8 reasons why social media isn't the right place to hire creative freelancers

With over 3.96B people using social media worldwide as of July 2020, and many creatives promoting their work on Instagram, Facebook, and Pinterest, to name a few, it's not surprising that many of us use social media platforms to hire creative freelancers for their projects.

At first, even we turned to some of these platforms to find creatives for our projects, but anyone that's tried to hire through social media knows it's a long and disorderly process. Prepare to get lost in about fifty different rabbit holes before finding the right expert for your specific needs.

The problem with social media is quite simple: it's just not made for hire. And it's especially not made for hiring creatives — here's why:

Social media is social, not professional

Facebook and Instagram are *social* networks, and by their very nature, aren't made for *professional* interactions. It's important to keep in mind that social media encourages quick and impersonal interactions.

As people on these platforms aren't necessarily coming from a place of professional intent, your message won't have the same impact and your requirements may get lost in the noise of social media. People simply might not give the same attention to a Facebook post as they would to one on a recognised professional platform.

Just think about your behaviours on Instagram and LinkedIn, and how you approach each platform differently. However, whilst your call for a creative expert will definitely hold more legitimacy and professionalism on a network like LinkedIn, you'll have trouble finding creative freelancers there, which brings us to our next point.

Social media isn't made for hiring creative freelancers

While there are social media networks dedicated to hiring, like LinkedIn, many creative experts aren't present there, simply because it's not a platform made for creatives, nor one targeted to creative hiring. Most creative freelancers will use their portfolios (visual, audio, or written) to show their experience and suitability for a job, rather than sending a traditional CV and cover letter.

And it's this lack of adaptability to the creative process on these social networks that pushes many to favour more flexible, but less professional networks to find work.

You need to know where to find your audience

By using social media to hire creatives, you're actually limiting yourself to the social platform's audience, which was never targeted to creative expertise in the first place.

Finding the right place to go to hire general creative skills doesn't seem too difficult of a task to start with, but things start to get a lot more complicated if you're looking for, say, a filmmaker specialising in crowdfunding videos with an interest in health, or a creative translator with a scientific background, or even an illustrator specialising in colourful figurative body representations echoing a wine brand.

If what you're looking for is very specific, you'll usually struggle to find the best place to go to attract the right creative freelancers. And whilst you might think reaching out on all social media platforms would increase your chances of

finding the right person for your project, in broadening your audience, you're actually opening the door to applicants from *all* backgrounds, including those who may not actually specialise in the expertise you require.

You need to know how to talk *creative*

Writing a creative brief is a skill and one that isn't easy to master. A creative brief is a job description, but it's a job description unlike any other. Often, the information you feel is important to your project and your needs aren't what a creative freelancer really needs to know to best do their job.

It goes without saying that any information you chose to include in your description is necessary to the project, but you may have missed out on some essential points that could really narrow down and refine the kinds of applications you receive.

And because social media networks aren't made for creative hiring, you benefit from no guidance whatsoever when writing your initial job description, which will potentially attract the wrong talents and, once again hinder your productivity.

Without a clear creative brief, your prospective creative freelancers may misunderstand your needs, making it nearly impossible for them to quote you accurately for the job, setting you up for possible disagreements further down the line, in regards to workload or invoicing, to name a few examples.

It's not efficient: you lose an incredible amount of time reviewing applications

Based on our experience hiring creative freelancers through social media in the past, we quickly realised that it heavily compromised our productivity. People were sending us multiple portfolios, either through their website or social media pages, or both.

That meant that we had to spend hours browsing through entire portfolios on multiple platforms, just to find a few examples of relevant previous work that would show us how the creative expert could interpret our brief and add to our vision.

And because most creatives wear many hats (which is why we love them), it's needless to say that finding an example of a corporate conference video on the website of a creative, who is a filmmaker, editor, DOP, animator and motion designer, isn't a quick and easy task.

And because social media platforms aren't adapted to creative hiring, sorting through those portfolios more than doubles your workload: your time spent on reviewing applications is huge, while you could be spending your time more efficiently in other areas related to the creation of your project.

A lack of privacy: your professional life starts to interfere with your personal life

Once you advertise your project on social media, you quickly receive interest from all corners of the Internet, and your personal profile or page is flooded with messages. Even if you ask applications to be emailed to a specific place, chances are, people won't necessarily take notice of your ask.

Most times, you'll continue to receive comments, direct messages, and friend requests, which can get a little overwhelming and can feel like you don't have any privacy. The lines between your professional life and personal life can start to blur. And the last thing you want is to receive messages and requests related to your professional enquiry on your time off.

Uncertainty and unwanted stress: it can feel risky to hire freelancers without someone to turn to for guidance

Things can always go wrong, as with anything in life. The creative freelancer you hire could get sick; you may disagree on some terms, or you could have a conflict over the delivery. For those reasons, it can feel stressful and risky to work with freelancers, and even more so if you never have in the past. This uncertainty is one of the many reasons people tend to work with the people they know.

Whilst it can be great to work with those you know and trust, it might not always be the best way to go. By always doing this, you're missing out on potentially meeting the best creative to bring your story to life, one that not only has the exact skill set you might need, but also one with a genuine interest in and closeness to the subject of your project.

You need to be organised and on top of

everything everywhere

If you aren't an organisational guru, it's difficult to keep tabs on the applicants you liked and the ones you decided might not be the best fit for your project. You'll find yourself spending a stupid amount of time just trying to remember which profile it was that you saw that one artwork that would be exactly what you're looking for.

And between the hundreds of messages you don't have time to sort through and the ones from people that end up hidden in the request inbox, it's also quite likely you'll miss out on discovering some truly amazing applicants. And that's a real shame!

You might have just missed that perfect creative freelancer for your project, that had the right style and mindset to bring your idea to life. All in all, using social media to hire creative freelancers can be a messy, overwhelming, and stressful process.

When we started using social media to find the right creative experts to bring onboard our projects, we quickly realised that it definitely was not the most productive way to go. And as a start-up with a small team, we just couldn't bear it anymore.

So, we decided to come up with a better way to hire creative freelancers, one that would save us and our freelancers time and energy, making both parties more efficient and profitable, without compromising on quality. Through our experiences over the years, we slowly started to take note of all the things that made hiring creative freelancers time consuming, uncertain, and just – difficult.

At <u>SSSHAKE</u>, we believe that hiring creative freelancers for your projects is without a doubt, the best way to go, as it not only ensures you're getting someone specifically qualified to do the job, but also, more freedom in the profiles you decide to hire; and, actually, lower costs in the end as you cut out unnecessary middleman fees. Currently, hiring independent creative freelancers is a complex task.

But it shouldn't be.

With all the clear benefits of hiring freelancers, the act of doing so shouldn't hinder your efficiency and productivity. So we created a platform specifically made for hiring creative freelancers, to make writing your brief and selecting the right creative expert for your project simple, straight-forward, and hassle-free.

<u>*This article was initially published on SSSHAKE's blog.*</u>

Article by TIPHAINE BRUEL