

Free Agency Strategy: The New Human Resource Paradigm In the Kenyan Labour Market

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Abstract

The free agency strategy is a trend in the contemporary labour markets that has emerged to change the market dynamics and increase the autonomy of the employee in making choices, and this is more so in the Kenyan market. The strategy is more effective and efficient relative to traditional employment that has numerous flaws. With the advent of technological advances in the labour market, workers have been rendered capable of connecting and working together from anywhere. This form of flexibility is synonymous with the Free Agency Strategy (FSA), likely to dominate the Kenyan labour market in the near future. With adoption of this strategy, the business trend is shifting towards flexibility with project-based workforces picking a considerable pace. There are numerous benefits of adopting this strategy for employers and employees. Companies in Kenya are realising that through the adoption of the free agency strategy, it is extremely easy to scale up and down major operations. The new Kenyan workers who possess knowledge and skills are finding it easy to access work.

Key Words: *Free Agency Strategy, Entrepreneurial Empowerment, Leverage, Economic Downturn, Generation X, Generation Y, Silent Generation, Baby Boomers.*

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background

The labour market in the contemporary Kenya society has undergone numerous changes in its course of expansion that has rendered it difficult and paradoxical to characterise. In this market, growth of jobs has been impressive with unemployment levels becoming lower. Goff (2005) reiterates that the labour market today is ridden with uncertainty and changes that make it an insurmountable task to define the needs of the current workforce. As a part of effective and efficient talent strategy, major companies have embarked on performing trends related to employment and labour dynamics (Goff, 2005). This has accelerated the growth of a free agent workforce. The strategy of free agency comprises of temporary employees, small business owners, independent contractors, and a broad spectrum of non-traditional workers. The aforementioned parties offer the much-desired flexibility in the labour market that has become increasingly unpredictable. Companies have been faced with the need to leverage the fast-growing and flexible resource in free agents. This new strategy in the labour market possesses the experience, which makes instant differences in the labour market. It has entrenched a relationship in the workplace that when harnessed correctly, will create optimal returns to the employer and the employee (Goodwin-White, 2009). Free agents have continued to make a clear indication that they want what is best for them and are engaging with companies providing a flexible schedule. Through contingent work, the FSA provides a better balance between life and work when compared to the traditional employment strategy. Working for a number of employers helps in the development of skills and experience that leads to increased employability. In the review of literature, a comprehensive account of free agency strategy in the labour market in Kenya will be present.

2.0) Literature Review

2.1) Trend in the Labour Market

In the contemporary Kenyan society, careers have evolved in a manner that they are no more built on the long-term commitments to a single employer. The normal trend in the labour market has changed as newer and better options emerge. With an increase in the number of freelancers, entrepreneurs, temporary employees, and contractors, employers are making contingent workers to become a vital part of their workforce strategy. The economic realities that have emerged in the past few decades alongside increasing desire by the workers for engaging and flexible work have been the principal source of a shift from the convectional employment relationship (Predelli, 2011). Consequently, workers are now more interested in the options of free agency, such as micro-work, entrepreneurship, project and temporary work, and independent contracting.

A study on free agency strategy on the Kenyan labour market is incomplete without knowledge of who these agents are, what they offer in the labour market, and how they differ from the traditional employees. Moreover, it is of utmost importance to know why many workers are making a voluntary choice of this work style. Through research done by Goff (2005), it is apparent that companies are using an avalanche of means to tap into the flexible workforce provided by the FSA. Cornelius (2002) also reveals that more companies are leveraging the

flexibility offered by free agency strategy with consultancy firms offering advice on how to develop talent strategies comprising free agents. In the wake of emerging trends in the labour market, strategies on workforce are centred on the capacity to access the best talent when the need arises. Similar to other markets, the Kenyan labour market is also prone to uncertainties that render companies with relatively stronger workforces to be able to adapt to the changing trends.

