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# How Businesses Can Find And Hire The Best Freelancers

By **Expert Panel**®, Forbes Councils Member.  
for **Forbes Business Council**, **COUNCIL POST** | Membership (fee-based)

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Freelance workers can enable businesses to tap into different skills and keep up in a fast-paced, competitive marketplace—if they’re chosen wisely. But when a business is looking to bring on

contract workers, pinpointing quality candidates in a crowded global talent pool can be a challenge.

Without established and thorough vetting processes, it can be difficult to find a freelancer who will be a good fit for a given role and perform their duties well. To help hiring managers ensure they are bringing on the right candidates, 20 [Forbes Business Council](#) members offer their advice on how to accurately identify high-quality freelancers in a crowded global talent pool.

## 1. Do Your Due Diligence

The best way to identify high-quality freelancers in a crowded global pool is to do your research. Make sure to check their tagged work on social media, as it's much harder to fake. Ask nontraditional questions to see if a candidate is a problem-solver or a systems player. Post what you are searching for on your social media channels and pay to solicit submissions. If a person freelances and takes themselves seriously, their work will be public. - [Steve Murray, SMCA Creative](#)

## 2. Narrow Your Search By Industry

The best freelancers do not just have skills—they bring domain knowledge. When you hire someone who understands your product or market, you can accelerate the ramp-up and reach informed, high-impact results sooner. In business, focus always wins, and the same goes for hiring. - [Ahva Sadeghi, Symba](#)

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## 3. Have A Discussion

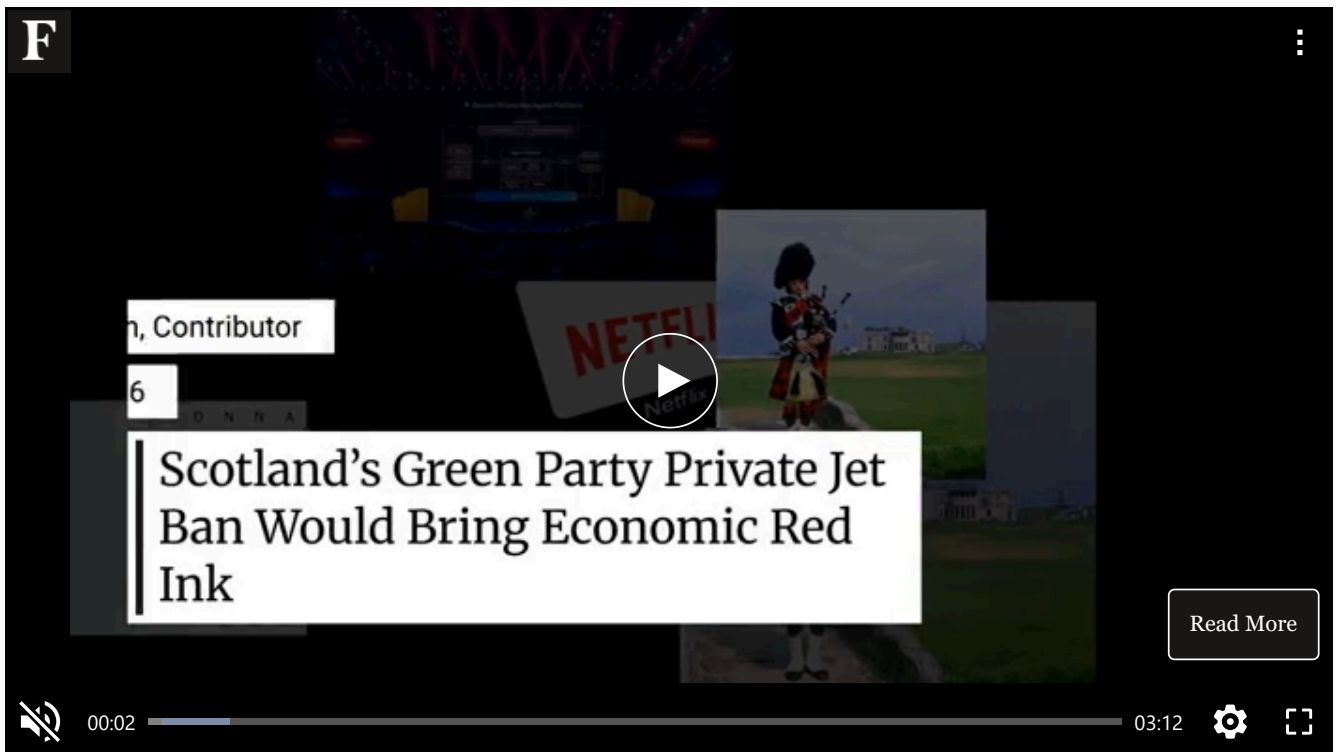
Always have a discussion. So many freelancers are there to nab the easy-to-get jobs, but a select few take their careers seriously, and the good ones will be happy to accept a discussion. You can learn a lot about how they approach work, their values and their level of professionalism. You also get a better sense of the type of person you're working with, which is vital for communication. - [Asad Kausar, Dabaran Inc.](#)

