



# How to Boost Your Bottom Line with Specialized AV Contractors

Curate and manage remote teams to grow your AV integration business

Presented by:

An **AVTECHNOLOGY** Partner



## The AV market has grown into a \$116 billion-a-year global industry, and opportunities are being offered far and wide to put your integration firm on the map.

For most AV integration firms, however, being in ten cities at once isn't an option. As you look for creative ways to expand your reach in a global market, tapping into contractor specialists is a key way for your integration firm to grow business by locating qualified remote workers, shortening time-to-completion rates by up to 90 percent, and cutting payouts by two-thirds.

Access to technology and the Internet has become the great equalizer and is a primary catalyst for breaking down barriers of distance and culture. Workers and employers alike are taking advantage of this new business climate. Forget hyper-local—your business is increasingly global, and the nimblest AV integrators will dominate.

### THE FREELANCE ECONOMY: THE FUTURE OF WORK

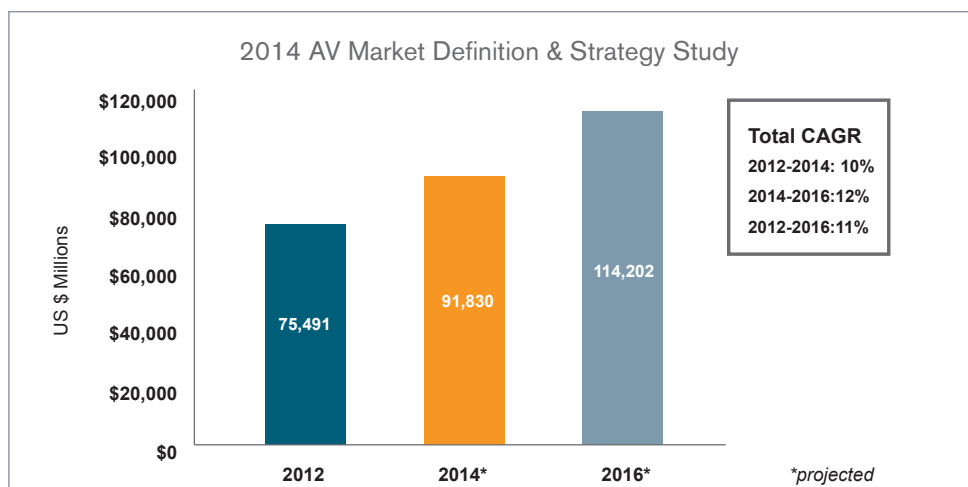
Whether by choice or necessity, the ranks of skilled workers are participating in a major workstyle shift, from being

in-house experts to contract consultants. More than one-third of the total American workforce freelances, and research firm Gartner predicts that figure will increase to 50 percent of the entire workforce by 2020—less than four years from now.

You may be based in Atlanta with a talented crew of sales, installation, and support staff, but how do you address a job opportunity in Seattle, Washington or Topeka, Kansas? Can you afford to send your lead integrator across the country for a week while your other staffers struggle to pull the extra weight? What opportunities are slipping through the cracks?

Turning to 1099 talent simply makes good business sense. Not only does it free your in-house staff to focus on their areas of expertise, but you can also eliminate the expense halo that hovers over hiring new full-time employees—including tax liabilities

The AV market grew 11 percent between 2012-2016, opening the door to increase your potential as an integrator on a pan-regional, or even global, scale.



Source: InfoComm International 2014 Global AV Market Definition & Strategy Study.

for Social Security, Medicare, and federal and state unemployment taxes—that can balloon to 20 to 30 percent in excess of the employee's salary.

With the right system in place, using regionally based AV contractors to be your eyes, ears, and talent on the ground can be your key to achieving big growth.

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### **THE CHALLENGES OF MANAGING CONTRACT WORKERS**

The array of opportunities in AV integration, both geographically and horizontally across markets, has created a demand for specialized skills you may not have on your W2 staff. From systems design, DSP programming, and engineering services to site installations, project management, and beyond, freelance experts and staffing groups are popping up in markets large and small to support the needs of a growing industry.

But managing an on-demand workforce in the AV industry can present unique challenges for integrators who are accustomed to working with salaried staff.

First up is the question of how to find the right contractors. Are you relying on word of mouth, or are you tapping into a vetted pool of talent? The peace of mind that comes from knowing each field service contractor has a positive reputation and performance track record can be golden.

Once you find those specialists, you have the hurdle of having to manage contractors who aren't familiar with your

internal processes. Issues of consistency and compliance with regulations are also crucial. It's your job to ensure the client receives the highest quality service and performance your firm can deliver.

As an audio visual expert, you know that communication is the key to success in any endeavor. Working with remote talent can present challenges in ensuring your team is on board with the project objectives and clearly understands the processes, protocols, reporting schedule, and deadlines to which the team members must adhere.

The area of "talent management"—encompassing the employee lifecycle from recruitment to performance evaluation to exit interviews—has resulted from the merging of traditional human capital management, or human resources, with vendor management systems. This new frontier is allowing AV integrators to enjoy the benefits of a scalable, on-demand workforce without sacrificing the quality control and oversight inherent with full-time staff employees.