The shift towards the free agency strategy in Kenya has been accelerated by waning of long-term commitments to employers. Moreover, careers built on flexibility have emerged and are gaining ground in the labour market. According to a research by Bamberger and Meshoulam (2000), almost a half of all the workers in labour markets across the world are classifying themselves as free agents, and in the Kenyan context, this translates to about 75% increase in the past three years from a mere 30% recorded in 2008. Such a mercurial growth reveals a number of developments in the labour market. Among the developments include increased accessibility and attractiveness of workers and increase for the work available to free agents in the Kenyan context.

Numerous factors have contributed to the increase in the adoption of the free agency strategy, not just in Kenya but globally, with the most significant among them being an aging workforce, changing attitudes, and economic downturns. With regard to the aging workforce, mature workers are increasing their pursuit for greater flexibility and freedom (Bamberger & Meshoulam, 2000). Moreover, these workers are more likely to become free agents compared to their younger counterparts. Second, with regard to changing attitudes, the recent surge in the adoption of the free agency strategy is a reflection of a shift in the attitudes of the workers. The workers are becoming increasingly drawn to the advantages and opportunities offered by the lifestyle of free agency. Concisely, this lifestyle is characterised by increased control and independence, entrepreneurial empowerment, and freedom to make a choice between rewarding and interesting work (Bamberger & Meshoulam, 2000). With regard to the economic downturn, the ramifications of the economic conditions have compelled employers and workers to make a consideration of making better and flexible arrangements.

Compared to surveys carried out in Kenya completed within the last decade, layoffs and terminations from previous employment coupled with the inability to secure work elsewhere were cited as the principal reasons for choosing free agency strategy over convectional employment (Predelli, 2011). As the Kenyan labour market makes a recovery and many other countries return to more stable employment conditions, the number of free agents in the working population of many nations could plummet. Nevertheless, the trend towards free agency strategy is still very strong and increasing across the world.

Cornelius (2002) reiterates that significant disparities in the manner in which various employers make engagements with the free agents exist. Some of them do it quite often whereas others fail to do it at all. Notwithstanding the aforementioned findings, organisations incorporating free agency strategy are accounting for about half of the workers employed in various countries in the world (Cornelius, 2002). Bearing this in mind, it is vivid that flexible workplace practices are not the anomalies that they were once deemed. Well-educated Kenyan entrepreneurs have emerged to change the dynamics of the labour market. Despite the disparities in attitudes, expectations, and work ethics, all generations of workers possess an increased interest in the strategy of free agency. Since 2008, there has been a dramatic rise in all forms of free agency in Kenya. The most noticeable are micropreneurs that have emerged in the form of independent contractors, entrepreneurs, and freelancers. The aforementioned parties presently represent almost a third of the global workforce. This represents about a 70% increase from the surveys conducted in the last decade (Cornelius, 2002).

Kaupins (2012) provides a breakdown of the generations present in the labour market as; Silent Generation, Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Generation Y. Notwithstanding disparities in work ethics, opinions, expectations, and attitudes of the aforementioned generations, all are showing an increased interest in the work style of free agency. This is a new challenge in the labour market as organisations seek to manage and engage these generations simultaneously. The Silent Generation constitutes of workers born in the period between 1935 and 1945. Two thirds of all workers emanating from this generation, work as free agents presently. Kaupins (2012) explains that the strategy of free agency has numerous advantages for individuals looking to enter into retirement with a level of autonomy in their operations. The baby boomers represent a generation that constitutes individuals born between 1946 and 1964. Nearly half of the workers perform their working operations as free agents. As this generation moves close towards retirement, it is apparent that the generation will rise concomitantly with the Silent Generation for similar reasons. Generation X is a classification in the labour market that comprises of individuals born in the period between 1965 and 1979.

