

Designing an Efficient Freelance Management System in Indonesia's Event Industry: A Case Study of Evoria Event Orchestrator

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Abstract

This research aims to develop an effective freelance management system for Indonesia's event industry through a qualitative case study of Evoria Event Orchestrator. Despite having a database of more than 900 freelancers, only approximately 10 percent are actively engaged, indicating significant inefficiencies in talent recruitment, deployment, evaluation, and retention. Adopting the Design Thinking approach, the study integrates Getz's (2012) Event Lifecycle, Cuskelly's (2006) Volunteer Management Lifecycle, and Sullivan's (2014) Employee Lifecycle Model to balance efficiency and empathy. The analysis identified six root causes: limited preparation time, a reactive culture, manual coordination, skill gaps, person-dependent communication, and the absence of systematic feedback and learning mechanisms. In response, three solutions were developed: the Evoria Crew Planner, the Evoria Coordination Manual, and the Evoria Learning Hub and Freelance Circle, with the first two solutions tested through prototype implementation. The findings demonstrated that structured yet human-centered management systems can enhance coordination efficiency, improve workload visibility, and strengthen freelancer engagement. The result provides a scalable model for freelance management.

Keywords: Freelance Management System, Creative Industry, Event Management, Gig Worker, Operational Efficiency.

A. INTRODUCTION

Over the past decades, economic disruptions such as global recession and the Covid-19 pandemic have significantly transformed labor markets, leaving many workers facing employment uncertainty. According to Ashford, Caza, and Reid (2018), Such disruptions have accelerated the growth of flexible work arrangements, while organizations increasingly rely on freelancers to enhance operational efficiency and maintain competitiveness. Historically, the term "gig" was first used by musicians in the early 20th century to describe short-term performance engagement. The emergence of digital labor platforms in the 1990s, such as the Elance, now called Upwork, further expanded opportunities for freelancers by facilitating access to clients across the world (Mould et al., 2014). Today, digital connectivity enables millions of individuals to generate income independently through online platforms and professional networks. Furthermore, following the 2008 global finance crisis, many organizations increased their reliance on contract-based workers as a strategy to reduce costs and improve workforce flexibility (Donovan et al., 2016). In Indonesia, this transformation has been particularly evident in the creative and service sectors. Permana et al (2023) argue that Indonesia's gig economy includes both platform-based workers and non-platform professionals engaged in project-based work across various industries, including design, media, and event production. While this model offers greater flexibility and broader access to income-generating opportunities, it also exposes workers to several challenges, including income instability, limited social protection, and restricted opportunities for professional development.

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The gig economy is particularly prominent within the creative industries, where projects often require specialized expertise and flexible work arrangements. Sectors such as media, design, and event management rely heavily on the freelancers to meet diverse and fluctuating project demands. According to Ross and Simmons (2018), the event industry can be characterized as a "temporary organization", in which short term teams are assembled for a specific event and disbanded upon its completion. The dynamics makes gig workers essential, as they provide the expertise and flexibility required to meet demanding event timelines. In Indonesia, the rapid growth of the creative economy has created new opportunities for Indonesian freelancers. The strategic importance of the sector has been formally recognized through government initiatives led by the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy, which aims to strengthen industry capacity, encourage innovation, and enhance Indonesia's competitiveness in global creative markets, including the event sector. This growth is reflected in the increasing scale of Indonesia's event industry. In 2024, Indonesia hosted 170 exhibitions, representing a 21 percent increase to the previous year. Furthermore, the Indonesia Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions (MICE) market was valued at approximately USD 2.3 billion in 2023 and is projected to reach USD 7.4 billion by 2032 (astuteanalytica). Revenue generated from MICE events alone is expected to reach USD 1.7 billion in 2025, representing an 8 percent increase from 2024. The expansion of the event sector is also evident in the growing popularity of lifestyle and entertainment events. More than 3000 music events were organized across Indonesia in 2023, attracting an estimated audience of 30 million attendees. According to GoodStats.id, between January and August 2024, 46 percent of Indonesia youth attended music concerts 2 to 3 times, while 37 percent attended at least once during the period. Collectively, these trends demonstrate the increase economic significance of the event industry and highlight the growing demand for skilled freelance workers in areas such as event production, logistics, design, technical operation, and management among others.

Within this national context, Evoria Event Orchestrator provides a relevant case for examining freelance workforce management in Indonesia's event industry. As of September 2025, Evoria Event manages a community-based talent pool of more than 900 freelancers seeking opportunities in event-related projects. However, only approximately 10 percent of these freelancers are deployed annually. On average, each event requires 20 to 40 freelancers, while the preparation period from project acquisition to event execution is approximately 24 days. Although this workforce model offers considerable flexibility, it also presents challenges related to talent availability, communication, coordination, and performance evaluation across multiple concurrent projects. Established in 2021, Evoria Event Orchestrator operates as an event consulting, networking, and production hub serving various stakeholders within Indonesia's event industry. Guided by the principle of "One Event, Thousand Impact," Evoria Event Orchestrator aims to create value by connecting individuals, organizations, and ideas through event-based initiatives. The combination of a large freelance talent pool, project-based operations, and rapid event execution cycles makes Evoria an appropriate setting for investigating the design of an effective freelance management system.

