Philip: **[00:00:03]** Hi everybody, and welcome to this week's Art of Procurement interview. I'm Philip Ideson. I'm the host of the show. For the first time, I'm really excited to say that the Art of Procurement is now powered by sig. If you missed the announcement, please check it out. I did a bonus podcast a couple of days that I recorded and published just to give you a little bit more context on what that means and why it's something that I've been working on for some time, but I'm really excited that we can finally announce it and share the details of this partnership.

[00:00:32] Well, onto the show today. My guest is Gene Zaino. Gene is the founder and CEO of MBO Partners. MBO Partners are at the forefront of the gig or the project economy. I was delighted to welcome Gene onto the show to discuss a little bit more about the gig economy and particularly in the context of knowledge based workers.

[00:00:52] We then discussed how organizations can stop thinking of taking advantage of an on-demand workforce. And if they already are, what are some of the things that they can do to take it to the next level. So, my first question for Gene, and this was really to help with some context was just to ask him if he could share a little bit more about what MBO Partners actually does.

Gene: **[00:01:14]** MBO provides an operating system really for the new workforce of the independent and gig workers. That's just growing and becoming a pretty big trend in… Actually, in the US and around the world.

[00:01:32] And what we do is we make sure that these people that want to work as freelancers and independent contractors, that they're put into a platform that is properly making them compliant for the clients they work for, putting them in the proper work or categorization. But at the same time, our customer is really that individual freelancer providing them all of the tools and infrastructure they need to make them a successful independent consultant and contractor.

[00:02:10] That's everything from providing them an online platform that gives them all access to their business information, multiple clients, all the different income streams coming into one financial - what we call a business center. They get access to you know have doing this from their phone to take a picture of like their business expenses or entering their time, their projects.

[00:02:36] This platform then will handle everything from billing their clients, tracking their cash coming in, taking business expenses, getting the tax

deductions, all the way through actually even making sure their taxes are properly paid every time they take money out. And giving them access to benefits, retirement, business insurances. We'll actually set them up as their own little corporation if that's what they want to do.

[00:03:05] And for the clients and for mostly large enterprises that use these independent contractors and freelancers generally when they use them at scale, you know 50 to 100 or thousands of them, we provide a full centralized procurement and administration capability that aggregates these people together so there's one organization to deal with.

[00:03:28] We integrate into the procurement systems so that they are tied into all of the processes and approvals that are needed to engage with an independent contractor. And then, there's one master agreement. And then we have work orders and some agreements with every different project. So, as the work gets done, it gets approved through our system, integrated into the client system, payment comes to MBO, and then MBO sends it out to every individual. We then take a transaction fee that is similar to kind of an American Express kind of PayPal fee which is anywhere from 3 to 5 or 6 percent. That's how we do our business.

Philip: **[00:04:16]** Yes. It's kind of creating consistency for an organization to actually access these freelance workers in a way that they ordinarily probably wouldn't do if they had to manage all that themselves.

Gene: **[00:04:29]** Yeah. So, it provides safety. The compliance, it provides centralized administration, and we also have a platform that allows them to create a marketplace for those types of contractors and freelancers they want to use and reuse to send projects to. It is really a new innovative way to really improve the efficiency of an organization services supply chain.

Philip: **[00:04:59]** So, actually, I want to dig deeper into the project or the gig economy in a little while. But just while we're talking a little bit about MBO and your origin story, one which is probably the easiest question is… And I've always wondered this, what does MBO actually stand for?

Gene: **[00:05:16]** Good question. So, MBO actually stands for My Biz Office. That was our original name. When we created the concept of MBO, it was designed to be the business office for an independent contractor. So, it was named My Biz

Office. And you know kind of circa 1999-2000, that was kind of a cool name to have, you know my something.

[00:05:45] Then as we evolved, the contractors and consultants that were using is just saying "Gene, My Biz Office kind of sounds a little, you know kind of funky." So, they ended up starting to call us MBO. Then we realized that "Okay. Well, we want to be more of a professional services organization to help these people feel more like you know they're truly independent consultants. We then changed our name to MBO Partners.