Almost half of the workers in this category are free agents presently and this represents an increase in just less than five years. Generation Y is a generation of workers born during the 1980-1992 epoch. A quarter of this group is comprised of free agents. A modest increase of workers in this category shows that the strategy of free agency is mostly preferred by the older workers and is an easier route to pursue as the level of experience increases (Predelli, 2011). As Kenyan workers in the labour market progress in their careers, there is an increase in their propensity to adopt the free agency strategy. With almost 67% of the Kenyan population of free agents comprising of workers from the Silent Generation and the Baby Boomers, free agency strategy is a reserve for

the well-educated and highly skilled individuals boasting of decades of working experience (Predelli, 2011). More of half of this population possess a masters or a higher degree. Compared with convectional employees, more free agents possess professional or technical skills. As more employers seek to fill highly critical positions, which require experience and specialised skills, many Kenyan employers will require and need to free agency workers (Predelli, 2011).

3.0) Motivations behind the Free Agency Strategy in the Kenyan Labour Market

According to Bamberger and Meshoulam (2000), flexibility is not the only reason that Kenyan workers are choosing the work style of free agency. Notwithstanding that some of the increases in the free agency strategy are attributed to the recent economic turmoil, almost 75% of all the free agents are making a voluntary choice of this strategy. This evokes numerous questions regarding the factors that make the free agency strategy of great appeal to a growing number of individuals across all the age groups. Increased freedom, opportunities, and flexibility, which the free agency offers are the principal reason that workers have come to choose it over convectional employment (Bamberger & Meshoulam, 2000). Although the balance between work and life is another major motivation towards this type of strategy, research also reveals that empowerment linked with one being his/her own boss is a reason that compels most of workers in the labour market to pursue the free agency strategy (Bamberger & Meshoulam, 2000). Statistics from surveys on the strategy in the labour market reveal that almost 75% of individuals voluntarily choose the work style of free agency because they value entrepreneurial benefits, freedom, and flexibility.

Motives for choosing the strategy of free agency vary across the generations. For Generation Y, the real value of this strategy is in the numerous additional opportunities that the work style of free agency provides. Being capable of developing skills and building a portfolio of challenging and varied work early in the career is oftentimes what new entrants in the labour market desire (Osterman, 2000). However, they struggle to get it under convectional employment. Alternatively, the Generation X workers are making a choice of the free agency strategy to benefit from work-life balance and gain greater flexibility. Oftentimes, they have gained substantial experience albeit balancing multiple priorities in their lives that include family commitments (Osterman, 2000).

The Silent Generation and Baby Boomers seek out the strategy of free agency because they find of utmost importance the freedom the strategy provides in the latter stages of career. As they dwell on retirement, free agency gives them the opportunity their workloads deem fit. Workers in generation Y are the individuals most likely to have embarked on the free agency strategy because of the prevailing economic conditions of the previous decade (Goodwin-White, 2009). This does not mean they have done this reluctantly or they will seek out convectional roles when the roles become easier and more accessible as options. In fact, research reveals that about 40% of these agents believe that economic conditions have actually enhanced their opportunities by strengthening the demand of their expertise (Goodwin-White, 2009). Although most of the individuals in the Kenyan labour market are pushed into free agency, most of the individual will choose it voluntarily says Goodwin-White (2009). While the motivation for making a choice of this working strategy may differ based on age, free agency does provide a significant upside for every worker generation. Whether the individual is just starting out in the workforce or is looking to leave the workforce, the strategy of free agency offers the employees the autonomy, opportunity, and flexibility unsurpassed by convectional employment (Goodwin-White, 2009).