Since its establishment in 2021, Evoria Event Orchestrator has expanded from an online event service provider into an event consulting, networking, and production organization serving a diverse range of clients, including international Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), government institutions and corporate entities. The company's operations combine project flexibility with structured internal coordination. Evoria is supported by 14 full-time employees specializing in event management, creative production, design, operations, finance, and client relations. On average, Evoria manages three events per month, each requiring between 20 to 40

freelance professionals depending on the scale and complexity of the project. The average project cycle, from pitching to event execution, is approximately 24 days. To support project delivery, freelancers are recruited for a variety of roles, including event crew, ushers, designers, production assistants, and other event-support functions. This workforce structure enables the organization to respond quickly to fluctuating project demands and seasonal increases in event activity. Nevertheless, internal data indicate that only a small proportion of registered freelancers actively participate in projects each year, suggesting potential inefficiencies in workforce deployment, engagement, and retention.

To further identify the underlying causes of the problem, a Fishbone also known as the Ishikawa analysis was conducted. Developed by Kaoru Ishikawa (1968), this analytical tool is widely used to systematically identify, categorize, and visualize the root causes of organizational challenges. It facilitated a structured examination of how multiple contributing factors and symptoms collectively lead to a central problem. The analysis identified six major categories: information gaps, unclear communication, system and process, scheduling conflicts, performance evaluation, and skill and trust-related challenges. Among these categories, system and process emerged as the most critical underlying factor, influencing the effectiveness of the other dimensions. The absence of standardized systems and procedures limits information flow, hinders communication, complicates schedule coordination, and weakens performance evaluation practices. Consequently, these issues contribute to inefficiencies both the freelancer recruitment, deployment, evaluation, and retention, affecting both the freelancer and Evoria Event Orchestrator.

To gain a comprehensive understanding of these challenges and develop appropriate improvement strategies, this study addresses the following research questions:

1. Why do inefficiencies exist in Evoria's current freelance talent pool management practices from recruitment, deployment, evaluation, and retention?
2. What are the impacts of these inefficiencies on freelancers engagement and Evoria's event operations?
3. How can innovation contribute to designing a sustainable freelancer management ecosystem for Evoria's talent pool?

This research aims to understand and improve the freelance management system within Evoria Event Orchestrator through an in-depth examination of its recruitment, deployment, evaluation, and retention practices. As a single-case study, the research focuses on the period from September 2024 to September 2025. The analysis incorporates both organizational and freelancer perspectives to provide a comprehensive understanding of existing management challenges and to inform the development of a sustainable freelance management ecosystem.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

The event industry operates within a distinctive organizational environment compared to many traditional business organizations. According to Wynn-Moylan (2017), events involve the temporary coordination of contracted suppliers, paid staff, volunteers, participants, attendees, and venues to deliver a one-time experience, often within a limited preparation period. Such conditions create high levels of uncertainty and time pressure, requiring effective coordination and adaptive management practices. To maintain operational continuity, event organizations typically rely on a dual workforce structure consisting of permanent employees and temporary external contributors.

Hanlon and Cuskelly (2002) further note that workforce requirements increase substantially during event planning and execution phases before declining once the event is completed. Human Resource Management (HRM) has a significant role in the event management

process. Drucker (2012) emphasizes that understanding individuals' strengths enables organizations to improve both productivity and performance. However, the project-based nature of event work requires a flexible Human Resource approach that balances organizational stability with workforce adaptability. De Toni and Tonchia (2005) describe this capability as operational flexibility, whereby organizations are able to shift between different modes of operation while maintaining system effectiveness.

Within the event industry, the distinction between freelancers and gig workers is often blurred. Industry literature frequently uses these terms interchangeably, particularly in creative and event-related sectors where project duration, work flexibility, and reputation overlap (Savas, 2024). Both groups consist of independent paid contributors who undertake project-based assignments and are engaged based on their expertise and availability rather than formal employment contracts. In contrast, volunteers are unpaid contributors whose participation is primarily driven by intrinsic motivations, including social values, recognition, inclusion, and a sense of purpose (Cuskelly et al., 2006).

As discussed in the introduction, Evoria Event Orchestrator faces challenges in managing its freelance workforce, particularly in the areas of recruitment, deployment, evaluation, and retention. These challenges reflect broader workforce management issues commonly observed in project-based event organizations, where team compositions change frequently across events (Wynn-Moylan, 2017; Hanlon & Cuskelly, 2002). To address these challenges, this study integrates three complementary theoretical perspectives: Getz's (2012) Event Lifecycle, Cuskelly et al.'s (2006) Volunteer Management Lifecycle, and Sullivan's (2014) Employee Lifecycle Model. Together, these frameworks provide the conceptual foundation for analyzing existing freelance management practices and designing a sustainable freelance management system for Evoria Event Orchestrator, as illustrated in Figure 1.

