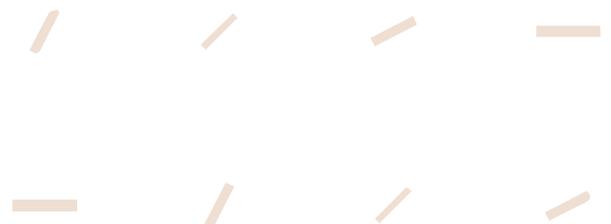
1 What project are you most proud of?

The answer to this question can provide insights into the individual's core motivations.

Things to listen for: Originality, initiative and conviction. Does their answer show confidence in their ability to provide a professional end result and meet your businesses needs? You may also want to know if they share your organization's values and can support your mission.

Follow up question: "What does your dream project look like?" Justin Moodley of LASANAN found that "People enjoy working on projects that align with their skills and passion, so understanding the dream scenario for a freelancer allows our internal resources a chance to better understand an ideal path towards collaboration." He also says this question gives you insights into the person's experience, personality, and preferences, and helps develop a well-rounded view of them.

To uncover the most effective questions to ask when interviewing a contractor, we spoke with professionals in various roles and industries. Following are their 6 questions that best help evaluate contingent workers you are looking to engage in your workforce.



2 What is your true availability?

Many contingent workers end up biting off more than they can chew. This doesn't mean they aren't the right fit for your business, but it can impact deadlines. Clearly communicating how much time you expect them to devote to your project can help them adequately assess whether they have the bandwidth to support your needs.

Things to listen for: How aware is your prospective contingent worker of their current workload and how much they can handle?

Follow up question: "Are you currently working on other projects?"

Sometimes you have a surge in demand and your go-to resources aren't available. This is when a pre-vetted "labor cloud" can come in handy. It can be a talent pool of workers that already meet your requirements within your typical geography, or it can be expanded to reach similar skill sets in other geographies.



3 What is your preferred method of communication?

The way a contingent worker communicates gives clues to their work style. Some work better through e-mail and chat communications, where others prefer voice communications. This can help in determine if they are the right fit for your assignment.

Things to listen for: Is their communication preference in-line with how your team or business operates and will it be effective for remote work? Does their communication style indicate accountability, tenacity, followup, and collaboration, all of which are critical to in a contingent worker-client relationship.

Follow-up question: "How do you organize your tasks to ensure you are meeting all of your timelines and what tools are you using?" If the individual already uses a collaboration tool, like Slack or Smartsheet, you may be able to more easily manage their time and projects by using the same tool, or available reports.

Mobile workers on WorkMarket can collaborate in real-time with their clients to ask questions, send documents, and check-in and check-out to help track time spent on their assignments.

4 How does this assignment fit into your overall goals?

Angela Delmedico of Elev8 Consulting Group, recommends asking a potential contractor about their career goals. Angela has found that some of her best engagements were “humble” about their backgrounds, and some of her worst were ones who “talked the talk” but didn’t walk the walk.

Things to listen for: Job Search Strategist and Professional Coach, Melissa McClung of Life by Design Careers, recommends that you look for purpose and a plan for developing additional skills, some of which may be met by taking on your project. If they can connect this role to their personal vision for their growth, it’s a win-win.

Follow-up question: “What is a professional skill or behavior you want to improve next year and what is your plan to do it?” This is a great question to help highlight problem-solving ability. But McClung cautions about the traditional wisdom of turning a weakness into a strength – so, don’t be afraid to prompt them to go deeper into their plans.

Worker profiles in WorkMarket help identify good fits for a particular assignment. You can set up “labor clouds” to require certain skills or credentials, include custom questions or have them take a quiz.

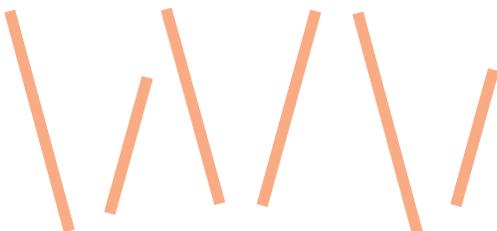
5 How would your last client rate you?

It can be insightful to hear how a potential contractor felt things went with the project before verifying with the reference provided.