Philip: **[00:06:16]** Interesting. Well, I've always wondered that. It makes complete sense. Especially interesting about people who already work with you started to call you that. It wasn't some big branding exercise where you sat down and…

Gene: **[00:06:26]** No. Actually, we did a big branding exercise and it came down to let's just stick with this if that's what they're calling us. It wasn't anything that we could come up that was that much better.

Philip: **[00:06:40]** So, you had a career thinking consulting. You're both as a consultant, I think as a leader within consulting as well before you launched MBO. So, what was the inspiration behind actually starting it? You talked a little bit about what it does and what it did at the time but why was there a gap in the market that you saw at that time?

Gene: **[00:06:59]** Sure. So, I started my career in public accounting actually at KPMG. They are first in the audit and financial arm and then moved into the consulting arm. Then eventually left and started my own consulting business which eventually was sold to a much larger consulting company. So, in doing that, I kind of learned what it is to be in the consulting business and also learned what it is to deal with the kind of issues that consulting firms have. Clients want you to have people available and they want them to start right away when they have a project even though they'll take a long time before they make a decision.

[00:07:50] And at the same time, you know as a consulting company, you can't afford to keep everybody sitting around not doing work. So, I saw the need for building a community of just in time talent. Back in those days, the internet was obviously becoming very popular back in those days. The turn of the millennium there were you know. Like monster.com was out there. So, I knew the internet and match.com. I knew the internet was going to figure out how to match people

with projects and projects with people, but I knew there was a need to clear that transaction in an efficient way and in a compliant way.

[00:08:31] I saw the need. At that point in time, the big issue was the Y2K problem. There was a lot of 10.99 and there were lots of attacks and reclassification issues. Compliance started becoming a big issue in terms of companies using more and more of these independent contractors. But there were penalties and risks associated to them. And then, for the independent contractor, it was difficult for them to figure out how to be a one-person company, go find business to develop their career and at the same time have to figure out how to manage through the navigation certainly of large companies and the bureaucracy and procurement processes. It's pretty clear to me that there was a need to put that together and come up with a way to clear that transaction and provide a… We removed a lot of the friction in that transaction and certainly disintermediate a lot of layers of a process.

Philip: **[00:09:28]** It is interesting you talk about the journey. This is a journey that… You mentioned there Y2K. So, in 1999-2000 you are talking about this and solving for this. And yet, when we talk about the gig economy, it feels like that's something recently coined as if it's come out of nowhere. I'm interested if really what we think of as being the gig economy today. Is that just the latest iteration, latest name for something that's existed a long time before now that maybe there hasn't been the technology to connect it all together.

Gene: **[00:10:02]** Absolutely right. Independent contracting has been around for a long time. I could tell you in our time that we've been you know working in this part of the industry, we've seen a big change over the last seven or eight years. Before that, companies would say "Well, we don't want to use independent contractors" or where there was this stigma associated to freelancers like they are people that can't get real jobs.

[00:10:32] Today, it's the whole new world. It's like companies are building platforms based on using gig workers. Companies are realizing that's where the real talent is, and individuals are finding that they have a better life. They can manage their work and life. In fact, they even feel healthier being more of an independent contractor.

[00:10:56] So, absolutely, I think it has come into vogue, into mainstream now. But it's been around for a long time. One of the things I like to point out to people

when I'm at conferences and when speaking and it usually gets kind of you know

like the eyebrows. You know employment as we know it is only about 135 years old. Before that everybody was self-employed. We're kind of going back to a world where people are becoming more specialized and more self-directed.

[00:11:34] Certainly, a large part of the workforce at different points in their career are going to be doing this type of work either supplementing their full-time job or doing it for quite a bit of period of time while they're either wanting to build their own little business or while they need to have more flexibility.

Philip: [00:11:58] It's interesting as I talk to folks and maybe this is just trinities that I surround myself with. I'm having conversations nearly every day with really senior level professionals, you know CPO levels in the procurement space even who have gone on the career journey and got to a certain point and realized that maybe this is what they want to do for the rest of their lives. Or they want some more flexibility that you know being in their organization doesn't afford them. So, this suddenly becomes attractive.

