

TSIA and Movate:

A Partnership in Enterprise Support Services

TSIA is the world's leading research organization dedicated to helping technology companies achieve profitable growth and solve their top business challenges. Services, Sales, Product, and Channel organizations at technology companies large and small look to TSIA for world-class business frameworks, best practices based on real-world results, detailed performance benchmarking, and exceptional peer networking opportunities. TSIA's membership community consists of over 40,000 executives from 96 countries and represents 80% of the Fortune 100 technology companies.

Movate, formerly CSS Corp, is a digital technology and enterprise support services company committed to disrupting the industry with boundless agility, human-centered innovation, and relentless focus on driving client outcomes. It helps ambitious, growth-oriented tech companies across segments stay ahead of the curve by leveraging its diverse talent of over 11,700 full-time Movators across 20 global locations and a gig network of thousands of technology experts across 60 countries, speaking over 100 languages. Movate has emerged as one of the most awarded and analyst-accredited companies in its revenue range.

Movate has been a long-standing partner of the Technology & Services Industry Association (TSIA). The two organizations regularly collaborate towards the creation of thought leadership through event sponsorships, webinars, and research. Movate's SVP & Chief Marketing Officer, Vivian Gomes, also serves as part of TSIA's Partner Advisory Board.



Leveraging the Power of the Gig Economy

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by John Ragsdale and Melanie Fricke

Executive Overview

The beginning of this decade has been quite tumultuous for enterprises. The COVID-19 pandemic, extended lockdowns that crippled businesses, the Great Resignation or Great Reshuffle, and now fears of a looming recession have all created multiple hurdles, forcing businesses to shift, adapt, and transform rapidly. New models of work quickly emerged with the adoption of next-generation digital technology. Enterprises could no longer afford to be laggards in digital adoption and were forced to move away from traditional approaches to introduce new ways of working. And one of those new ways was the adoption of the gig workforce model. With this model, companies could leverage the marketplace model for employees across the value chain, including highly skilled jobs. However, there have been significant risks, and many early models proved unsuccessful. Emerging gig workforce models are now available, in particular for technical support, that eliminate risk and ensure quality talent and an excellent customer experience, while still offering flexibility and affordability. The gig economy is here to stay, and companies need to investigate how they can leverage these innovative approaches to become a core part of their staffing strategy.