### **HOW CAN A FREELANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM HELP?**

Specialized, non-W2 talent can help AV integrators quickly turn business by shortening the invoicing period to open more opportunities without increasing staff. One large AV client for Work Market, a Freelance Management System (FMS) that helps businesses manage their entire contractor base, cut its average project fulfillment time from two weeks to just 24 hours by automating management of its freelance work.

The key to successful collaboration on remote AV projects lies in using a shared platform for communicating the project needs, monitoring the process, and evaluating the results. An FMS allows





OLED is capable of a refresh rate as low as 0.001ms, compared with the much slower refresh rate of 5ms for LCD. So OLED processes and changes content 5,000 times faster than a standard LED-backlit LCD panel. Additionally, the lower MPRT (motion-picture response-time metric, essentially the time it takes for a pixel to go from black to white to black again) means less image blurring with OLED vs. LCD.

companies to manage all of their contractors from a single software platform and see all the moving parts in a central, consolidated dashboard. With an FMS, both the contractor and the AV integrator have access to dashboards where they can manage the entire relationship. These interfaces look different to each audience, but they pull from a shared data set and are tailored to the separate needs of vendors and clients.

The integrator can establish rigorous assignment requirements for the contractor to follow, with the ability to screen potential workers on certifications and knowledge specific to the AV industry and the processes you want them to follow. It's also possible to administer background checks and require workers to opt into the company's contract agreement. By doing this, firms can separate the novices from the experts and exert control over the project in areas of quality, professionalism, and worker classification.

Once the boots hit the ground and the wire is ready to be pulled, internal project managers can collaborate with workers in real time through an FMS to accelerate assignment completion. Mobile apps can provide vendor check-in and the ability to upload pictures of a project so the client can see progress and site information as it happens.

#### THE WORK MARKET SOLUTION

Work Market is a fully integrated FMS that enables companies to manage every aspect of their contractor relationships in a single piece of software, from recruitment through project completion.

Work Market can curate a robust talent pool of highly skilled contractors and freelancers for AV integrators from its

## ACHIEVING THE IMPOSSIBLE

Proving that you can pivot and deliver results quickly is a sure way to rack up new clients. When a new security client recently approached Work Market with the opportunity to upgrade 200 retail sites in just 48 hours, they got results and landed the business.

Although the need was large, the expectation wasn't high: A mere 50 percent success rate would have been considered a home run. Work Market took the need and worked with the client to develop a profile for its prospective talent pool, then sent out all 200 assignments.

Two days later, 140 of the 200 sites were completed—a full 70 percent—all accomplished through talent pools the client discovered on Work Market.

vast team of contributors. Where many companies run into issues of stagnation and rising costs by exhausting their vendor funnels, Work Market actively delivers new vendors to you.

Through its massive data set, Work Market is able to assist clients in determining target pricing for services based on industry averages. Users can then adjust pricing and achieve cost savings—about 40 percent on hourly rates for one recent client—or position themselves to acquire the best talent on the open market through competitive pricing.

A clear distinction with Work Market is that the software itself manages the

work, not the AV integrator and not Work Market. Through the software's highly customizable front end, users can set up their HR and work processes exactly the way they need to flow in order to integrate with their business models, and then manage by exceptions. That creates process efficiency and can prevent the integrator from having to hire additional dispatchers down the line.

The Work Market API has all open endpoints, meaning its long list of integrations—including go-to CRMs and financial software such as Salesforce®, Microsoft® Dynamics GP (Great Plains),

Quick Books™, and Sage™—is only a starting point. Web-savvy users can and do create integrations for third-party systems and license them back to Work Market for the entire community of users to deploy. The strong, native back end and integrations allow companies to manage the entire freelancer relationship, including accounts payable, through the Work Market platform.

Work Market is positioned to take your AV integration business to new heights. For more information on how their solution can work for you, visit the Work Market website. ■

## FINDING THE RIGHT PERSON FOR THE JOB

Mike Swartz, director of professional services at Work Market, works with AV integrators to develop solutions that address the specialized needs of the AV industry. From cultivating independent talent to developing relationships with talent firms, Work Market has been able to deliver much-needed AV experts for its integrator clients.

A big part of the value of Work Market is its flexibility, notes Swartz. After drilling down with a new AV client and understanding that new sales opportunities it can't fulfill in-house are what drive its need for independent contractors, he suggested they use Work Market's Salesforce® API to streamline the client's processes and be able to accept more jobs.

"When a sales opportunity comes into the client's CRM, the client tries to match it within their full-time employee base," explains Swartz. "But if they're unable to find an employee who is available or qualified to do the work, the integrator can now select the option to send a request to Work Market. All the info from Salesforce—the location, date, name, problem, and skills needed—automatically goes to the client's pre-screened and approved contractor firms."

The client now has true partnerships with contractors through Work Market that allow it to reach a nationwide network of AV professionals who are qualified and certified.

"They're using Work Market to manage all of their contractors, so if a problem arises that needs remediation, the client can see all of the project information and reconcile as needed."



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