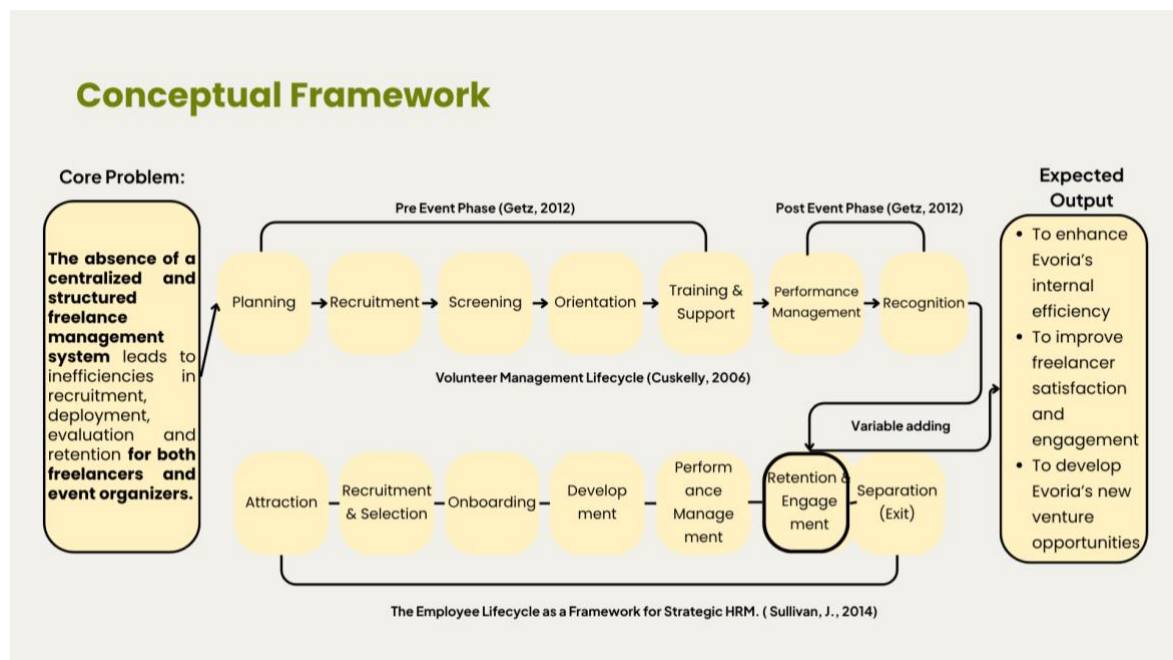


Figure 1
 Conceptual Framework

Although the term freelancer is commonly used to describe independent project-based workers, preliminary interviews conducted with members of Evoria Event Orchestrator's talent pool revealed characteristics that extend beyond conventional gig work arrangements. Many participants emphasized not only financial compensation but also the importance of recognition, learning opportunities, professional development, and a sense of contribution to meaningful projects. While their work arrangements resemble those of gig workers, their motivations also reflect characteristics commonly associated with volunteer engagement, particularly the desire for belonging, appreciation, and personal growth. This suggests the presence of a hybrid workforce profile in which paid contributors maintain strong psychological attachment and seek professional validation beyond monetary rewards.

From an organizational perspective, Evoria requires both workforce stability and operational flexibility. However, the absence of an integrated system for recruiting, assigning, evaluating, and retaining freelancers has contributed to process inefficiencies and uneven participation among members of the talent pool. These challenges are consistent with findings from previous event management studies, which emphasize the importance of team continuity and effective organizational systems in environments characterized by temporary and frequently changing project teams (Wynn-Moylan, 2017; Hanlon & Cuskelly, 2002).

To address these challenges, this study adopts Cuskelly et al.'s (2006) Volunteer Management Lifecycle as one of its theoretical foundations. The model conceptualizes engagement as a cyclical process consisting of planning, recruitment, screening, orientation, training and support, performance management, and recognition. This perspective is particularly relevant to Evoria because it highlights the relational and motivational dimensions that influence participant engagement. Nevertheless, while the model effectively explains behavioral and emotional commitment, it provides limited guidance regarding long-term workforce sustainability and organizational retention strategies. To complement this perspective, Sullivan's (2014) Employee Lifecycle Model is incorporated into the analysis. Among its seven stages, this study focuses specifically on the Retention and Engagement phase, which emphasizes maintaining motivation, commitment, and organizational connection over time. This dimension is particularly relevant for organizations such as Evoria that repeatedly collaborate with the same freelancers across multiple projects and events.

To connect these human resource perspectives with event operations, Getz's (2012) Event Lifecycle Model is employed. The model divides event management into three stages—pre-event, event delivery, and post-event—and highlights the temporary and dynamic nature of event organizations. By integrating Getz's operational perspective, Cuskelly's engagement-oriented framework, and Sullivan's retention-focused approach, this study develops a comprehensive conceptual framework that balances operational efficiency with human-centered workforce management. The framework provides the foundation for designing a sustainable freelance management ecosystem that supports organizational performance, freelancer engagement, and long-term workforce continuity.

To translate these theoretical insights into practical organizational solutions, this study adopts Design Thinking as its methodological approach. Design Thinking is particularly suitable for addressing complex organizational challenges because it emphasizes empathy, collaboration, experimentation, and iterative problem solving (Brown, 2008; Stanford d.school, 2018). This approach is highly relevant to the context of Evoria, where the identified challenges stem from both human factors, such as motivation and engagement, and systemic factors, including organizational efficiency, coordination, and process consistency.