## 4. Seek Cultural And Strategic Alignment

In today's global talent pool, technical expertise is often easy to find, but true value comes from cultural and strategic alignment. Beyond reviewing portfolios or résumés, create a small, paid test project that mirrors the type of work they'd be doing for your business. This reveals not only their skill level, but also their communication style, reliability and ability to adapt to your brand's values. - [Magda Paslaru, THE RAINBOWIDEA](#)

## 5. Have Employees Recruit Talent

I learned that “like attracts like.” My MVP employees do the recruiting for me. They know the culture, the bar for quality and the type of people who thrive here. When they bring in talent, I reward them. It makes finding high-quality freelancers easier, faster and way more reliable than sifting through endless résumés. - [Lindsay O'Neill, Wellness Eternal](#)



## 6. Ask Open-Ended Questions

Over the years, I have refined my hiring practices—specifically, the questions I ask in interviews. I lead with open-ended questions that allow me to really get to know the freelancer’s mind and how they approach all types of work. I also ask questions about working style and availability to ensure they are a good fit for my team. - [Emily Reynolds, R Public Relations](#)

## 7. Ensure They Demonstrate Discipline

High-quality freelancers demonstrate discipline from the outset. I assess how they communicate expectations, document their process and follow through on commitments. In compliance and governance work, these markers of integrity and reliability matter more than polished portfolios. - [Tiffany Archer, Eunomia Risk Advisory, Inc.](#)

## 8. Focus On Consistency And Communication

You need to look beyond flashy portfolios and focus on consistency and communication. My top tip is to give candidates a paid test project. How they handle deadlines, feedback and detail will tell you more about their reliability and fit than any résumé or reviews ever could. - [Miriam Groom, Mindful Career](#)

## 9. Present Real-World Problems

Anyone can showcase polished work samples, but the real test is throwing candidates a small, messy, real-world problem and seeing how they untangle it. Pay them to do a trial assignment that forces critical thinking. Don't assign a generic "design me a logo" project, but something with incomplete information or a tight deadline. High-quality freelancer candidates will ask sharp questions, challenge assumptions and show initiative. - [Lissele Pratt, Capitalixe](#)

## 10. Look For Curiosity

The best freelancers I've worked with weren't the ones who looked perfect on paper, but the ones who asked me sharp, thoughtful questions. Curiosity signals ownership. If they're already thinking two steps ahead in the interview, I can trust they'll do the same on the project. - [Samuel Darwin, Sparkle](#)

## 11. Review Proof Of Outcomes

As a founder, I've learned that the best way to identify high-quality freelancers isn't just by looking at résumés. Review proof of outcomes, such as case studies, shipped projects and measurable results. A practical tip is to start with a small test project, which quickly reveals not just technical skill, but also communication skills and reliability. - [Dr. Stevens Bonhomme, D.B.A, M.A, Feedcoyote](#)

## 12. Assign Small, Paid Test Projects

Run a small, paid test project before committing. In a crowded talent pool, profiles often look alike, but real value shows in how a freelancer approaches actual work. A short, well-defined assignment reveals communication, reliability, creativity and problem-solving skills far better than résumés or ratings. This strategy will ensure you choose someone who truly fits your needs. - [Dr. Minnie Bodhanwala, Wadia Group of Hospitals](#)

## 13. Ask Your Personal Network

There are platforms with the option to check the qualifications of freelancers. This includes their ratings, reviews and portfolios, as well as the possibility of test tasks and interviews. But I think that recommendations from your personal network are still the best way to get what you want. - [Anton Alikov, Arctic Ventures](#)

## 14. Have Candidates Outline Their Problem-Solving Approach

Set up a call with the freelancer and ask them to outline their approach, timeline and costs for solving your issue. If they lack prior experience, they should explain their research process or provide a clear action plan. A skilled freelancer will ask the right questions to refine the solution. - [Alex Osmichenko, IT Monks](#)

## 15. Look Beyond Profiles Or Test Projects

Having built and scaled businesses with domestic and offshore freelance teams, I've seen that skill is easy to find, but consistency is not. My advice is not to rely solely on profiles or test projects. The best freelancers I've worked with came through trusted networks and were vouched for before we'd spoken. The shortcut is to work with vetted talent where quality and dependability are already clear. - [Kevin Chern, Sanguine Strategic Advisors](#)