[00:12:25] It also then allows you to start thinking about earning money based on the value that you provide as opposed to you know being stuck in the sea working essentially time material for a salary. It's interesting those trends kind of all happening where I see more and more, more and more people I talk to.

Gene: [00:12:42] Absolutely. I mean I think it's a career stage. You know motivation. So, like you said, certainly at certain points in people's career certainly towards the latter, you know in a more mature part of their career they want to do something different. They've established some level of real intellectual capital that they could then sell and make more money on. They've established a network of people that trust them and know what they do.

[00:13:09] And then of course, there's different parts you know different times of your career when you need more flexibility raising a family or whatever, but I totally agree with you that we're going to see companies wanting to buy results more than hourly work. And that's going to favor the people that have really good skills who can know how to deliver efficiency in value at a fixed price and actually earn more money but provide their clients with budget integrity and not a lot of risk because they're not just paying by the hour. They know what they're going to get, and they and they have a fixed price for it.

[00:13:52] At the same time, these are ways to replicate work/expertise that you know how to do over and over again. And I think actually with automation, more

artificial intelligence, I think is going to allow freelancers to actually become much more profitable because they're going to leverage, they're going to become expert at certain tools that's going to enable them to deliver real value at a very efficient price and use the tools to leverage whatever their work is.

Philip: **[00:14:26]** You know as you think about that change because I completely agree with that. That's been my vision behind a lot of the things I've been doing recently. I'm interested when you see and work with clients, do you see that on the ground that more clients are actually thinking in that way and actually wanting to buy the deliverable outcome based results for a fixed price versus just bringing somebody in to essentially sit at a chair and do something and do great work and do it for 3, 6, 9 months, whatever it looks like. But it's a little bit more open ended. That's what people I think still conceive in their mind of working with freelancers. So, I'd love to hear if you're seeing changes, you know the winds of change in terms of how people are engaging.

Gene: **[00:15:09]** I see the change. It's certainly early days. I will tell you that it's certainly a direction. I see it happening, but I think we're you know, I don't know how many years. Things happen fast nowadays. But usually in this world of work things take a little longer. I think we're a few years away from that but it's becoming more and more you know.

[00:15:33] As people become more and more specialized which certainly the internet and marketplaces are allowing us to do so you could go hire a specialist. As you hire specialists, they are focused. They know how to do things. They could bend. When you've done something more than three times you kind of understand how to do it and you could put a fixed price on it. When you're doing something for the first time you got to charge by the hour because you don't know how long it's going to take. But so, the more people become specialized and the more they are focused and certainly if they start using tools and templates, I absolutely believe you're going to see in the future, you know mid-term near to mid to midterm future where you're going to have like a service catalog. And you're just going to buy results. And I think that's going to be another huge accelerator for people to become specialized freelancers and independent consultants to deliver those types of products.

Philip: **[00:16:25]** What kind of job roles are we talking? Because you know when you think about… And I use that term loosely again, the gig economy, just because

it's something I think is kind of accepted in terms of what that means. But when you think of it, you are thinking of more tactile transactional commoditized work.

The reality being that that's not all it's for. You can have and bring knowledge based workers. And I think you see a lot of that. So, I'm interested again what kind of workers. Is there are limits to the kind of workers that you would see in this model or is it really essentially anybody?

Gene: **[00:17:15]** We studied this for years now. We have seven years of data, thousands and thousands of data points. On our website MBO Partners or go into Google and just search State of Independence in America, you'll get seven years of data.

[00:17:35] What we've learned is there's kind of a barbell impact at the two ends of the extreme. One is where you have what I kind of refer to and others refer to as undifferentiated services where people are doing things that are really not related necessarily to their skill. It's just kind of doing some work, right. So, driving a car, picking up your dry cleaning, you know walking the dog, doing some type of service that is being done to either supplement your income or a lot of people do it even socially you know. So, it's like bartending where you kind of bartend to meet people. There's a lot of that.