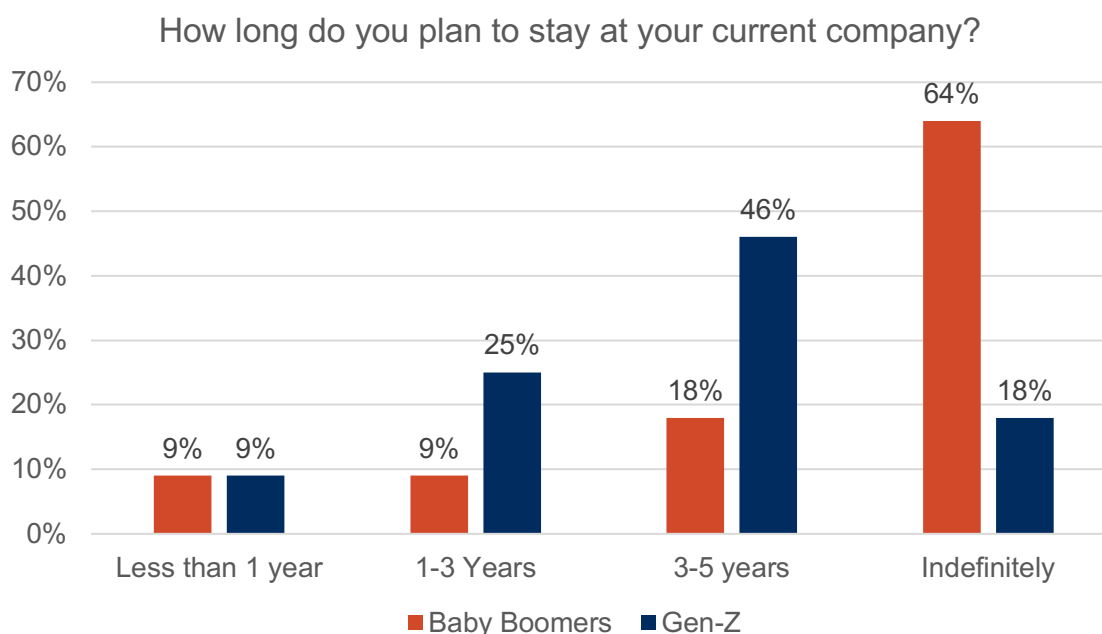
The Enduring Appeal of the Gig Economy

The gig economy isn't new, of course. Simply put, the gig economy involves the exchange of services by gig workers on a short-term and payment-by-task basis. But it has become mainstream recently with the growth of internet-backed digital platforms that facilitate easy access to gig work for white-collar jobs as well. Today, with technology-enabled gig work platforms, there are estimates as high as 1.1 billion gig workers worldwide, with 55 million in the US.¹ The global uncertainty is helping fuel this

move further, as it encourages existing product users to put their knowledge and skills to good use as support workers or gig peer experts and generate additional income streams.

[A TSIA study in late 2021²](#) revealed that younger workers have very different attitudes about length of time in positions compared to previous generations. *Figure 1* provides an example, contrasting data from the youngest workers, Gen-Z, with the oldest workers, Baby Boomers. While 64% of Baby Boomers say they plan to stay with their current company indefinitely, 25% of Gen Z say they only plan to stay one to three years, and almost half, 46%, say their expected tenure is three to five years. This translates into increased costs for enterprises that must onboard new talent each time and invest capital in their training and development.

Figure 1: Generational Differences in Company Tenure



Source: TSIA 2021 Employee Engagement Survey.

The way people work has changed too. The industry is seeing a rapid shift from traditional nine-to-five jobs to freelance or contractor positions, especially among Millennials and Gen-Z. A research study from TSIA partner [Kantata](#), highlighted in a recent webinar, “[Staying Ahead of the Changing Dynamics of the Modern Services Workforce](#),”³ found that more than 50% of Millennial and Gen-Z workers have considered becoming a freelancer or contractor. Gig workers choose gigs because it provides them the flexibility to work anytime, anywhere.

The gig economy opened the door for enterprises to leverage gig workers' skills and experiences across the value chain. Technology advancements have democratized gig workers' access to projects and assignments which were monopolized earlier by full-time employees. Now, skilled practitioners, specialists in their domain, can be hired for human resources, product development, customer support, marketing, sales, technical support, enterprise support, etc., as gig experts, without the enterprises putting additional effort into the hiring process. **An integrated gig-enabled blended** model enables enterprises to tap into their existing pool of customers who have significant product knowledge and onboard them as gig peer experts for providing enterprise support to their fellow customers, thereby reducing or eliminating the costs for training and upskilling. These skilled gig peer experts provide their services as per their availability and flexibility with the added satisfaction of helping their fellow users. Enterprises can onboard gig experts as demand requires for shorter durations, which leads to a win-win situation for both enterprises and gig workers.

As we progress in the future, the gig economy will transform current organizational structures, and enterprises of all sizes will tend to harness the power of the gig economy. But the shift from the traditional workforce model to the gig-enabled workforce model has already started with the vision of becoming increasingly versatile and agile.

Why Gig Has the Potential to Transform Technical Support Ecosystems

Now the question arises, is this emerging gig model the answer to creating a resilient support ecosystem for enterprises? For enterprises to meet the needs of customers and provide a stellar experience, effective, low-effort technology support is no longer a nice-to-have but a must-have. Many traditional support centers have realized that they are ill-equipped to meet the demands of today's digitally savvy, global customers. And there are three compelling reasons why this is so: rising costs, employee attrition, and changing work expectations.

Some pure-play, gig-based support services providers were already present in the market, but the pandemic accelerated the pace of digital innovation in gig-based support delivery, and, in turn, enterprises quickly embraced the gig-based support model to benefit from its flexibility and cost-effectiveness. Besides bringing down the cost of talent onboarding, the gig model helps enterprises reduce their spending on infrastructure and utilities. It enables tech firms to reach a larger and growing talent base across the globe without the overhead of employee training and HR administration. They can then focus on building a maximally adaptive and resilient support workforce that is flexible and agile.