## 16. Examine Their Real-Life Troubleshooting Skills

The best method of identifying top freelancers is to examine their troubleshooting skills in real life. Have them troubleshoot a business problem that looks like what they would be doing. The processes they followed to solve the business problem will show their creativity, strategic thinking skills and ability to provide consistent value in vibrant work situations. - [Gianluca Ferruggia, DesignRush](#)

## 17. Assess Their Emotional Problem-Solving Abilities

Look for freelancers who ask about your emotional goals. The best freelancers don't just ask, "What's the deliverable?" Instead, they ask, "What outcome are you hoping to feel when this is done?" High-quality talent understands that great work solves emotional problems, not just technical ones. This question separates strategic thinkers from task-completers every time. - [Archer Chiang, Giftpack](#)

## 18. Examine Their Thinking Under Pressure

The best freelancers are not defined by résumés or platforms but by how they think under pressure. I look for people who challenge assumptions, bring original solutions and communicate with clarity. A test project is useful, but what separates the best candidates is their ability to think like owners. That mindset turns a freelancer into a partner you can trust with the future. - [Reid Rasner, Omnivest Financial](#)

## 19. Avoid Overlooking Consistency And Reliability

The best freelancers show you who they are before you ever sign a contract. I've learned that how they respond, how reliable they are and how clear they communicate early on often tells you more than a polished portfolio. Raw talent without consistency and reliability won't get your projects across the finish line. - [Scott Paddock, Wondr Health](#)

## 20. Leverage Talent Recruiting Agencies

Finding great freelancers is a job in itself. Focus on your core business, not endless sourcing. Time is scarce, so I use platforms that pre-vet potential candidates. For example, I use Sagan Passport for embedded operators and Toptal for high-end experts, choosing by need. If it's not a fit, act fast and give precise feedback so the agency can sharpen its processes. - [Manuel Moreno, Alta Homes](#)



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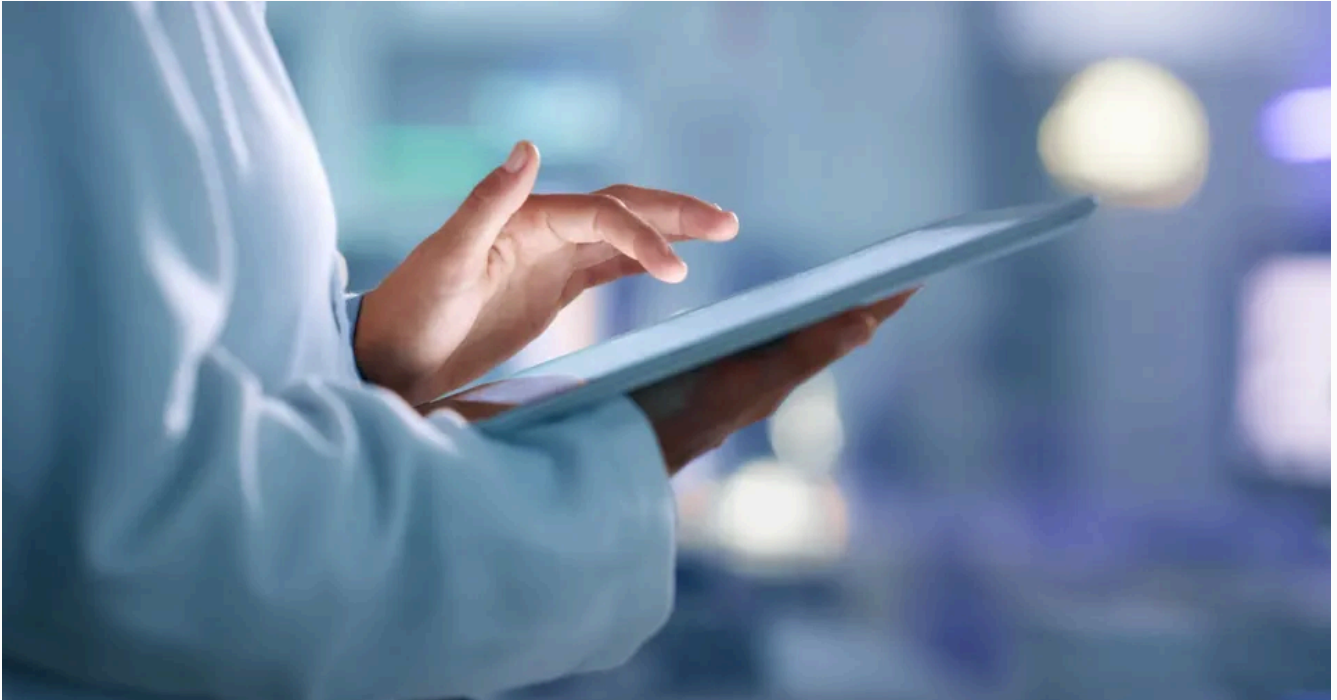
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### Summary

Life sciences organizations should modernize managed services now, focusing on operational readiness, outcome-based models, and defect elimination, rather than waiting for full AI readiness. This proactive approach builds a stable, governed...

