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GETTING A HELPING HAND

By Maxine Wiggs

THE industry has changed a lot in the last decade, hasn't it? Technology has disrupted the traditional bricks-and-mortar model of business. Home-based agency networks are booming, delivering client and agent flexibility. New distribution channels seem to emerge daily. Talented people are finding their skills are valued across a range of areas and are eschewing the traditional conventions of employment. Technology platforms are emerging that connect the needs with the haves, the time poor with the time rich.

As Rachel Botsman - author of 'What's Mine Is Yours: The Rise of Collaborative Consumption' - puts it, "That power drill of yours will be used for around 12 to 13 minutes in its entire lifetime. It's kind of ridiculous, right? Because what you need is the hole, not the drill. So why don't you rent the drill, or, even better, rent out your own drill to other people and make some money from it?"

And more and more, people are viewing their own skills like that. I've either got time or expertise or some kind of idle capacity that I can switch on as required to generate income. Why commit to a single employer, when I can open myself up to multiple opportunities? People are starting to see jobs more as gigs, and they'll have a bunch of them on the go at once. There's great flexibility in terms of what, where and how you might work, but there's a cost, of course. Income consistency, superannuation, doing your own books, tax and the like are all things

that someone plugged into the gig economy will typically have to navigate. Likewise, for the employer, there can be some pitfalls. It's not for everyone, but plenty are making it work.

I started Resource in response to my own professional experiences in the travel industry, those occasions when I needed someone to plug into my team and fill a short term gap. That might have been project related, a consequence of someone being on extended leave, or even just being under the pump and wishing we had an extra pair of hands quick-smart.

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I find myself networking a lot, meeting people and asking them about their business challenges. It seems that, at the centre of every issue, sits time. There's never enough of it. In fact, my opening question now when I approach a prospective client is "What don't you have time for?" Their responses now see us supplying talented people to create and execute content marketing plans; collaborate on LinkedIn articles and blog posts; develop communications strategies and plan product launches; create and curate content for social media; writing, proofing and editing newsletters; building

simple websites; crafting web copy; writing press releases; event production; video and even providing recruitment services. In particular, with content marketing being what it is today, the story-tellers on our books are busy, busy, busy.

Local task-outsourcer Airtasker claims that tasks worth \$3.5 million are posted to its community each month and confidently says its Taskers can earn up to \$5,000 a month completing odd-jobs for people who increasingly recognise the value of their own precious time. A recent US study by Intuit predicts that by 2020 just around the corner - 40% of American workers will be independent contractors. The trend towards a gig economy has begun.

As Botsman says, "We are no longer passive consumers but empowered participants who can create, share, collaborate and exchange in ways never possible before." And as I see more businesses outsource work to talented people who choose to operate outside traditional employment structures, I couldn't agree more.

Maxine Wiggs has worked in many different roles in the travel industry, including retail, wholesale, airlines and tour operators in Australia and abroad.

She bottled all her experience and started Resource in April last year - a stable of professionals ready to fill the expertise and project gaps in your business quick-smart.