The gig economy is here to stay. And it's going to stay well into our future. For enterprises, the advantages are immense:

- **Access to a larger pool of skilled workers.** With fierce competition in the market, technology companies are constantly releasing new product features or updates to keep themselves ahead of the curve, with some XaaS providers adding new features monthly. But

this puts tremendous pressure on their support teams. Enterprises can mitigate this challenge by accessing a large global pool of skilled gig workers who will solve queries based on their skills and expertise.

- **Ability to cost-effectively scale.** Utilizing gig workers provides large enterprises with a scalable and cost-effective model. Enterprises don't have to enroll gig workers on the payroll, which helps enterprises to bring down their operating costs. Gig talent pools are easily scalable—enterprises can create and scale CX teams at speed. An agile, on-demand workforce helps enterprises reduce the wastage that can crop up with traditional fixed-cost customer service operating models.
- **Meeting the needs of younger workers.** According to [TSIA's Support Services Benchmark](#),⁴ pre-pandemic voluntary attrition rates for support averaged 7%. Today, the average is 9%, with some companies seeing 12% voluntary attrition or higher. While some of this is related to a strong job market and more options for workers due to work-from-home policies, it also reflects the reality mentioned earlier: more than half of younger workers are considering contract work. Leveraging a gig model is allowing you to offer the approach to work preferred by Millennial and Gen-Z workers.

Key Challenges in Leveraging the Gig Workforce

As we've seen in the previous section, there are multiple benefits attained from leveraging the gig economy for technical support talent. But as we've seen with early attempts, there are some underlying challenges that companies must think through when architecting their gig strategy.

- **Screening for technical skills.** The first platforms offering a marketplace of technical support workers were introduced in the early 2000s. Unfortunately, they were short-lived. The biggest challenge was that the platforms accepted whatever experience the individuals who joined their marketplace said they had. It turned out that many exaggerated their technical experience, meaning they were unable to resolve complex support issues, generated very poor customer experiences, and incurred high costs due to multiple call-backs and reopened and escalated cases.
- **Issues with reliability.** Access to a large pool of gig workers can enable organizations to scale quickly. Gig professionals love gig work because of the flexibility. But that same flexibility can be a drawback for organizations as reliability and dependability could be reduced. A model that ensures reliable coverage is required.
- **Performance management.** Managing and monitoring the performance of the gig workforce is a complex challenge for enterprises. Gig support platforms function on a marketplace model, which provides access to the large pool of talent. But if the marketplace platform doesn't provide the structure for onboarding, compensation, and performance management,

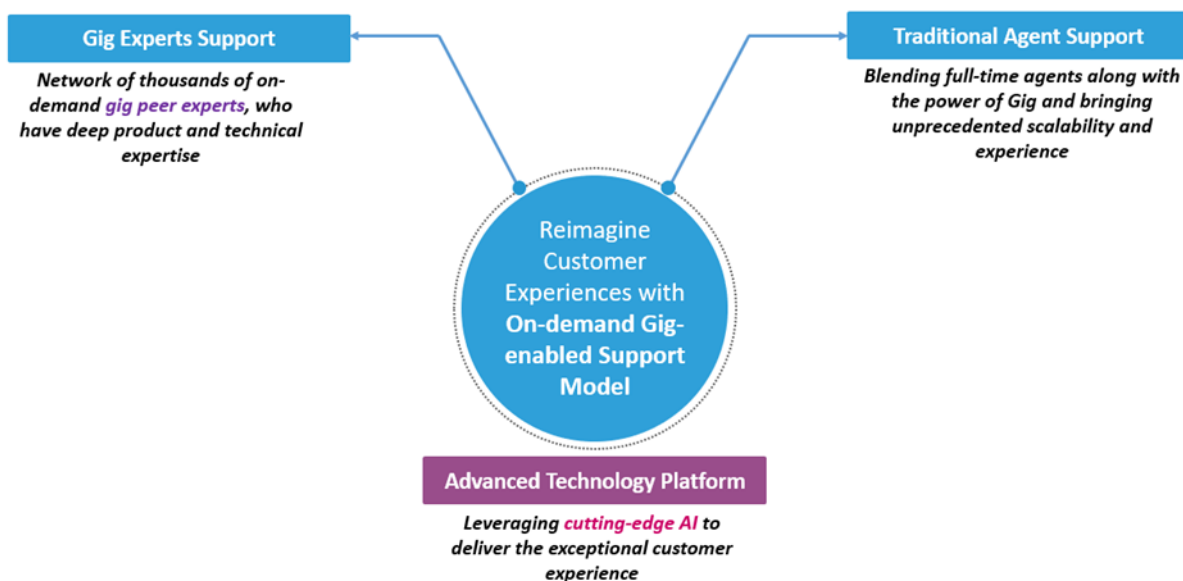
enterprises end up with the extra burden of managing the performance of the gig workers in addition to their traditional workforce.