[00:18:25] And that's really based on demand. You know gig work that is you're not really looking for a particular skill, you just looking to have a service done. They're generally low dollar transactions, and they're very specific. That's probably what brought a lot of media attention to the gig economy. But then on the other side of that barbell is where the real dollars are in this economy. There's 1.2 trillion dollars in the United States that is driven by this gig economy. The overwhelming majority of that is driven by highly skilled or differentiated services. That's where you are looking for a particular type of skill or capability and you need to understand the quality of that person. So, you're buying the person not the just the service. That is where kind of LinkedIn comes into play and other niche marketplaces that are really even being geared toward certain communities of talent where you could go and explore the profiles, look at their particular experience. And then, you're generally looking at engaging someone for a higher dollar value and a more strategic level of work.

[00:20:06] In our world in MBO, our average projects are about $30,000 an engagement. When you're going to engage someone for that level of dollars you're going to do a little due diligence behind that as opposed to somebody to pick up my dry cleaning per se.

Philip: [00:20:28] Yeah. As you think about adaption, does that change from country to country based on legislation for example or even just coaching. We have listeners all around the world to the show. I know my viewpoint is mostly around the US, a little bit in the UK as well, but from what you see when you work in different geographies if there's a different level of adaption based on certain factors.

Gene: [00:20:54] It's certainly happening worldwide. You know McKinsey did a great study on, I think it was 25 countries, but it was a number of countries. They identified, and they extrapolated 160 million people around the world that are now doing this type of contract gig work. The countries that are being most progressive in this are the more developed countries. Certainly, the UK, Ireland, Australia, the Netherlands. But US does have the largest component. But it's happening everywhere.

[00:21:47] There are different rules. When you talk about labor and work, it gets very localized. Even in the United States. The laws in California versus the laws in Texas versus the laws in New York versus Massachusetts. They're very different as to what constitutes an independent contractor and what are the responsibilities of an employer or the client. There's a lot to know. That is sort of the things we specialize in. How do you really set up the arrangement as a company? How do you set the arrangement up with that independent contractor so you're not going to run into a minefield of risk with the Department of Labor or the IRS or the state unemployment or the worker's camp or the Affordable Care Act?

[00:22:38] In different countries, the UK just recently changed its position on this a great deal. It used to be that that the burden of employment was on the individual. From a tax point of view, if they were misclassified the individual was penalized. They flipped that around mid-last year. It's now the higher, the company, is now at risk if their worker is being misclassified which puts a whole different perspective on the risk.

Philip: [00:23:11] Right. One of the things I think over in the US for sure is the debates they've been having about healthcare and what healthcare is going to look like. How is that impacting the supply side? Because I look at my personal perspective. I think there's a time when in the US you are completely dependent upon your employer for healthcare. Then we have the Affordable Care Act which

opened that up then to anybody. If that ever changes, does that impact… would that put some brakes on the market in the States if folks suddenly were struggling to get access to affordable healthcare again?

Gene: [00:23:52] Yes. There's this concept of job block which has been benefits are only available through your employer so therefore you're stuck in that job. You can't leave because you need to get your benefits. Certainly, the Affordable Care Act has lubricated the system to remove more of that job block. But it's been a trend that's been happening for years. Pensions are now more and more rare. Right? Where you can get a defined benefit plan. It's now about defined contributions where everybody's got their own 401(k) and they can take it with them.

[00:24:37] The Affordable Care Act certainly has its controversial issues. But I think there's definitely going to be some kind of unlocking of that healthcare offering to only be by employers. It's becoming a very big expense to employers. I think that's also been driving the independent contractor to hire somebody. It's a pretty big commitment. It takes a lot of work. There's a lot of responsibility. There's a lot of cost. That was another driver actually for using more and more independent contractors from the company side.

[00:25:24] From the individual side, you're absolutely right. What do these people do for healthcare if you can't be part of a group? I think that that is still an issue. I think you will see more and more innovation. We're certainly talking to a lot of the larger healthcare providers and I think there is a lot of attention and innovation that's being focused on how to deliver health insurance and how to improve the cost of providing health to individuals so that they can take on that responsibility. I personally think as you get more and more data whether it's these DNA you see on TV, right.