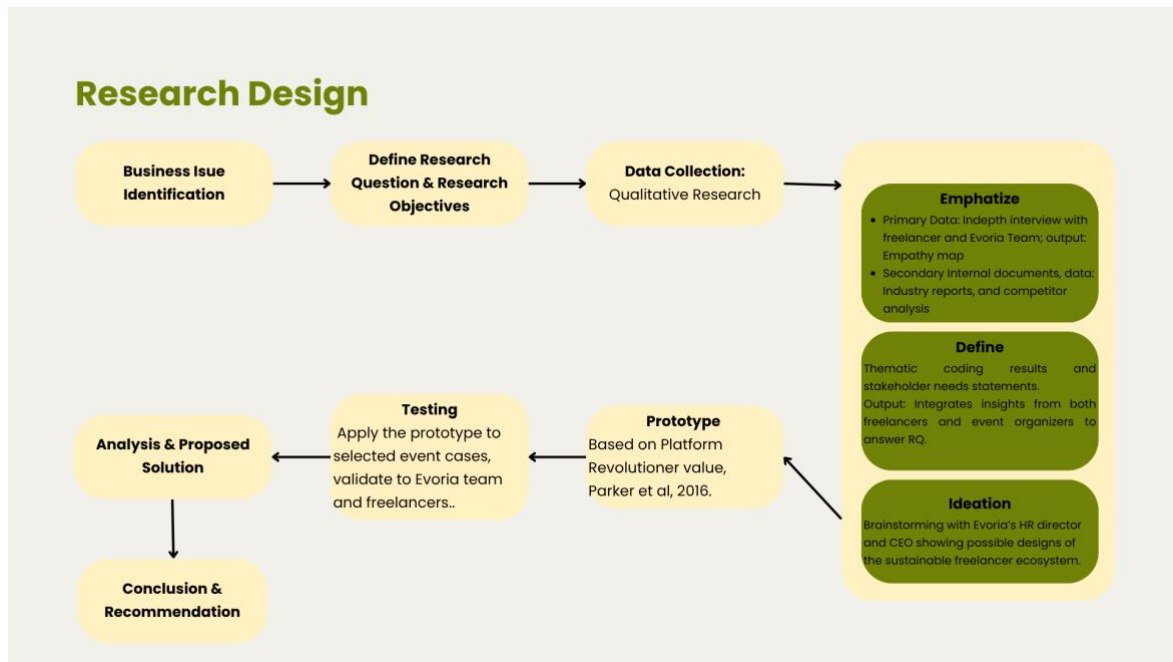


Figure 2
Research Design

The research process consists of six stages, as illustrated in Figure 2, integrating both analytical and creative phases to generate practical and evidence-based solutions. This study adopts a qualitative study approach to develop a comprehensive understanding of how Evoria Event Orchestrator manages its freelance workforce ecosystem. Given the study's focus on human experiences, organizational processes, and workforce engagement, qualitative inquiry enables an in-depth exploration of the motivations, challenges, and interactions that shape existing management practices.

Data were collected from both primary and secondary sources to ensure contextual depth and analytical rigor. Primary data were obtained through semi-structured interviews with freelancers and members of Evoria's internal team. Participants were selected using purposive sampling to ensure their relevance to the research objectives and their direct involvement in freelance management processes. Secondary data consisted of organizational documents, including recruitment records, event schedules, freelancer evaluation forms, operational reports, and other relevant internal documentation.

The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis, allowing the researcher to identify recurring patterns, categorize emerging themes, and interpret the relationships between organizational practices and freelancer experiences. Through this process, qualitative insights were systematically translated into findings that explain both the nature of existing inefficiencies and the factors contributing to them. To develop actionable solutions, the study employed the Design Thinking framework, consisting of six stages: Empathize, Define, Ideate, Prototype, Test, and Implementation Planning. The analytical stages were used to identify and understand organizational challenges, while the creative stages facilitated the development and refinement of human-centered solutions. The integration of thematic analysis and Design Thinking provided the foundation for designing a structured and sustainable freelance management system for Evoria Event Orchestrator.

C. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

This study applied the Design Thinking framework, consisting of five stages: Empathize, Define, Ideate, Prototype, and Test. The Empathize stage focused on understanding how freelancers and internal staff experienced Evoria Event Orchestrator's existing freelance management system. The objective was to uncover the emotions, motivations, challenges, and expectations that shape their interactions within the organization. To support this process, profile mapping and empathy mapping were employed as analytical tools.

Through in-depth interviews, perspectives from both sides of the freelance ecosystem were explored. Three freelancers were selected from Evoria's talent pool based on their diverse professional backgrounds and levels of experience. In addition, three key internal stakeholders—the Head of Event, Event Manager, and HR Administrator—were interviewed, as these roles are directly involved in managing freelancers across multiple projects.

Although the interviewed freelancers represented different professional backgrounds, they exhibited several common motivational patterns. All participants belonged to Generation Z and viewed freelance work not solely as a source of income but also as an opportunity for learning, networking, and professional recognition. This finding supports the earlier observation that freelancers within Evoria display characteristics associated with both gig workers and volunteers, combining financial motivations with intrinsic needs for belonging, development, and appreciation.

Three key themes emerged from the interviews:

- a. Transparency and fairness in compensation and agreements foster trust and strengthen long-term commitment.
- b. Clear communication and early structured briefings increase confidence, preparedness, and work performance.
- c. Recognition and appreciation, even when expressed through simple gestures, enhance motivation and organizational attachment.