The Solution: An Integrated Gig-Enabled Blended Support Model

To mitigate these challenges from the traditional gig support models, enterprises can leverage an integrated gig-enabled blended support model that has the flexibility of gig and the resilience of a full-time support ecosystem. It helps manage surges in demand with high-quality support for complex issues, achieves tangible cost savings, provides enterprise privacy and security, is agile in deployment, and offers a more profound and empathetic experience to customers 24/7.

An example of an integrated gig-enabled support model is [Movate OnDemand](#), seen in *Figure 2*, introduced earlier this year. Movate OnDemand is a disruptive model leveraging gig peer experts across 60 countries and speaking over 100 languages to provide personalized customer resolutions, backed by full-time support engineers, and augmented by advanced technology. This model not only scales up and down effortlessly but also delivers empathetic support along with traditional support.

Figure 2: Integrated Gig-Enabled Support Model



Source: Movate (formerly CSS Corp).

Multiple characteristics differentiate the approach used by Movate OnDemand from traditional marketplace models:

- **Enabling a brand's best customers to support other customers.** The gig model from Movate has a unique proposition: it helps in leveraging a brand's most trusted asset, its customers. It enables existing customers to bring their knowledge of products and

functionalities to other fellow customers. These practitioners, or gig peer experts, as Movate calls them, require no additional training and are deployable from Day Zero, reducing the training costs significantly. But the more visible impact, per the customers, is the level of [empathy](#) these experts bring.⁵ Being a user of the product themselves, they understand the pain points of their fellow users and are often able to connect with them at a much deeper level than traditionally trained support agents.

- **End-to-end skilled gig worker onboarding.** The integrated gig-enabled support model helps source and rigorously screen each applicant to guarantee that only highly skilled gig workers are onboarded. The model enables enterprises to be part of the onboarding process and customize it as needed for their products and services. The onboarding covers skills assessment and writing tests to ensure that skilled gig workers have the required expertise, communication skills, language requirements, and empathy to provide excellent support. The model enables gig workers with the necessary training to function seamlessly.
- **Intent analytics.** This model leverages machine learning (ML) and text mining techniques to understand the customer's intent. It enables gig peer experts and full-time support engineers to understand customer requests proactively and provide exceptional customer support. Moreover, it matches intent with the gig worker's expertise, reputation, availability, ratings, and customer feedback so that customers get the right expert for their requests.
- **Smart routing.** Smart-routing features powered by artificial intelligence (AI) and ML directs customer requests based on the specific skill set and technical knowledge of both the gig workers and support engineers. This feature ensures performance optimization and significantly reduces the call volume and frequency.
- **Peer-to-peer reviewed rating methodology.** The model enables peer-to-peer review, which means peer experts, both gig workers and company employees, vote on the answer quality and provide feedback, ensuring that enterprise customers consistently receive the highest level of service and accurate information. High performers are rewarded by automatically routing more work to them using a reputation engine. Each skilled gig worker's reputation is built and maintained based on peer reviews, customer feedback, and response time. This helps ensure that the network grows more robust and organically.
- **Response automation.** Support organizations know that content creation is an ongoing challenge, and there are never enough resources dedicated to authoring knowledge articles. In the Movate model, gig peer experts are monetarily incentivized to create automated content for repetitive requests, which decreases customer response time and improves CSAT, customer lifetime value, etc. The model aims to bring efficiency and agility with automation and ensures the quality of responses with a peer-to-peer rating methodology.