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Artificial intelligence is redefining the future of managed services across life sciences. Organizations recognize its potential to improve resilience, efficiency, and insight across increasingly complex application landscapes. However, many are still navigating regulatory constraints, data readiness, and operating model limitations that make immediate, large-scale AI adoption impractical.

Organizations should not delay progress while waiting for “full AI readiness.” Instead, they should take deliberate steps to modernize managed services now—steps that deliver measurable performance improvement today while creating the conditions for AI to scale effectively tomorrow.

### **Start with operational readiness, not AI pilots**

AI delivers value only when it is deployed on a stable, well-governed operational foundation. For life sciences organizations, this foundation must account for regulated environments, data sensitivity, and strict auditability requirements.

Organizations that are uncertain about AI adoption should first:

- Align the managed services operating model to support outcome ownership rather than task execution.
- Embed security, compliance, and risk controls directly into service design, rather than treating them as downstream approvals.
- Establish an IT service management approach that prioritizes stability, prevention, and learning over activity volume.
- Ensure that operational and business data is accurate, governed, and accessible.

Talent and culture are equally critical. AI-enabled application management services require new ways of working—greater process ownership, deeper collaboration between business and IT, and a shift from manual execution to intelligent orchestration. Organizations should plan explicitly for these changes rather than assuming technology alone will drive adoption.

A core enabler is a structured, AI-interpretable knowledge base. This should capture application behaviors, known issues, resolution paths, and system dependencies across the service landscape. Without this foundation, AI will amplify inconsistency rather than improve performance.

### **Shift intent from incident resolution to defect elimination**

In many managed services environments, performance is still measured by incident volume and speed of resolution. These metrics, often reinforced through contractual structures, unintentionally reward activity rather than improvement.

Organizations should reset this model. The objective of managed services should be to prevent incidents—not to process them more efficiently.

This requires a disciplined approach to proactive problem management. Recurring incidents should trigger root-cause analysis and engineering remediation, not repeated ticket resolution. For example, when recurring service disruptions are driven by poor data quality or fragile integrations, the priority should be to fix those defects at the source. Over time, this approach reduces operational noise, improves service stability, and lowers cost.

Data quality and integration discipline are particularly critical in life sciences. Addressing validation gaps, standardization issues, and integration failures can significantly reduce incident volumes and downstream disruption. Organizations should ensure incentives exist—both internally and with service providers—to invest in these improvements.

### **Redefine success in application management services**

Organizations do not need to wait for AI adoption to modernize how they define success in AMS. They should act now to move from reactive, service level agreement-driven delivery models to outcome-oriented managed services.

Leading organizations are:

- Shifting KPIs from narrow operational metrics to outcomes such as service reliability, user experience, incident prevention, and business impact.
- Distinguishing isolated user issues from systemic defects and ensuring recurring defects trigger permanent fixes.
- Rebalancing teams to combine deep business process ownership with focused engineering capability.
- Moving from reactive operations toward predictive and preventative service models.

In regulated environments, these changes must be implemented with strong governance. AI-enabled and automated operations must enhance auditability, traceability, and control—not compromise them. Human oversight, validation rigor, and compliance discipline remain essential.

As a result, organizations should work with managed service providers that bring both advanced automation and AI capabilities and deep life sciences sector experience.

### **Build momentum now—enable AI at scale later**

When inefficiencies are removed and incentives are aligned with outcomes, technology becomes a force multiplier. Proactive problem management, automation, and operating model redesign can deliver immediate value while simplifying the environment AI will eventually operate within.

For organizations that are uncertain about AI readiness, the path forward is clear:

- Improve managed services performance today through better intent, governance, and measurement.
- Reduce complexity and operational noise.
- Establish outcome-based KPIs that make value visible and measurable.
- Create a stable foundation for scalable AI adoption.

AI will play a defining role in next-generation managed services. And in life sciences, value is realized fastest when organizations first modernize how services are designed, measured, and operated. Those that act now will be best positioned to scale AI with confidence and control.

*Ryan Osborne, Managing Director, Deloitte Consulting LLP, also contributed to this article*

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