Despite these positive expectations, several recurring challenges were identified. Freelancers frequently experienced last-minute changes, limited preparation time, and insufficient feedback following project completion. These conditions created uncertainty and emotional fatigue, reducing opportunities for professional growth and weakening long-term engagement with the organization. The findings align with Cuskelly et al.'s (2006) argument that recognition, support, and meaningful engagement are critical factors in sustaining participant commitment.

The empathy analysis of Evoria's internal team revealed a shared commitment to maintaining service quality while operating under significant time constraints. Although each position performs distinct responsibilities, their roles are highly interconnected. The Head of Event oversees overall event quality and execution, the Event Manager coordinates operational activities and freelancer deployment, and the HR Administrator manages recruitment, administration, and performance evaluation. Together, these functions require balancing speed, accuracy, and people management within compressed project timelines.

Three major themes emerged from the internal stakeholder interviews:

1. Reactive planning and workforce forecasting – Recruitment and preparation activities are often initiated too close to event dates, limiting preparation time and increasing operational pressure.
2. Dependence on experienced freelancers – While returning freelancers reduce operational risks and onboarding time, excessive reliance on a limited group restricts talent regeneration, inclusivity, and workforce development.

3. Manual administration and communication processes – The extensive use of WhatsApp and spreadsheets results in fragmented information, inconsistent feedback mechanisms, and limited process visibility across projects.

Collectively, these findings indicate that Evoria’s challenges extend beyond workforce availability. The underlying issues are rooted in organizational systems and processes that affect communication, coordination, knowledge sharing, and engagement. This supports the argument that improving freelance management requires not only operational solutions but also a more structured and human-centered approach that integrates efficiency with long-term workforce development.

The findings from the Empathize phase reveal a noticeable misalignment between freelancer expectations and the operational priorities of Evoria’s internal team. Freelancers emphasized the importance of recognition, constructive feedback, transparency, and opportunities for professional development. In contrast, the internal team primarily focused on operational efficiency, workforce discipline, and client satisfaction within highly constrained project timelines. While both groups share the common objective of successful event delivery, their differing priorities contribute to tensions within the existing freelance management system. The Define phase was conducted to synthesize the insights generated during the Empathize stage and identify the underlying factors contributing to current management inefficiencies. By translating qualitative findings into clearly defined organizational challenges, this stage addresses the first and second research questions concerning the causes and impacts of inefficiencies in Evoria’s freelance management practices.

Gap Analysis Between Freelancers and Evoria’s Internal Team

The results of the thematic coding process are summarized in Table 1, which highlights the gaps between freelancer expectations and organizational practices across eight human resource management stages, ranging from workforce planning to retention. Each category presents the identified themes, perspectives from both stakeholder groups, and the resulting insights that explain the underlying sources of misalignment. These findings provide a foundation for understanding the inefficiencies observed throughout Evoria’s freelance management lifecycle and serve as the basis for the subsequent root-cause analysis and solution development process.

Table 1
 Gaps between freelancers and Evoria’s team

Event Phase	HR Cycle	Theme	Freelancer Perspective	Evoria Team Perspective	Insight
Pre Event	1. Planning	Manpower Forecasting	Freelancers expect clear and timely communication regarding event schedules and role availability to enable effective planning	Event teams plan manpower after client confirmation; short timelines (often <1 week before event).	Planning is reactive, not predictive, limiting fairness and readiness.

Event Phase	HR Cycle	Theme	Freelancer Perspective	Evoria Team Perspective	Insight
			alongside their primary occupations.		
	2. Recruitment	Access & Information	Freelancers rely on WhatsApp groups and referrals; perceive access as “orang dalem”	Job opportunities are distributed manually by the HR team, making it difficult to ensure equal access and participation among freelancers.	Recruitment practices are informal and lack transparency, potentially undermining trust and limiting workforce diversity.
		Attraction Factors	Motivated by extra income, networking, and portfolio growth.	The event team primarily views freelancers as operational contributors responsible for task execution.	Value mismatch : freelancers seek development, EO prioritizes reliability.

Event Phase	HR Cycle	Theme	Freelancer Perspective	Evoria Team Perspective	Insight
	3. Screening	Selection Criteria	Freelancers are unclear on what defines “qualified.”	HR filters hundreds manually; selection depends on responsiveness and availability.	Screening emphasizes speed over quality, reducing merit based fairness.
		Communication Flow	Freelancers experience last minute confirmations.	Event team under pressure from late client approval; cannot confirm earlier.	Both sides are trapped by event industry timing, but structured comms can reduce chaos.
	4. Orientation	Briefing & Readiness	Freelancers who depend on online briefing creates unstable internet, limited materials.	Managers admit lack of visual aids and standardized content.	Orientation lacks standardization; readiness varies by individual initiative.
		Culture Familiarization	Freelancers value supportive teamwork and feel proud when trusted.	The event team emphasizes discipline and SOP adherence.	Culture onboarding is currently informal; new freelancers learn by imitation.

Event Phase	HR Cycle	Theme	Freelancer Perspective	Evoria Team Perspective	Insight
	5. Training and Support	Skill Development	Freelancers learn by doing; proactive ones thrive, others struggle.	Team recognizes the skill gap but lacks time for structured training.	Informal learning creates inconsistency and burnout.
		Real time Support	Freelancers appreciate responsive WhatsApp groups but some delays in answers cause confusion.	The team handles multiple events simultaneously and makes delayed replies common.	Support depends on individual responsiveness, not system.
Post Event	6. Performance Management	Feedback System	Freelancers rarely get personal feedback, only group remarks.	Managers fill evaluation forms late or skip due to workload.	Feedback loop broken both lose data for improvement.
		Accountability and Standards	Freelancers see fairness as a key motivator.	The team focuses on attitude and discipline, some freelancers blacklisted.	Accountability and Standards perceived differently.