- **High network availability.** Enterprises get access to a larger pool of skilled gig peer experts across the globe, traditional outsourced support engineers as needed, and a technology platform, which not only automatically scales up and down but also provides low-effort, empathetic customer experiences.
- **Pay-per-resolution pricing.** Organizations can not only transform the customer experience, but they can also reduce cost per case by 20% or more, leveraging a pay-per-resolution approach. A consumption-based model for enterprises means that they are charged only for successfully resolved cases.

Real-World Results: Benefits and Success Stories

The approach to leveraging the gig economy for B2B technical support described in this report utilizes gig experts with real-life knowledge of your products and experience resolving technical issues. With this model, training requirements are drastically reduced, and the impact on customer experience is immediate. Companies that have adopted this model have seen impressive results, including 30% to 40% lower cost than traditional support, faster response and resolution times, and improved CSAT scores by as much as 20%. Following are three success stories of Movate OnDemand.

A Global Tech Conglomerate

Objective: This large technology company wanted to eliminate the need to hire seasonal customer support workers by using an on-demand gig support model.

The company, a TSIA member, needed to maintain the highest levels of customer experience even when demand surged, such as during major product and service launches. Their traditional support system was struggling to adapt.

The gig model enabled the company to tap into a vast pool of enthusiastic experts with the right technical knowledge and communication skills to provide highly effective support. The benefits were clear:

- A total of 1.8 million customer issues were resolved in 12 months by gig workers.
- An average of 87% customer satisfaction score was achieved.
- More than 54,000 questions were handled for the launch of a new product.

A Leading Professional Network Company

Objective: Scale the support organization quickly and efficiently.

This company was facing challenges with the quality and cost of customer support. Their existing customer support organization and systems were unable to scale adequately to meet their needs,

resulting in very high response times. This was leading to significant user dissatisfaction and case backlogs.

By adopting an integrated gig-enabled support model, they tapped into their fast-growing user base, who are users of the platform themselves and could respond to queries much more efficiently and at a much lower cost than full-time support engineers. Here, the model delivered business outcomes including 190,000 resolved customer issues in 2020, with an average customer satisfaction score of 84%.

Tapping into the gig talent pool, the company was also able to quickly launch support for nine new languages.

A Leading Software Product Company

Objective: Deliver enhanced customer satisfaction and reduced costs through an on-demand model.

This product company, a TSIA member, receives a large volume of customer cases regarding product functionality, creating CAD files, generating outputs, etc. Before adopting the integrated model, they had in-house support engineers who provided suboptimal support to customers with long response times. The company leveraged the integrated gig-enabled support model and onboarded skilled gig workers, who were themselves product experts with years of experience. This resulted in benefits including a 67% cost reduction, while garnering an average customer satisfaction score of more than 90%.

Taking advantage of the abilities of the large number of gig experts, the client was also able to support 17 additional languages through both native speakers and translation tools.

TSIA Recommends

Businesses are increasingly recognizing the disruptive potential of an on-demand support workforce. From being reluctant adopters, enterprises are now ready to embrace the gig workforce shift—provided they can overcome the challenges of legacy marketplace models. If your organization is ready to tap into specialized on-demand expertise for driving superior customer experience outcomes, below are some recommendations to get started.

- **Are you a good candidate for a gig platform?** The companies who are currently thriving on the model described in this paper share certain characteristics. They tend to be larger enterprises, with mature, sizeable support teams, allowing them to better blend gig workers with their traditional model. Industries with a lot of seasonality, or large volume spikes due to new products or rolling releases, also see great benefit from the gig approach.
- **Identify engaged power users.** If you are considering a gig model leveraging customers, spend some time creating a list of target power users. Ask your tech support team and customer success

managers to recommend knowledgeable customers and take advantage of reputation models in your customer community to identify active participants with high-quality ratings from peers. Don't worry about their location, recruiting, time tracking, or managing payments, the gig platform provider will take care of all of that for you.

- **Remain flexible for future resource planning.** The success examples outlined in this report have been leveraging outsourcing for technical support for many years. Depending on your particular challenge(s), traditional outsourcing, the gig model, or a combination of the two may be the ultimate solution. Ideally you should be working with a service provider who has best-of-breed solutions for both approaches and can help you navigate your options as your organization continues to scale.

Endnotes

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