

Chapter 7

**WORKING IN HOSPITALITY:
FLEXIBLE WORKING AND THE
GIG ECONOMY**

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ABSTRACT

Employment in hospitality is changing as hospitality employers increasingly seek flexible employment patterns, the notion of a ‘job for life’ and the concept of a ‘9–5’ workday as never really been that prevalent in the industry because of the 24 hour opening of many of the services, or anti-social working times for instance in restaurants in the evening. However, with the rise of the use the so-called gig economy; employees in the sector are often faced with very insecure employment conditions under the guise of ‘self-employment’. Although the hospitality industry in general were late adopters of ‘gig working’ the phenomenon is rapidly increasing in the hospitality sector, driven by the rise of online demand platforms, where hospitality can find employees very quickly.

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This chapter identifies many of the areas in the hospitality sector where change to employment is taking place and the impact it has on both hospitality employers and employees.

Keywords: the Gig economy, hospitality recruitment policies, online demand platforms, impact on employees

INTRODUCTION

The hospitality industry was slow to recognise the potential benefits of the gig economy, but is slowly and steadily entering this employment arena via online platforms such as Coople.com (Rowson and Cavagnaro, 2018). This chapter focuses on the benefits for employers and the impact of the so-called gig economy on workers in the hospitality industry.

Furthermore, this is a discussion chapter one of the aims is to highlight issues for future research in the hospitality sector. In the past two decades hospitality employers have focused on flexible recruitment strategies, typically in an effort to save labour costs, cover anti-social shifts and to remain competitive in the industry.

As in many industries in the world, the now almost historic notion of a 'job for life' and the concept of a '9-5' workday are diminishing fast or have been completely obliterated. In its place, flexible working in organisations has increased, in hospitality the notion of flexibility has been around for at least two decades and typically means flexibility of time and hours worked, in many cases un-paid hours, rather than the HR definition of split shifts, part-time working, training, and cross training of employees to cover a range of job roles in the business (Lashley and Rowson 2010; Rowson and Lucas, 1998).

The idea of the so-called 'gig working' is increasing rapidly in the hospitality industry. The need for greater employment flexibility has led to hospitality employers embracing the gig economy as a provider of some of their labour. This combined with the rise of digital sharing platforms such as Coople.com, Upwork.com and Freelancer.com which makes filling the

temporary job vacancies quicker and less expensive for the employer. Coople in particular allows hospitality businesses (employers) to contract workers for short-term engagements (gigs), for a defined time period sometimes just for a few hours.

The growth of online demand platforms such as Coople.com, Jobble.com, and Uber.com, and Deliveroo.com has given rise to a global sharing economy in which it is becoming ever more commonplace to buy and sell jobs and services online across the world. The online demand platforms tend to focus on workers from particular areas being connected with potential employers in the same areas, and often in the case of hospitality the local area where workers can quickly get to employers establishments to fill vacancies (Rowson and Cavagnaro, 2018).

However, grouping these two different online providers in the gig-economy in a common analysis can be a dangerous premise; first and foremost crowdwork and work on-demand platforms via apps are not monolithic or homogenous concepts in themselves. In reality crowd sharing platforms and on demand platforms tend to serve different markets in the online economy. But for the purposes of this chapter the focus will be about on-demand platforms. First we consider crowdwork platforms, for instance they employ different methods for adjudicating tasks and for payment (Eurofound, 2015).

Some crowd work platforms may launch competitions with more persons working simultaneously on the same task and the client selecting and paying only the best product. Some may operate on a first-come-first-served basis. In some cases, no relationship exists between the client and the worker: he/she executes the task and is paid by the platform, which then provides the result to the client (Rowson and Cavagnaro, 2018). In other cases, the crowd work platform acts more as a facilitator of the relationship between clients and workers (Risak and Warter, 2015). Some crowdwork platforms set minimum compensation for certain tasks whilst other let the compensation be set by their requester (Eurofound, 2015).