According to Goodwin-White in 2009, satisfaction levels under the free agency strategy have become higher on most counts when compared to conventional employees and moreover, these rates are increasing. Even though the agents in this strategy have undergone the same dire economic times as any other individual over the past years, their levels of satisfaction have actually improved since the genesis of the economic downturn in 2008 (Goodwin-White, 2009). Compared with the convectional workers, the free agents report being relatively more satisfied with numerous aspects of their career. Most notably, the free agents are highly satisfied with the ability to manage their career development and path, an opportunity to expand in life, annual salary, the balance between work and life, and the level of stress emanating from work (Goodwin-White, 2009). Notwithstanding the numerous positive attributes connected to the free agency strategy, most workers in Kenya deem some aspects of convectional employment better compared to the conditions in free agency. These realms are health care options and job security. Nevertheless, when the aforementioned factors are weighted against a range of employment options, the benefits of the strategy of free agency consistently fulfils more of the elements in the lifestyle checklist, desired by high-performing workers.

The table below reveals what makes free agents in Kenya, a case study conducted in Nairobi County, agree that their style of working offers more control over their career and it opens doors to a broader spectrum of opportunities for skill building.

Table 1: A table showing the level of satisfaction of free agents vs. conventional employees

Who is more satisfied	Free Agents	Conventional Employees
General employment situation	✓	
Balance between work and life	✓	
Work-related Stress	✓	
Opportunities for expansion of skills	✓	
Opportunities for career advancement	✓	
Job security		✓
Annual salary	✓	
Available options in healthcare		✓

Further, Vettori (2010) reveals that free agents are becoming more satisfied with their situation of employment than they were in the previous decade. The strength of the satisfaction of the free agents provides extra insight into what has rendered traditional approaches towards retaining workers over the long run very difficult (Vettori, 2010). Choice and flexibility do not foretell well with the traditional strategies of a workforce that largely dominate the Kenyan labour market.

An organisation that is based in Kenya that wants to reap benefits of inclusion of free agents into its workforce needs to know that there exists the need to keep the workers interested. Research carried out by Goodwin-White in 2009 reminds that most free agents are not interested in monetary returns of a project. From the above mentioned positive attributed of the free agency strategy, it is apparent that the most appealing aspect of this strategy is the capacity to move from one project to the other, increased autonomy to make decisions on which assignments to accept and the one to reject. However, it is of importance to decipher how the free agents find their work and how they make a choice over which assignments to accept (Goodwin-White, 2009).

The topmost method of securing work for most free agents is through referrals from friends, former colleagues and employees, and family members. Most Kenyan free agents interviewed revealed that they find the projects they work on by relying on established networks and professional contracts. Moreover, these players also rely on the popularity of online community and market places that has grown rapidly because of change in business operations. Popular sites have emerged to help free agents access assignments or telecommuting contracts that demand a specific set of skills. Other sites have emerged to post project offerings in the form of contest whereby contracts are awarded to the best applicants. Most of these sites help business organisations to complete work virtually. This is achieved by contracting with the individual free agents or by assembling the project teams in diverse locations, Nairobi County being one of the major areas. The advantages of Kenyan companies that mostly depend on free agents, such as validating, screening and assessing the worker is the companies appeal more to most of free agents. For the younger workers, this proportion is much higher with 50% of the workers in generation Y using staffing firms for new assignments (Bamberger & Meshoulam, 2000).

The proportion of workers supported by staffing firms has made a substantial increase from 2008 (Vosko, 2005). This realisation is important for the companies looking to access a valuable pool of talent. Concerning which projects are accepted or avoided in the free agency strategy, three major factors are considered by the free agents. These factors include interest, potential of revenue, and the clients' reputation. Regarding interest, free agents look for work that makes them interested. The type of work and the assignment or project's quality becomes of increased importance as the free agents age (Vosko, 2005).

Under the revenue potential, assignments' profitability is the secondary consideration for the free agents in Kenya that weigh multiple assignments. Last, the client's reputation is also given important consideration because free agents want to work with the clients they admire, identify with, and trust. Factors influencing how free agents make selections of their assignments differ across generations. The workers in generation Y place a premium on the ease of finding work projects and assignments (Shalla & Clement, 2007). Compared to other generations, the generation X and Baby Boomers tend to view the company's reputation as of utmost importance. Workers in Generation X also place greater emphasis on the potential of revenue that the assignment has, compared to other generations (Shalla & Clement, 2007).