[00:26:22] Yeah. Well, you're going to start seeing personalized medicine. Things have become much more specific and I think that will also drive how this whole healthcare costs will be dealt with. But I think that's a tough problem as we all know. You're absolutely right. It's certainly an issue.

Philip: [00:26:45] It's something I certainly keep an eye on from my perspective. I have done over the debates of how that could impact the supply side. But I hadn't thought about the fact that it's a huge expense on the employer side when they do have somebody who is a full-time employee. And so, maybe over time that we're someone bundling of all benefits and the employer responsibility is just what that looks like. Who know? I guess we'll watch this space.

Gene: [00:27:03] Yeah. I think that's what's going to happen. But again, it becomes a very localized issue. It might be different from state to state and certainly will be country to country.

Philip: [00:27:26] And so, what I'd love to do then for the remainder of kind of the questions that I have is to talk about some actions. I want to come from a couple of different perspectives. One is for a company that's only just beginning to think about the gig economy, and then for one maybe they are already doing it what can they do to actually be more effective, efficient in the use of freelance as independent consultants.

[00:27:49] And so, I guess I'll start with those that are just beginning to think about offering the gig economy. Where should they actually start?

Gene: [00:27:57] Sure. So, for those that are just starting to think about it, they probably already have a lot of people working in their organization that they're not aware of. We find that there is freelancers and independent contractors working two or three layers below other vendors.

[00:28:15] I would think the first thing they want to do is build together a program that is focused on how it is most efficient to engage with this segment of the workforce. It's an important segment. It's where a lot of innovation is. It's a very efficient segment. If you do it properly you have to make sure you get rid of the risks. It's easy to just pay people through you know PayPal or debit card or through your AP system. And then before you know it you've got some big problems because of the worker classification risk.

[00:28:57] I would say you need to make this a strategic program and initiative. The companies that are most successful have done it that way. In terms of companies that are already doing it, part of the problem is "Okay. How do I change my organization? I got all these people already being paid directly." You have to do it slowly. You don't want to poke the hornet's nest. Okay. You don't want to all of a sudden tell people "All right. We're now going to go into this program." even though they've been working independently directly and probably out of compliance for years.

[00:29:37] The biggest risk a company has, a large company that is, that has hundreds or thousands of these independent contractors is to make them unhappy. There's so many whistleblowing tools - there's the internet and social

media. You don't want to damage your brand. You need to gradually give people plenty of choice and warning as to what the new program will be.

[00:30:01] The best way to do that is to market it internally, have a proper program set up, and set up a community where you could tell these people "Okay. Now, register with our network." And certainly, there are tools out there that you could create your own network of kind of a micro marketplace, right. If you register, by the way you're going to get privileged access to projects from our company. And by the way, you're going to have to operate in this more compliant process or go through this compliance program. But that's going to take place whatever, 90 days from now. So, give people choice.

[00:30:43] If you're already doing this and you have a lot of people working as independent contractors, the worst thing you want to do is rip the Band-Aid off quickly and create a lot of risk and problems. Those are the choices.

Philip: **[00:30:59]** I hadn't even thought about the reputational risk and the fact that it only takes one unhappy independent not to like how you are proceeding for them to create a big problem and to open up, as you say the obviousness.

Gene: **[00:31:08]** Oh, yeah. And by the way, the media loves this stuff. The media would love to have a front-page story or some story of "Hey, this person should have been an employee. They've been working here for six years. They never got over time.

Philip: **[00:31:22]** This company is taking advantage of them.

Gene: **[00:31:24]** Yes. Yes. So, on the other hand, there's people that really don't want to be your employee. They love what they're doing, and they will be happy to join a community where they could get more project type work. In those situations where those people are really the higher level more in-demand talent, as an organization you need to figure out how to become a client of choice for them. How do you become so attractive that they want to work with you as their preferred client? There are certainly initiatives. Those are the more sophisticated. People have been doing this for a while. They have programs that make it really easy for these freelancers to work with them and do it in a least amount of friction, least amount of risk. They know how to market the projects to them. So, there's lots to do.