Things to listen for: McClung warns that individuals may be uncomfortable answering this question, so be prepared. Those who are prepared will refer to the wins they had with their client. The best answers will include stories and examples. Beware of people who give no details about previous working relationships.

Follow-up question: “How do you deal with unhappy clients?” This question is perfect for finding out how a contractor handles uncomfortable situations or confrontations. Answers that turn the question around into complaints of particular clients and the way they wanted the work done can be telling.

You can view worker ratings in real-time with WorkMarket’s freelance management system.



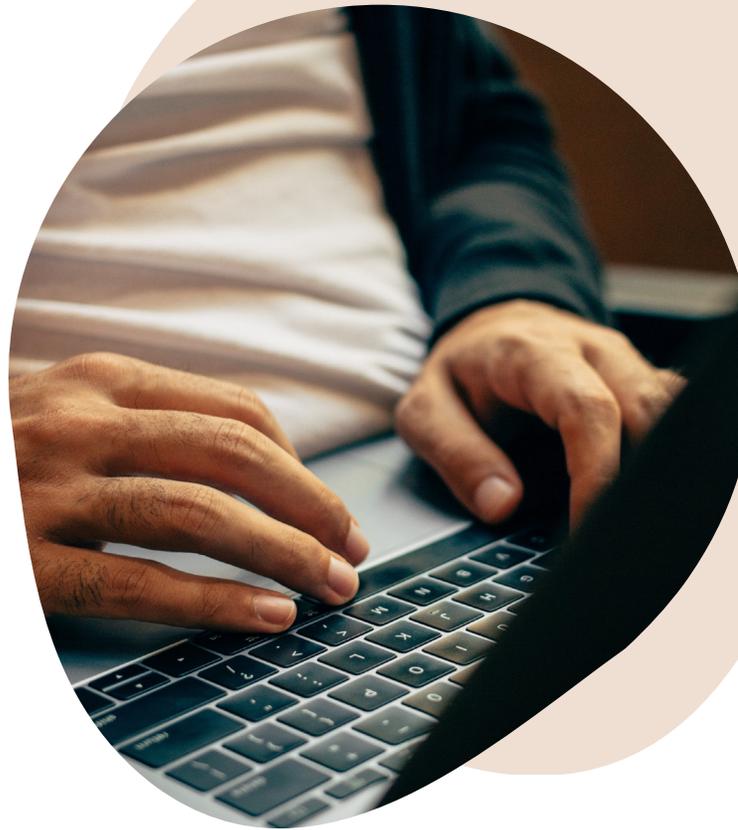
6 What technology are you familiar with?

For time-sensitive projects, it might not be in your team's best interest to have to train someone on the tools you use. The best fit might be a contingent worker who is familiar with your current tech stack.

Things to listen for: Is the person competent in or familiar with tech that is key to your industry, like Marketing Automation Software, SCRUM, Slack, etc.?

Follow-up question: "On a scale of 1-5, how familiar are you with [tech] to achieve [business goal]?"

Not only can you set up labor clouds to require certain skills or credentials, but you can also set up measurements or self-ratings. For example, if you need someone with Adobe Photoshop expertise, you can set up a custom test to assess their competence. Or, if you want a Cisco CCIE engineer or a Microsoft MCSE, you can ask them to upload a certificate for verification.



Future of Work

SmallBizGenius recently reported on the most compelling statistics in the rapidly growing gig economy. In it, they cited a Gallup poll that showed "more than a third of all U.S. workers – around 57 million people in total – are now employed as independent workers."

Accenture boldly predicted that by 2021, a Fortune 2000 company will exist with no full-time workers outside of the C-suite. It's not a matter of if, but when, you will engage contingent workers for your business. And when you do, you will need to be prepared for a new way of engaging talent and managing your extended workforce. Ideally, you want a tool that finance, procurement, team leaders, and HR can all leverage. We invite you to dig deeper into the benefits of labor clouds and the automation afforded by freelance management systems.



Learn more in this guide:
Freelance Management Systems 101

About WorkMarket, An ADP company

WorkMarket was founded in 2010 and in 2018, was acquired by ADP, a global provider of HR technology and services. With ADP resources, WorkMarket continues to be focused on providing enterprise technology to help companies unlock the power of their extended workforce. **Visit www.workmarket.com to learn more.**