Online demand platforms as mentioned earlier in the chapter tend to be the interface between employers i.e., businesses and workers, mostly driven by a mobile telephone app. Workers register and log in for work,

and the app provides them with work. Deliveroo is an example, when a deliverly rider logs in to work the app will work out the next nearest pick up and delivery, signalling the rider via the mobile app. Once that food order is delivered the rider checks the app again and the next nearest delivery is given to the rider.

Online demand platforms such as Coople.com allow hospitality workers to register on the app and a similar process takes place where vacancies in the local area are filled by the app. Sometimes these vacancies are just for hours or days or regular days each week, the employer can rate the employee and when an employer finds a particularly good worker, can ask for that same person again in the future. However, this gives no job security to the so-called Coopler, who can be called upon as frequently as required by the employer.

WORKING IN HOSPITALITY

Baum, (2002) suggests that hospitality work (and thus the skills that it requires for its delivery) exhibits diversity in both horizontal and vertical terms. Horizontal diversity reflects the breadth of the sector from fast food outlets and bed and breakfast establishments to elite resorts, and ‘style’ hotels and clubs. Vertical diversity is reflected in the range of technical, service and managerial tasks that are undertaken ‘under the one roof’ (Baum, 2006).

Vertical diversity in hospitality work is represented by a more traditional classification, that ranges from unskilled to semi-skilled, and from skilled to supervisory and management. This ‘traditional’ perspective of work and, therefore, skills in hospitality is partly described by Riley (1996, p. 18) in terms that suggest that the proportionate breakdown of the workforce in hospitality is as follows: Managerial – 6%; Supervisory – 8%; Craft (skilled) – 22%; Operative (semi-skilled and unskilled) – 64%.

Clearly this simplification masks major business organisational diversity in hospitality, reflecting the size, location and ownership of hospitality businesses. The actual job and skills content of work in hospitality is predicated upon these factors, so that common job titles (e.g., restaurant manager, sous chef) almost certainly mask a very different range of responsibilities, tasks and skills within jobs in different establishments. However, now over two decades old Riley's model is still very relevant in that semi-skilled and unskilled labour accounts for around 65-70 percent of hospitality jobs. The use of high numbers of semi-skilled and unskilled labour combined with the low pay and often associated poor working conditions is a major driver for high labour turnover in the hospitality sector (Rowson and Palmer, 2010). Furthermore, the industry tends to offer limited promotional and personal development opportunities for employees at this employment level, which often means workers will opt for alternate positions that provide these opportunities for them.

In more recent times the hospitality industry has started to use more migrant labour to fill the semi-skilled and unskilled roles (Rowson and Palmer, 2009). The high levels of labour turnover in the hospitality sector make the use of temporary and agency workers inevitable (Rowson and Palmer, 2010). Taking into account that the UK hospitality sector is the fourth biggest employer in the UK with over 3 million workers, labour turnover and recruiting is a major issue in the industry. Historically, the hospitality sector has always faced major employee retention and recruitment problems and still has one of the highest staff turnover rates of any other sector in the UK (The Caterer.com, 2017).

The cost associated with recruiting and replacing employees is another factor why employers in the hospitality sector find online demand platforms useful for solving their employee shortages. Recruitment costs are those that an employer incurs looking for someone to fill their newly vacant position. This includes everything from the cost of developing an updated job description to the cost of training the new employee, and basically everything in between.

Table 1. Cost of replacing employees

Position type	Average replacement cost
Entry-level/non-skilled	30-50% of employees annual salary
Service production	40-70% of employees annual salary
Clerical/Administrative	50-80% of employees annual salary
Skilled hourly	75-100% of employees annual salary
Professional	75-125% of employees annual salary
Technical	100-150% of employees annual salary
Supervisor	100-150% of employees annual salary

Source: G&A Partners, 2018.

Every vacant position represents hours and hours of work for recruiters, HR professionals and hiring managers, who have to sort through applications and resumes; deliberate and narrow down the applicant pool; schedule and participate in interviews; and then meet again to select a candidate.