3.1) The Future of Free Agency in the Kenyan Labour Markets

Bamberger and Meshoulam (2000), mention that both employers and employees facilitate growth in the population of free agents. Presently, free agents represent more than 34% of the workforce in the labour market. Nevertheless, numerous factors will accelerate a further growth in this type of work style in the country. From the perspective of the employees, economic uncertainty is among the factors that will influence the shift towards the free agency strategy in the labour market (Bamberger and Meshoulam, 2000). The economic status is given utmost consideration and is etched in the minds of the workforce in the Kenyan labour market. However, as

workers realise that a guarantee in job security is out-dated, uncertainty is leading to new interest in the work style of the free agents (Bamberger and Meshoulam, 2000).

More than half of the convectional Kenyan employees agree that the present conditions of the economy have led them to make considerations of the free agency strategy as a platform for gaining greater control and autonomy over their income stream and own career paths. New retirement and health options are other factors lying under the perspective of the employee, which will accelerate the shift towards the free agency strategy in the labour market (Bamberger and Meshoulam, 2000). Historical dependence of workers in the labour force on their employer for benefits, such as retirement savings and health care looks to undergo a change in the coming years. The rise of affordable and more flexible healthcare will compel traditional Kenyan employees to consider the work style of the free agent. Another factor is household make up. The present situation of two-income families offers greater flexibility for exploration of the free agency strategy (Bamberger & Meshoulam, 2000).

As one of the spouses maintains the security of the convectional employment, the other is able to explore more flexible work opportunities. New technologies are also fuelling the growth of the free agency work style. Through instant messaging, cloud computing, video conferencing and social networking, free agents in Kenya are being connected effortlessly with the tools and the networks they need to access projects from all over the globe. The changing attitude of workers is also a factor that has accelerated the shift towards the free agency strategy (Goff, 2005). Younger workers in the country have a less likelihood of committing to a single employer for the rest of their lifetime. Moreover, they keep looking for the best opportunities through which they can differentiate and expand the portfolio of their work. Workers in their mid-life have competing priorities in life and therefore look for the best ways through which they can get greater flexibility (Goff, 2005). Analogously, older workers are in pursuit of flexible ways to enter into retirement and maximise the value of extensive experience. Business pressures, downsizing, family responsibilities and competing loads of work are compelling many workers to look for more balance and flexibility in their lives. Demographic shifts are among the factors that are increasing the pace for full adoption of the free agency strategy in the labour market (Goff, 2005).

In Kenya, through a study conducted in Nairobi County, reveals that mature workers are more likely to become free agents than the younger counterparts are, albeit disproportionately. As the workforce ages, the shift towards the free agent strategy because of flexibility continues to increase. As the older workforce delay their full retirement, the flexibility and freedom of the option of free agency is becoming a highly attractive option. These workers are highly educated and skilled, experienced, and have developed a broad network of professional contacts via their working years. These individuals offer an array of skills to employers looking for highly qualified talent translating to instant value (Osterman, 2000).

4.0) The Perspective of the Kenyan Employer

Among the employers looking to engage with employees in a free agency strategy, numerous factors have led to an increase in the adoption of the free agency strategy in the country. Skill and talent gaps are among the factors. As the employers expend efforts to fill vacancies in the technical and professional areas, accessing the cream talent is paramount. Strategic utilisation of the free agents enables the employers to widen their field whilst seeking optimal talent. This gives them access to a variety of resources in the form of entrepreneurs' at-home workers, and retirees. This is an important talent source as employees are seeking to close the gap that exists in the current labour market and build a talent pool for future prospects (Osterman, 2000).

