



## 90% of organisations are failing to get the most from independent talent, new report finds

- Just 1 in 10 companies is truly mature in its use of freelance talent
- Mature organisations report nearly double the ROI of their peers (62% vs 36%)
- 47% of companies take more than 15 days to source a freelancer, by which point the best talent has moved on

**London, 3 March 2026** - A landmark new report from [Malt](#), Europe's leading freelance management platform, reveals that just one in ten companies effectively integrates freelance talent at a strategic level, despite freelancers becoming an increasingly critical part of how organisations access skills, manage workloads and drive innovation.

The [Malt Freelance Maturity Report](#), is based on an exclusive survey of 140 international businesses across HR and procurement conducted by Staffing Industry Analysts (SIA). For the first time, it benchmarks how strategically organisations integrate their freelance workforce by segmenting companies into three groups: Trailblazers (11%), who lead across all measures; Navigators (56%), who show mixed performance; and Explorers (33%), who lag significantly behind.

The report highlights the consequences of falling behind. While 70% of the most mature organisations say freelancing gives them a genuine competitive advantage, mature organisations report nearly double the return on investment (ROI) of their less mature peers - 62% versus 36%. Yet despite this clear evidence, the majority of companies remain poorly equipped to capitalise on the opportunity in front of them.

Speed is among the most immediate problems. With skills shortage still prevalent across the globe, 47% of all companies take more than 15 days to source freelance talent - long enough for the best independent professionals, who have their pick of clients, to have committed elsewhere.

Mature organisations are three times more likely to track key freelance engagement metrics. Yet the overall approach remains surface-level, with only 12% of companies measuring freelance performance using structured indicators to set objectives and refine their strategy.

Vincent Huguet, CEO and co-founder of Malt, said: *"This data black hole directly fuels the perception of low ROI among less mature companies. The value is clearly there, but they lack the means to see it. Meanwhile, 84% of organisations lack centralised tools to re-engage freelancers who have already delivered strong results, squandering one of the most obvious sources of competitive advantage available to them."*

Among the most mature organisations, 91% have joint or centralised leadership across HR and procurement, compared to just 27% of less mature companies. Some 74% of mature programmes have a dedicated compliance process in place from the outset, compared with just 21% of less mature counterparts. The three primary reasons organisations use freelancers, such as access specialised skills (88%), scale for workload peaks (68%) and cover workforce gaps (54%), are consistent regardless of maturity level. The difference is simply whether companies have built the infrastructure to act on those needs effectively.

*"The companies pulling ahead are the ones that treat freelancers as a core part of their workforce strategy and invest in engaging them from day one. With a fully built freelancer program, they can scale teams on demand, tap into highly specialized expertise fast, and build a more agile, resilient workforce."* concluded Huguet.

For organisations wanting to assess their freelance maturity, they can use Malt's easy online assessment tool [here](#).

### About the report

The Malt Freelance Maturity Report was conducted by Staffing Industry Analysts (SIA) on behalf of Malt, surveying 140 international businesses, primarily European and North American, across HR and procurement functions. Malt defines freelance maturity as an organisation's strategic integration of its freelance workforce, moving beyond tactical fixes to a centralised pillar that accelerates growth, de-risks operations and future-proofs talent pipelines. This maturity secures a significant competitive edge and transforms an organisation's ability to swiftly access specialised talent, drive innovation and optimise resource allocation. You can access the full report [here](#).

### About Malt

Malt is Europe's leading freelance management platform, co-founded in 2013 by Vincent Huguet (CEO). Over 90,000 companies of all sizes source, contract and manage external talents from Malt's community of more than 900,000 highly qualified independent experts across every field - from tech & data to marketing and communication, to management consulting. Finding the right freelancer takes just seconds with Malt AI Search, contracting and payment are seamless, with built-in reporting and compliance, making Malt an end-to-end solution for freelance management. Operating across 9 countries in Europe and the Middle East, Malt achieved a business volume of over €1 billion in 2025.

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