Event Phase	HR Cycle	Theme	Freelancer Perspective	Evoria Team Perspective	Insight
7. Recognition		Appreciation and Reward	Freelancers value simple recognition like thank you notes, reposts, or coffee treats.	The team uses informal appreciation but no structured system.	Recognition is currently ad hoc but has strong emotional impact.
		Incentives	Freelancers appreciate full payment and occasional bonuses.	The team uses an ad hoc bonus for extra tasks or long hours.	Financial incentive motivates short term, but symbolic rewards build loyalty.
8. Retention and Engagement		Relationship and Loyalty	Freelancers are loyal when culture feels fair and fun but easy to leave when messy or unclear.	Team values returning freelancers to save time and reduce risk.	Retention depends more on trust than formal policy.
		Community & Belonging	Freelancers see events as a networking hub and want to stay connected between gigs.	HR focuses on record keeping, not engagement.	Community potential underutilized; social capital could strengthen the pipeline.

The gap analysis indicates that inefficiencies in Evoria's freelance management system are primarily driven by structural and procedural issues rather than individual performance. Most

challenges are concentrated in the pre-event phase, where planning, recruitment, and communication rely heavily on manual coordination and last-minute confirmations. In the post-event phase, weaknesses are also evident in feedback, recognition, and engagement processes, which limits organizational learning and long-term freelancer retention.

1. Root Causes of Inefficiencies

Based on the gap analysis, six recurring patterns were identified as the root causes of inefficiencies in Evoria's freelance management system. These issues appear consistently across all human resource management stages and reflect structural, cultural, and systemic rather than individual-level problems.

- a. **Persistent time pressure**
Most projects are initiated close to the event execution date, leaving limited time for structured planning. As a result, recruitment, briefing, and evaluation processes are conducted under tight deadlines, shifting organizational focus from system development to task completion. This continuous time pressure reinforces a cycle of reactive management.
- b. **"Get it done fast" culture**
Evoria's strength in speed and flexibility has fostered a culture that prioritizes rapid execution over documentation and process standardization. While effective for short-term delivery, this orientation limits organizational learning and reduces opportunities for continuous improvement in quality and coordination.
- c. **Manual and non-integrated systems**
WhatsApp and spreadsheets remain the primary tools for recruitment, coordination, and evaluation. Although sufficient for small-scale projects, these fragmented systems become inefficient in larger events, leading to duplicated work, information gaps, and delays in communication across teams.
- d. **Gap between experienced and new freelancers**
Returning freelancers possess tacit knowledge of organizational workflows, while new freelancers often lack adequate onboarding and structured guidance. This imbalance reinforces repeated selection of familiar freelancers and restricts talent renewal and diversification within the pool.
- e. **Communication dependency on individuals rather than systems**
Coordination quality depends heavily on individual responsiveness. Variations in availability and workload among internal staff create inconsistencies in communication, resulting in uneven freelancer experiences across different projects.
- f. **Weak feedback-to-learning cycle**
Post-event evaluations are often delayed or not systematically conducted, and insights are rarely translated into structured improvements. Consequently, similar operational issues—such as unclear job scopes and inconsistent preparation—tend to recur across projects.

Overall, the identified inefficiencies highlight systemic limitations in Evoria's freelance management model. The reliance on reactive and manual processes affects not only operational performance but also freelancer motivation, trust, and long-term engagement. The findings indicate two primary impact areas: freelancer engagement and event operational effectiveness.

2. Impact of efficiencies to freelance engagement and event operations

The findings indicate that reactive and unstructured systems significantly influence both freelancer engagement and event operational performance. In the absence of standardized processes, freelancers tend to rely on personal initiative rather than organizational guidance, resulting in inconsistent experiences and declining motivation. Limited clarity, inconsistent communication, and weak evaluation mechanisms contribute to a perception among freelancers that they are replaceable operational resources rather than valued collaborators. These conditions not only affect freelancer motivation and sense of belonging but also extend to operational performance within Evoria Event Orchestrator. Structural inefficiencies—such as reactive planning, manual coordination, and person-dependent communication—directly reduce the effectiveness and efficiency of event preparation and execution. As a result, both human engagement and operational reliability are simultaneously affected by systemic limitations within the freelance management process.

In this research, the ideation phase was conducted to address Research Question 3: how innovation can contribute to the design of a sustainable freelance management ecosystem for Evoria's talent pool. An ideation workshop was conducted involving the HR Director and Head of Event. Through structured brainstorming sessions and iterative "how might we" reframing, initial discussions on operational challenges were transformed into solution-oriented ideation. The outputs of the ideation process were evaluated using an Effort-Impact Matrix as a prioritization tool commonly applied in design thinking and innovation frameworks (IDEO, 2015; Liedtka, 2018). This framework categorizes solutions based on implementation effort and expected strategic impact, where high-impact and low-effort solutions are treated as quick wins, while high-impact and high-effort solutions represent long-term strategic investments.