Many employers also now use pre-employment screenings to assess applicants' skill sets and personalities, and require that promising candidates meet with multiple people within the organization prior to making an offer. In reality the longer the hiring process, the more expensive it becomes.

Taking into consideration the estimated recruitment costs in Table 1 it is easy to see the attraction of an on demand recruitment platform like Coople.com. The ability to fill a vacancy quickly and cost effectively will appeal to hospitality employers.

Typically, the highest labour turnover will be in the unskilled and semi-skilled sections of the hospitality workforce, Coople.com are 'recruiting' so called Cooplers i.e., workers online aimed at filling exactly these roles. Typical roles include bar staff, waiting staff, kitchen porters; often this is where the highest labour turnover takes place (Rowson, 2002; Lashley and Rowson, 2000).

RECRUITMENT PLATFORMS

The recent rapid growth of the gig economy has spawned a large number of internet platforms where the owners of the websites connect employers with potential workers (Rowson and Cavagnaro, 2018). These platforms are often referred to as ‘work on demand platforms’ or ‘crowd sharing platforms’, from a purely hospitality point of view sites such as Deliveroo operate to put fast food outlets in contact with delivery workers (single workers), (Rowson and Cavagnaro, 2018; Smith and Leberstein, 2015).

Kessler, (2015) however argues that ‘crowd work’ is usually working activities that imply completing a series of tasks through online platforms, these platforms form an interface for employer worker arrangements. Crowd employment is a new form of employment, defined in 2015 by Eurofound as:

‘Employment that ‘uses an online platform to enable organisations or individuals to access an indefinite and unknown group of other organisations or individuals to solve specific problems or to provide specific services or products in exchange for payment.’ (Euro Found, 2015)

Crowd employment is also known as crowd sourcing or crowd work, and aims to organise the outsourcing of tasks to a large pool of online workers often skilled middle class workers, rather than to a single worker as demand platforms do (Rowson and Cavagnaro, 2018; Eurofound, 2015). The use of technology is important in the matching of client and worker, usually based on individual tasks or projects, some examples are: Web content and software development; database building; classifying web pages; transcribing scanned documents and audio clips and reviewing documents.

However, this chapter is more concerned with work on demand platforms in the gig economy, these platforms are usually driven by mobile apps, many of the companies running the apps claim to be technology

platforms that are connecting *providers* (workers) with *consumers* (usually companies) easier and more quickly than ever. Until recently this was usually related to fast food delivery, for example Uber eats, or Deliveroo. However more recently, on demand platforms focused on serving the hospitality industry by connecting potential workers with employers, online platforms like Coople.com and Sidekicker an Australian app have brought recruitment of gig workers closer to the hospitality companies.

Often the organisations that set up the web platform and the app set the rules for workers, this typically includes the delivery times, payment per delivery and the app recruits the workers (those people delivering the fast food) in most cases the workers are classed as quazi-self-employed, although they may actually only work for the one company via their app (Rowson and Cavagnaro, 2018; Rogers, 2015).

Typically, the platform owners reserve the right to modify these agreements at any time, which renders the contractual relation that governs the workers' highly insecure and detracts from their ability to oppose particular regulations or decisions. Moreover, many of the agreements also give platform owners the right to terminate workers' user accounts, should they decide that these workers have somehow breached the agreement, which, to reiterate, can be modified at will (Aloisi, 2016).

The advantages for the hospitality employers are clear and most on-demand staffing platforms take care of all the on-boarding issues. Arrange the administration paperwork, any tax declarations for your gig workers, which the hospitality business only need on a short-term basis, as everything is centralized and streamlined online, or in many cases the onus is on the workers as self-employed people to deal with these things themselves (Rowson and Cavagnaro, 2018). Clearly, this makes it easy for hospitality employers to fill temporary vacancies quickly, but to some degree this just replaces recruitment agencies and more quickly. Whereas, with Coople.com for example the site can recruit workers for shifts lasting as little as just 4 hours, within the same day.