Philip: **[00:32:21]** This is three things actually. I just made a note of it as you were talking. I'd love to just go through them. They kind of go through the process of somebody who's just starting to somebody who's doing a big initiative to then becoming a client of choice just as followers. I thought to cover them in that order.

[00:32:36] So, the first one was you mentioned when you're talking about somebody who's new to thinking about or embracing the gig economy that the reality is they already have lots of independents working for them, they just don't know who they are or where they are.

[00:32:48] I wonder what are some of the ways that a company in that situation could actually go about finding out who and where those independent contractors are within their system. How did they get the data or the visibility into what their current status is.

Gene: **[00:33:04]** That's one of the hardest problems. Basically, what you have to do is you've got to go through your accounts payable system. You'll see… You can largely recognize them by even the names of their companies. John Smith Inc. So, one you have to ask your managers. You have to get the message out to your organization that hey there's a risk here that we don't want to fall into. So, anyone that you know that's you know running this type of operation let's find a better way for them to work with our organization.

[00:33:47] You could go by the… If you have security badges. Usually, companies know who's an employee and who's not their employee. You could look at those badges. But it's a very difficult thing to do. I will tell you it's one of the biggest problems that every company has is to how to identify where these people are.

Philip: **[00:34:07]** So, the next question I had a follow up on that was, you said as you start to put a program in place you want to give choices to the independent contractors that you do have. I just wondered what some of those choices could look like.

Gene: **[00:34:20]** So the choices are "Hey, here's the requirements to be a qualified independent contractor for my company." You need to have a background check. Examples. You need a background check. You need to have a certain level of professional liability insurance. You need general liability insurance. You

need to make sure you have the proper health insurance so that you know in current

Affordable Care Act laws your companies have to make sure that all their people are properly offered insurance.

[00:34:39] So there are certain things that that you need to have. You give them the way to get that. Obviously, a little self-serving here, this is what MBO does. So MBO would say "Okay. Here's how you get all that done." Or they could arrange their own methodology of getting people. There's proper insurances and so forth. But don't just try to treat these people like any other vendor that might have infrastructure to go do these types of things. Without looking like their employer, you have to help them by giving them choices and letting them go figure out how to get this done and give them the choice that you could use this company, this company, and that company. Or here's someone you can talk to because we want you to be in our program, but these are the requirements.

[00:35:53] Give them ample time to digest that and try to come up to speed. Don't give them three weeks to get it done. Give them three months to get it done.

Philip: [00:36:04] Something you said that probably segues into the last question I had on the kind of journey, and you mentioned earlier about being a kind of choice. And you said just then about helping people without being their employer. How can you be a kind of choice in this space without going too far that it starts to sort of align between being off work classification?

Gene: [00:36:27] Exactly. So, one thing you could do is you could create a preferred network. Just like you have preferred vendors. Procurement organizations know and have done this for years, right. You've rationalized your suppliers to give more to fewer suppliers to get better pricing. Same type of thing. Create a preferred network based on certain criteria but treat them like vendors. They are vendors. They have to be viewed as vendors.

[00:36:59] And do things that remove some of the friction. Perhaps, make sure there's a system in place that they could easily get access to record their invoices. Even the words you use, don't use terms like overtime. Make the work fixed price as much as you can. That helps that work arrangement to be as much of a vendor as possible.

[00:37:41] You want things to be easy, but you need them to be not confusing where people actually think "Well Gene, I thought I was your employee." But there are ways to do that. Setting up the right messaging, the right marketplace,

the right way again to treat them like you would a supplier but make it easy and make a process as purposely built for this type of one-person vendor.

Philip: **[00:38:09]** And building a community, a sense of community. I've often thought as… A community is something that doesn't necessarily have boundaries, but people feel engaged. Communication is a big part of that. Even though you may not be using them for a long time and then there may be a project that comes up that is a perfect fit. Keep some kind of communication ongoing so that they feel they are still part of something bigger than just themselves.