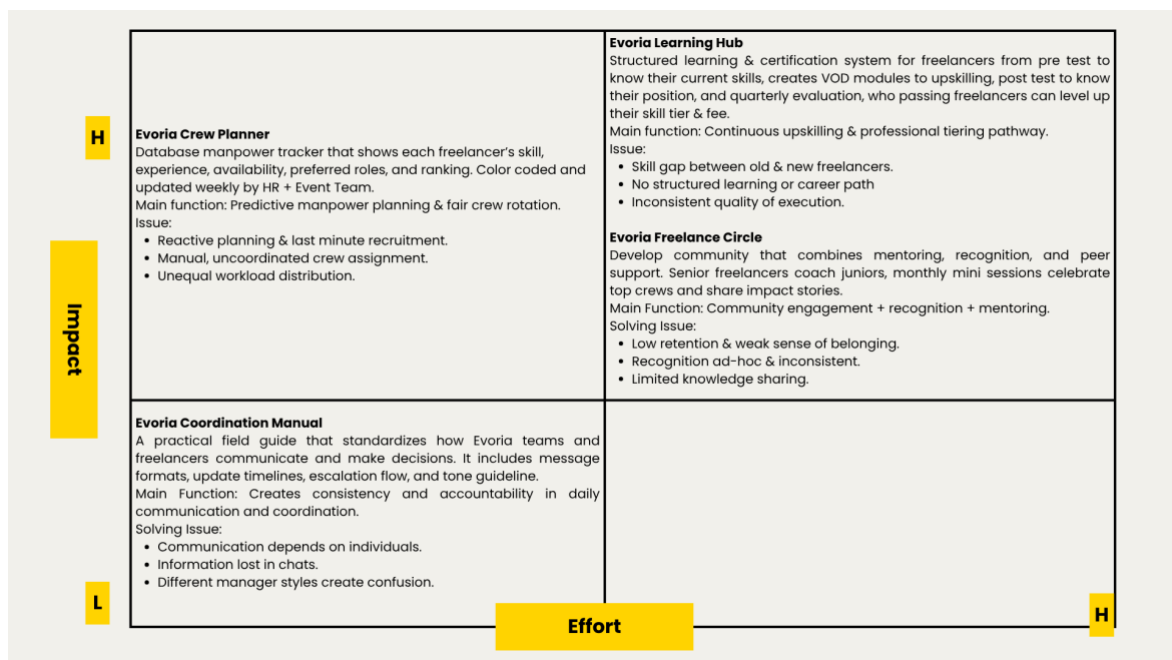


Figure 3
 Effort - Impact Matrix Business Solution

To prioritize the solutions generated during the ideation phase, all ideas were systematically assessed using the Effort–Impact Matrix (see Figure 3), a tool that categorizes initiatives according to their expected impact and required implementation effort.

The Evoria Crew Planner is a centralized freelancer management system designed to document freelancer profiles, including skills, experience, availability, and role history. The system is updated regularly by the HR team and used by the event team during recruitment and workforce planning. It enables predictive manpower allocation and improves fairness in freelancer distribution. This system directly addresses key issues identified in the Define phase, including reactive planning, manual recruitment, and unequal workload distribution. Although its implementation requires significant effort, particularly in data consolidation and system integration, its potential impact is high as it shifts workforce management from reactive decision-making to data-driven planning, improving both efficiency and equity.

The prototype integrates data from both HR and event divisions, documenting freelancer demographics, assignments, roles, and participation records from September 2024 to September 2025. Through this shared system, both divisions are able to make more transparent and objective decisions regarding recruitment and task allocation. To evaluate its effectiveness, the prototype was tested in two events conducted in October and November 2025. The evaluation involved three internal stakeholders who had previously participated in the empathy interviews. Using a feedback capture grid, the results indicated improved clarity, trust, and sense of ownership among users. Participants reported that the system transformed coordination from an intuitive and reactive process into a structured, data-supported workflow. These findings suggest that the prototype not only enhances operational efficiency but also strengthens communication and accountability, supporting the development of a more sustainable freelance management ecosystem.

High Impact – High Effort: Evoria Learning Hub and Freelance Circle

The Evoria Learning Hub and Freelance Circle were developed as an integrated initiative under Evoria Group, designed to establish a sustainable freelancer ecosystem through structured education, professional certification, mentorship, and community engagement. This initiative addresses key issues identified in the Define phase, including skill gaps between new and experienced freelancers, inconsistent work quality, low retention rates, and limited professional recognition.

The Learning Hub functions as a structured upskilling and certification platform that provides pre-assessments, learning modules, practice exercises, and post-assessments to evaluate freelancer competency levels. In parallel, the Freelance Circle complements this system by fostering a sense of belonging through mentorship programs, monthly community engagement, and recognition activities that celebrate individual and collective achievements. The integration of both components is expected to improve freelancer performance consistency, strengthen engagement, and enhance long-term retention. Although the initiative requires substantial investment in curriculum development, platform design, and resource management, its strategic value lies in expanding Evoria's role beyond event production toward talent development and creative workforce education. This directly contributes to Research Objective 3 by supporting the development of new business opportunities based on a sustainable freelance ecosystem.