EMPLOYERS

Couple is an on-demand staffing platform that focuses on hospitality employees amongst others, and connects people and companies by finding qualified, semi-skilled and unskilled people and showing their availability to employers in hospitality, events and promotion, retail, logistics, business services and commercial sectors. In reality this is little more than connecting employer and employee, the difference is that the so called Cooplers are self-employed and work on demand appointments that range between 4 hour gigs to several days, and sometimes regular shifts every week. Speed appears to be one of the organisations major selling points, often in the hospitality business one of the most frequently asked questions is, ‘how fast can we secure a new employee when someone leaves or calls in sick?’ Traditionally this would be through the use of agency staff; however, organisations like Couple allow hospitality employers to fill employee needs quickly.

Furthermore, all the hospitality employer needs to do is make a request for a specific employee and someone (a Coopler) will come along to cover that shift. Most hospitality roles are covered; front desk, bar staff, kitchen staff and many more. The so-called self-employed hospitality staff known as a Cooplers can often start within hours. In fact the website boasts that it can fill most vacancies within 4 hours, and companies only pay for the hours worked. This is clearly an advantage for the employer as there is no commitment to the self-employed worker, no need to have payroll sign on, training, pension, sick pay, and holiday pay, the only commitment that the employer has is to pay for the time the Coopler worked in the business.

To make sense of this in most hospitality businesses, the need for staff can change dramatically, not just over the course of a week or month, but over the year. For caterers and wedding venues, the summer is non-stop, while for those specialising in business conference space, it is late spring and autumn that are the busy periods. By embracing the ‘gig economy’ employers only pay for staff when needed. Even for just a four hour shift, innovative check in and check out systems ensure employers only pay for the hours used (Moss, 2017a).

Although this type of recruiting benefits the employer and is good for filling temporary vacancies, the shift in employer use for this type of hiring platform clearly reinforces the idea with hospitality employers that gig workers are a disposable commodity; or can be found as quickly as other commodities such as bread, milk and eggs! This approach to hospitality recruitment was found by Lashley and Rowson in (2000) whilst researching labour turnover in a large UK licensed retail brand, where labour turnover was inconsistent throughout the licenced retailers estate with some units showing labour turnover at 30-40 percent a rate at that time considered to be good in the sector, on the other hand some units where showing labour turnover of over 100 percent in one case 388 percent! The research showed that the recruitment policies in the units were very basic; induction programmes for new employees were limited. Often these amounted to little more than being assigned to another member of staff for the first few shifts. The researchers created a phrase for this type of recruitment, and this was based on the following statement: when faced with a new employee holding their CV the unit managers' reaction would be 'is there breath on the mirror; if yes, then they are hired' (Lashley and Rowson, 2000).

Nearly two decades later the same recruitment and labour turnover issues exist in the hospitality sector so clearly the online on demand platform arrangement offers greater flexibility for hospitality employers, however, on the other hand it gives little or no security for gig workers employed in such away. The argument that this type of work allows people to choose when they work or not is partially flawed in that; in reality it just leads to greater insecurity for the workers involved (Cherry, 2009).

Take the argument that the gig worker can work for any demand platform, at any time therefore, giving that person a constant amount of work if they want it, this is clearly flawed in that the rules of many of the platforms only allow workers registered with them to work for them. Hence the worker becomes solely committed to that provider, if the employee turns down a job, the provider may not contact them again via the app, and recent research has showed this to be the case with Deliveroo and Uber (Rowson and Cavagnaro, 2018).

Another example although in logistics rather than the hospitality industry is Hermes the courier company who employ self-employed so called ‘life style couriers’, because these workers are self-employed they do not receive the same employment benefits as employees, such as National Minimum Wage protection, sick pay or paid holiday entitlements; yet in reality most of the couriers work only for Hermes as this tends to be a contractual agreement (Rowson and Cavagnaro, 2018).

Businesses working within the hospitality, accommodation and food services sector, for instance, have also seen significant changes to their employment practices. Non-employer businesses within this sector have grown 1,464% since 2010. Experts have speculated that employment law should be updated to handle the changes and development in the structure of the UK labour market (Premier Business Care, 2018).