Competitive pressure has also caused the shift in the Kenyan market towards the free agency strategy. As companies try to maintain competitiveness, they are highly encouraged to adopt a scalable and agile employment model. The goal of building flexible employment models as a response to the changing business dynamics is becoming an important strategy for competition. Employers are looking for ways through which they can retain knowledge and key skills for optimal performance of their companies. Workers in the contemporary labour market are in need of schedules that are more flexible, valuable arrangements of work, and telecommuting. As companies make the realisation, they are seeking to retain talented individuals who possess key skills and retain the company's intelligence. This can only be achieved through the incorporation of free agents into the strategy of their workforce (Goodwin-White, 2009).

All of the aforementioned simultaneous workforce trends are propelling a steady increase in the number of working individuals seeking to make a transition from their traditional careers to performing their work independently as free agents. Workers in Nairobi County are increasingly being drawn to this new form of employment where the lifestyle considerations have emerged to influence decisions in employment. In addition, under this new strategy, flexibility and freedom outweigh the convectional ideas of security and certainty (Goodwin-White, 2009).

Notwithstanding the numerous benefits associated with the free agency strategy, Predelli (2011) indicates that employers are very slow to adapt the strategy. The rapid expansion of the free agency has not yet began to influence widely the policies of human resource for the convectional employees in Kenya who continue to dominate the labour market. Although the trend is clearly shifting towards free agency in all the generations in the workforce, it is apparent that the employers have to grasp fully what the ramifications of the free agency

strategy are. Nearly a quarter of the workers in Nairobi County report that their present employers do not offer working arrangements that are flexible enough to meet their competing needs. Among the important elements not embraced by these employers, include telecommuting and flexitime (Predelli, 2011).

This problem has not been addressed in the country since the latter years of the last decade. This reveals that there is a growing gap between employers' offers and the needs of the workers. It is clear that there is a mismatch between the traditional models of employment in Kenya and what highly skilled and experienced workers' desire is aiding in free agency growth. Moreover, it is also apparent that the lack of options on the part of the employers is compelling workers to find their own career paths, which necessitates the adoption of the free agency strategy. To make most of what is being offered by free agency strategy in the Kenyan labour market, organisations have to learn first the measures that are pivotal in the integration of a flexible work style into their processes of business and the present culture of the company. This means that the employers have to forego the conventional employment perceptions (Osterman, 2000).

Work is no longer the long-term and fixed proposition that it once assumed and workers in the Kenyan labour market are gaining more access to the flexible and engaging work that they desire. In response, organisations are being faced with need to re-educate and overhaul their operations with the aim of bridging the gap between what the employers want and what the workers offer. Otherwise, organisations that are adamant to adopt this strategy are risking losing on a widely distributed talent pool that is highly qualified (Kaupins, 2012).

5.0) Conclusions

The free agency strategy is a concept in the contemporary Kenyan labour market that has overhauled business undertakings. Because of increased experience, skills and education, the free agents in the Kenyan labour market are able to change the labour market for the better. These individuals are available, satisfied, and engaged. These agents now account for almost half of the workers in labour markets and they are increasing every year. To respond to changes in the dynamic labour market, the employers are having to harness and tap into this change in the employment market. By engaging with the free agents, the companies enjoy an easier, cheaper, and faster scalability of the workforce. These numerous advantages come with adopting the free agency strategy. When employers in the Kenyan labour market decipher what makes the free agents tick, they come to realise that the strategy is a source of talent that is needed if they are determined about getting and sustaining a competitive advantage.

The free agency strategy possesses the experience that makes an instant difference. This strategy has entrenched a relationship in the workplace, which when harnessed correctly can create a win-win situation for the employer and the employee. Free agents in Kenya have made a clear indication that they want the best for themselves and they are out to get it from the right companies that offer a flexible schedule. Contingent work necessitated by free agency strategy provides a better balance between life and work. Moreover, working for a variety of employees helps in skill and experience development that are synonymous with an increase of employability. The agents are building a competitive edge concomitant with the organisation that they work. The new era of workforce flexibility has come with incredible potential. Nevertheless, it requires a modern approach of thinking about the strategy of workforce, management, and talent acquisition. Companies in this era of changes in the labour market need to be extremely pro-active, to learn about the work style of the free agents, and make changes to get all the benefits emanating from this new form of workforce. Companies also need to embrace the strategy of free agency as not only a trend but also a workforce paradigm, causal to the future of business undertakings.