Gene: **[00:38:36]** Exactly. And that's what they like. They like to meet other people. You could certainly do that. You could have meet ups. You could have guest speakers come in. But make sure there's a bright line between what you do with your employees versus what you do with these people. And there should be. They want to be different. They want to be more self-directed, but they want good clients.

[00:39:04] A freelancer, independent consultant, probably wants half a dozen to a dozen clients that they could work with which makes it good for everyone. You don't have to keep doing things new over and over again.

Philip: **[00:39:16]** So to wrap up with a question on the supply side, taking it from the perspective of the independent consultants, and we have a number of independent consultants listening to the show as well. You see lots and lots of engagements happening every single day. I wonder if there are certain traits or certain things that independent consultants do that are more successful than others. What do they have in common?

Gene: **[00:39:40]** Well, they certainly have a high level of confidence. They know what they do. They know how to articulate what they do. They've established themselves a network of people that they could rely on to speak to what they do.

[00:40:07] They know what not to do which is important. You know it's like building a business. It's not very different. In the early days, you've got to be careful you don't take on things that you're not really good at. You want to create a good reputation. You want to make sure you stay focused to your core

expertise and build that reference base. And then the word of mouth just goes. It just happens.

[00:40:35] For those people that understand what their real core competency is and know how to articulate it, do thought leadership. Do podcasts like this or go speak or volunteer to speak at a local event. Write a blog. Market yourself from an expertise point of view and contribute that content. It is not that hard, but you need to have that confidence. You need to know what your skills are, and you need to not be shy about talking about it.

Philip: **[00:41:14]** Look Gene, I really appreciate you spending some time with us today and your insights. I think the listeners know the work that I've been doing. It's an area that I truly believe in in terms of how we deliver subject matter expertise, how organizations actually access talent. I think it's going to change significantly. I always wonder what's going to be the final trigger of that You mentioned right at the beginning I think about things happening quicker than we anticipate. I feel like things happen slower until you get to a certain point and then it's immediate. It's like you don't know when that trigger is going to be as soon as it hits.

Gene: **[00:41:50]** Well, it's that innovation curve, right? That people know about, right. I think we've been in the early adopters' stage for quite some time. We're now approaching the early majority, right. I think the acceleration line has just gotten steepened. I think that's what's happening, and we feel it certainly. I think overall you see it in the marketplace. You see more and more of these gig-related marketplaces starting up.

Philip: **[00:42:24]** So, you mentioned as well, the State of Independence reports. It's something I followed for a number of years. Probably, since you started it. So, I'd love if you could just share with listeners where they could go to find out more. I'm sure that report is one of those but if there's anything else you would recommend that listeners would check out, I can put links of those in our show notes. And of course, where they can contact you directly if they want to continue the conversation.

Gene: **[00:42:49]** Sure. Well certainly our website which is mbopartners.com. And then, once you get to our website, if you go to the resources page or even just go to the main page and scroll down, you'll see that there is links for the State of

Independence. There's links for the client of choice research that we've been doing as well. And also, we actually have a little bit of a position paper for what

the government needs to do to make this classification of independent contractor much easier to determine by having an actual certification for people that want to be independent so that their clients won't have to worry about the reclassification. So, we have a position paper on that as well.

[00:43:43] So, you know just go to mbopartners.com. Scroll down and you'll see these links. There are seven years of data there. And these other things. And certainly, our contact information. We've got teams of people that are both on the enterprise side and in the independent contractor side that are happy to talk about this.

Philip: **[00:44:03]** Perfect. What I'll do is I'll link up to those in the show notes as I mentioned. That's going to be at artofprocurement.com/mbopartners. That's artofprocurement.com/mbopartners.

[00:44:16] Gene, just once again, thank you very much for joining me. I really appreciate it.

Gene: **[00:44:20]** Thank you very much. This was fun.

Philip: **[00:44:23]** Thank you.

[00:44:24] Thank you for listening to another episode of the Arts of Procurement. To find an archive of all past episodes, you can go to artofprocurement.com/episodes. And to ensure you never miss another show, go to artofprocurement.com/subscribe.