Low Impact – Low Effort: Evoria Coordination Manual

The Evoria Coordination Manual is a standardized operational guideline designed to improve communication, documentation, and coordination between HR and the Event division. It defines

communication formats, escalation procedures, and tone guidelines to ensure consistency across projects. This intervention addresses recurring issues such as managerial inconsistency, person-dependent communication, and information loss. Although relatively simple and cost-efficient, the manual provides immediate benefits in terms of clarity, accountability, and coordination efficiency, thereby contributing to a more structured internal communication culture.

The prototype was developed to strengthen cross-departmental coordination by aligning two existing tools: the Power Sheet (PS) used by the Event team and the HR Workflow system used by the HR department. While both systems operate independently, they are functionally connected through shared milestones and event lifecycle updates. The Coordination Manual was tested during the pitching phase of two projects. At this stage, both the Power Sheet and HR Workflow were simultaneously applied to evaluate coordination effectiveness prior to project execution. Using a Feedback Capture Grid, the evaluation focused on improvements in clarity, documentation, and cross-functional coordination during early-stage event planning.

The results indicated that the manual enhanced structural clarity and strengthened collaboration between HR and Event teams. Participants highlighted its simplicity and comprehensiveness, while also suggesting future improvements, including automation, visualization, and integration into a unified digital dashboard to enable more predictive and coordinated workflow management.

The application of the Effort-Impact Matrix provides a clear prioritization framework that distinguishes between short-term operational improvements and long-term strategic transformation. The Evoria Coordination Manual represents a low-effort, immediate solution that enhances current communication and coordination practices. In contrast, the Evoria Crew Planner and Learning Hub initiatives represent high-impact, high-effort interventions aimed at structural transformation and ecosystem development. Collectively, these solutions contribute to both operational efficiency and long-term organizational sustainability by addressing systemic inefficiencies in planning, communication, and talent development within Evoria Event Orchestrator.

Future research may extend this study beyond a single-case context by examining freelance management practices across event companies and other creative industry organizations of different sizes, business models, and organizational forms, thereby providing comparative insights into the conditions under which structured freelance management systems are most effective. Future studies are also encouraged to incorporate focus group discussions involving freelancers, internal teams, and external partners to further validate and enrich the findings through cross stakeholder perspectives that were beyond the scope and time constraints of the present study. In addition, quantitative or mixed-method approaches may complement the qualitative depth of this research by providing measurable evidence of the effectiveness of structured freelance management systems in improving operational efficiency, freelancer satisfaction, performance consistency, retention, and organizational scalability over time. Further research is also needed to examine human resource innovation, workforce sustainability, and regulatory considerations for gig workers within Indonesia's event industry, where academic discussion on project-based workforce management remains limited. Such studies would contribute to a broader domestic and international understanding of the changing employment environment in creative and event-based industries, while supporting the development of more sustainable, inclusive, and evidence-based freelance workforce practices.

D. CONCLUSION

This study aimed to develop an effective freelance management system for Evoria Event Orchestrator by identifying the sources of inefficiency in the existing system, analyzing points of failure, and exploring how innovation can transform operational challenges into long-term organizational opportunities. The research adopted a qualitative single-case study design supported by Design Thinking, in-depth interviews, and internal document analysis.

The conceptual foundation of this study integrated Getz's Event Lifecycle Model, Cuskelly's Volunteer Management Lifecycle, and Sullivan's Employee Lifecycle Model. Based on this framework, six recurring root causes of inefficiencies were identified: persistent time pressure, a "get it done fast" operational culture, reliance on manual and non-integrated systems, gaps between experienced and new freelancers, communication dependency on individuals rather than systems, and weak feedback-to-learning mechanisms. Collectively, these findings indicate that while agility constitutes Evoria's core competitive advantage, the absence of structured systems limits scalability, consistency, and long-term sustainability.

These inefficiencies affect both organizational operations and freelancer engagement. From the freelancer perspective, limited transparency, inconsistent communication, and weak recognition practices reduce perceived fairness and belonging, resulting in a more transactional rather than developmental relationship with the organization. This is particularly relevant given that Evoria's freelancers are predominantly Gen Z side-hustlers who demonstrate higher loyalty when systems are structured, transparent, and supportive, but disengage when processes are inconsistent and unclear. From an operational perspective, reactive planning and manual coordination contribute to uneven workload distribution, delayed preparation, and recurring inefficiencies across projects.

To address these challenges, three innovation initiatives were developed and evaluated using an Effort-Impact Matrix:

1. Evoria Crew Planner (High Impact, Low Effort): A centralized and online manpower database that enables predictive planning, fairer workload distribution, and clearer performance tracking.
2. Evoria Learning Hub and Freelance Circle – High Impact, High Effort: A new sub business concept integrating training, certification, and community engagement to enhance skill consistency and long term loyalty freelancers.
3. Evoria Coordination Manual (Low Impact, Low Effort): A standardized communication framework that reduces person-dependent coordination and improves cross-departmental alignment.

Prototype testing indicated that these interventions improved clarity, reduced coordination stress, and strengthened collaboration between HR and event teams, demonstrating that structured systems can coexist with Evoria's agile operational culture.

In conclusion, sustainable freelance management requires a balance between operational structure and human-centered engagement. The Evoria case demonstrates that human-centered design can transform fragmented operational practices into an integrated ecosystem that enhances both efficiency and workforce development. These findings provide a foundation for reconfiguring project-based event organizations into sustainable talent ecosystems that not only deliver successful events but also support long-term freelancer growth and engagement.

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