6.0) Recommendations

In the dynamic labour market, there exists the need for more companies in Kenya to capitalise on the free agency strategy. Organisations have to take action as soon as possible to be in a better position for the free agent population that is rising. It is of great importance to include free agents in the general workforce strategy in the country. This entails designing an employment model that is flexible and that possesses a purposeful blend of free agent and traditional talent. More companies need to consider maintaining only a staff that has core personnel responsible for standard workflow and daily operations. Moreover, there is the need to leverage external and internal supply to stay at par with the trends in the Kenyan market. When experiencing seasonal demands for sets of specialist skills, an organisation can quickly bring free agents that possess the required skills. This ensures that there is a minimal downtime between the company's projects, the streamlined processes, and the associated benefits of a fixed influx of expertise and new ideas (Shalla & Clement, 2007).

Companies in the country need to know how they are presently using their free agents. To leverage the talent pool of free agents, it is of importance to decipher how much the organisation spends on the talent of free agents. There is a need to know how many free agents the company possesses, how they are being used, what their use is in the company, and the projects they are supporting. A good way to start such an assessment is to make a comparison of the company's facilities and Information Technology assesses information with the payroll data. Oftentimes, the free agents have access to the company and it is vital to know who is working for the company.

Organisations need to evaluate positions, projects, and departments to see how they are going to benefit from the talent of the free agents. This can be achieved by paying particular attention to the areas in the organisation that require skills that are highly specialised. Free agents are also useful in functional areas like mentoring and employee training. Many organisations use seasonal workers to mentor and train new employees (Vettori, 2010). Workers with knowledge about the mission, culture, and the goals of the business are the most versed to pass the knowledge to new employees. Many profitable companies in the country have prioritised the needs of the workforce in areas within the organisation that truly foster competitive differentiation. The goal is to have an agile pool with qualifications available in the areas of core competency. By concentrating on the critical positions and functions that support the key areas, the sophisticated companies are sure to benefit from the strategic advantage, if they leverage talent in the most important areas, at the right time, and incurring the least risk (Cornelius, 2002).

Companies need to understand the importance of their brand. Free agents evaluate the reputation of a company as closely as the company evaluates them. More workers benefit from online access to the rating of the employer and a wide array of recommendation site. Networking sites have enabled free agents to share information about the best working options. It is important to consider how the workers perceive the company's brand and adjust the impediments that may be present at the precise moment. Review of the career site is among the necessary steps to take because it necessitates that the organisation is promoted through emphasis on flexibility, opportunities for building skills, and interesting (Shalla & Clement, 2007).

The numerous changes happening in the labour market are compelling more companies to develop more options for the present employees. In the light of this, companies that have convectional employees and seeking more flexibility should consider developing the paths for free agents, so that they can be encouraged to maintain their stay with the organisation. These companies could also leverage the intellectual capacity of retirees and alumni through implementation of programs for engagement with the talent pools. These programs make it easy for the companies to manage uncertainty and future risk by having access to an experienced and qualified pool of talent. Seasonal workers desiring flexibility and freedom can take advantage of such programs (Goodwin-White, 2009). According to Goff (2005), there exist significant risks that emanate from misclassification of agency workers. Companies should work closely with the workforce solution partner and the legal team to understand the employment environment that is complex. An evaluation of the solutions partners in the workforce of the company is also necessary. The solutions partner should possess expertise in the population of free agents and should offer advice to the Kenyan companies on innovative and insightful ways to optimise and access the entire free agent pool to meet the objectives of the business. The companies should also possess the experience to help guide the free agents in business undertakings.

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