



The power of blended teams

Why insourcing a skill uplift is better than outsourcing your problem

In the fast-paced and constantly evolving world of business, having a workforce that is flexible, adaptable and can access the right skills on demand is worth its weight in gold. The open talent economy has become an invaluable resource for helping companies achieve this – enabling them to tap into a global network of professionals, fill skills gaps and streamline project management. What many organizations misjudge, however, is that on-demand talent is there to enhance your existing workforce through skill uplift, not replace it. The most fruitful and cost-effective way to use the open talent economy is to fully integrate independent professionals into your existing workforce, creating a powerful blended team made up of the best skills.

Identifying and filling skills gaps for optimum efficiency

When you have a big project management task on the horizon, for which your internal team does not have the full capacity or capabilities, it can be tempting to hire an entire consulting team to fully outsource the problem and present you with a final solution. This is the approach that many traditional consulting firms take: shipping in a full team of consultants and duplicating many of the existing skills that the workforce already possesses. This is not only inefficient, it's inflexible – costing unnecessary amounts and removing the core people who best understand the company.

By taking a flexible approach and blending your teams, you can save your company time, money and stress. There is not always the need to hire an entire team, when you can bring in the exact project-specific skills that are needed to strengthen your current workforce. This approach recognizes that your needs will probably be different for each project, and enables you to instantly tap into a pool of on-demand professionals to access the exact skills you're currently short of.

Integrating on-demand and internal teams to keep both parties happy

We all know that employees are the glue that holds our company together, and that an unhappy workforce is an unproductive one. If your internal team is going to work seamlessly (and happily) with on-demand professionals, then they need to be involved and valued. It's no good hiring an external team to take ownership of a project and then force a solution onto your employees: this is going to make them feel out of the loop, undervalued and resentful of the on-demand team. It will likely create friction in your company and affect the success of the project, as staff may get defensive and be unfairly sceptical of the proposed solution – reacting negatively to it or even reverting to a different solution at a later date.

If you integrate on-demand professionals into your internal team, then the project is more likely to run smoothly. You'll get more out of both parties – the on-demand professionals will feel part of the team, and your employees will feel valued for their skills and contributions, and therefore less resistant to change. The ownership of the project ultimately remains with your organization, and on-demand consultants are there to support, enhance and inform your team with the latest industry knowledge, skills and experience. Not only will this benefit your team for the project at hand, it also supports the internal knowledge and capability building ensuring that your team can sustain and further develop the solution even when the consultants are long gone.

a-connect's approach to blended teams

Creating perfectly blended teams is all about determining the exact skills that a company needs at a particular time, and being flexible as these requirements change. Here at a-connect, we start every project by asking the decision-maker about the current set-up and capabilities of their internal team, and determining what specific skills are needed for project success. We then choose the best fit of independent professionals from our network to fill those skills gaps and complete the existing team, without overloading the company and stifling the internal team. (Find out more on how to successfully integrate Independent Professionals into your project team [here](#)). This flexible and cost-effective blended-teams approach has worked exceptionally well for multiple a-connect clients in a number of different industries.

A case in point

As an example of how blended teams work in reality, we need look no further than the agribusiness industry. When a top-five [agribusiness company](#) needed support in rolling out and implementing its new global pricing processes and toolkit in 15 markets worldwide, a-connect provided project managers to work as co-leads with the client's existing global project managers, with the help of associates from both parties. This blended approach meant that the international project was seamlessly coordinated by internal and external project managers and pricing experts, and the client was able to retain ultimate control of the work and build upon the company's own internal capabilities and skills.

Here at a-connect, we believe that our flexible blended-teams model makes us stand out from traditional consulting firms. To find out how we can help your company, [contact us](#) today.



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