

Challenging the gig economy

April 8 2024, by David Bradley



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Employee engagement among independent gig workers is an important issue facing organizations working with remote teams and individuals. A

study [published](#) in the *International Journal of Management Concepts and Philosophy*, which looked at the connections between gig workers and their client teams, suggests there is a need to improve engagement to improve working conditions, well-being, and mental health for remote workers.

The [gig economy](#) is a labor market where individuals work on short-term contracts or as long-term freelancers. Freelancers have been a part of the economy for many years, but in the digital era, applications and platforms have opened up many jobs that were previously restricted to the conventional workplace. Gig workers enjoy flexibility but also face challenges like job security and benefits.

Rebecca Wason of Algoma University in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, Canada, has used a structured questionnaire based on William Kahn's three facets of [employee engagement](#)—meaningfulness, safety, and availability—and found significant differences in gig worker engagement levels. It seems that gig workers commonly feel satisfied with their work, but often feel isolated from their peers and management.

The research found that many respondents felt a lack of clarity from their managers regarding the significance and purpose of their work was a major problem. In addition, Wason found that some respondents felt that they had insufficient guidance on organizational culture and norms. This, the work suggests, leads to difficulty in integrating within client teams as well as a problem with forming social bonds. This leads to feelings of exclusion and detachment.

Effective communication, clear task assignment, and supportive organizational structures are all important in improving gig worker

engagement. Addressing such issues could improve the working lives of [gig workers](#), as well the outcomes for the organizations for which they work.

More information: Rebecca Wason, Disengaged: the problem of employee engagement in gig workers, *International Journal of Management Concepts and Philosophy* (2024). [DOI: 10.1504/IJMCP.2024.137637](#)

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