WORKERS AND EMPLOYEES

At this stage, some distinction should be drawn between ‘workers’ and ‘employees’ this distinction varies between countries and for the purpose of giving a clear example, UK employment law has been used. UK employment law distinguishes between the term ‘worker’ and ‘employee’ and in the gig economy this legal status tends to be something of a grey area; the following explanations are from the UK government website Gov.uk:

A person is generally classed as a ‘worker’ if:

- They have a contract or other arrangement to do work or services personally for a reward (your contract doesn’t have to be written),
- their reward is for money or a benefit in kind, for example the promise of a contract or future work,
- they only have a limited right to send someone else to do the work (subcontract),
- they have to turn up for work even if they don’t want to,

- their employer has to have work for them to do as long as the contract or arrangement lasts,
- they aren't doing the work as part of their own limited company in an arrangement where the 'employer' is actually a customer or client.

Workers in the UK are entitled to certain employment rights, including:

- getting the National Minimum Wage,
- protection against unlawful deductions from wages,
- the statutory minimum level of paid holiday, the statutory minimum length of rest breaks,
- to not work more than 48 hours on average per week or to opt out of this right if they choose,
- protection against unlawful discrimination,
- protection for 'whistleblowing' - reporting wrongdoing in the workplace,
- to not be treated less favourably if they work part-time.

However, employees' are subject to different employment rights. An employee is someone who works under an employment contract. A person may be an employee in employment law but have a different status for tax purposes. Employers must work out each worker's status in both employment law and tax law. All employees are workers, but an employee has extra employment rights and responsibilities that don't apply to workers who aren't employees (Gov.uk, 2018).

These rights include all of the rights workers have and:

- Statutory Sick Pay,
- statutory maternity, paternity, adoption and shared parental leave and pay (workers only get pay, not leave),

- minimum notice periods if their employment will be ending, for example if an employer is dismissing them,
- protection against unfair dismissal,
- the right to request flexible working,
- time off for emergencies,
- Statutory Redundancy Pay.

Some of these rights require a minimum length of continuous employment before an employee qualifies for them. An employment contract may state how long this qualification period is.

Working out the employment status for an employee. Typically refers to someone who works for a business and is probably an employee if most of the following are true:

- They are required to work regularly unless they are on leave, for example holiday, sick leave or maternity leave,
- They are required to do a minimum number of hours and expect to be paid for time worked,
- a manager or supervisor is responsible for their workload, saying when a piece of work should be finished and how it should be done,
- they cannot send someone else to do their work,
- the business deducts tax and National Insurance contributions from their wages,
- they get paid holiday,
- they are entitled to contractual or Statutory Sick Pay, and maternity or paternity pay
- they can join the business's pension scheme,
- the business's disciplinary and grievance procedures apply to them,
- they work at the business's premises or at an address specified by the business,
- their contract sets out redundancy procedures,

- the business provides the materials, tools and equipment for their work,
- they only work for the business or if they do have another job, it's completely different from their work for the business,
- their contract, statement of terms and conditions or offer letter (which can be described as an 'employment contract') uses terms like 'employer' and 'employee'.

(Gov.uk, 2018)

Furthermore, a person may be an employee in employment law but have a different status for tax purposes. Employers must work out each worker's status in both employment law and tax law in order to comply with both (Gov.uk, 2018).

While many writers and commentators have tended to focus on the new novelty of what has come to be known as the 'on-demand' or 'gig' economy. In fact this employment phenomenon forms both a continuation and an intensification of developments that have been underway for nearly four decades (Van Doorn, 2017). Some critical and political reading can clearly illustrate this; most commentators refer to the failure of capitalism in the recent recession of 2007–2011 caused by the banking crash and internationally taxpayers picking up the cost. This situation provided the ideal labour market conditions for the on-demand business model to flourish globally, this model often associated with Uber, Ubereats; Deliveroo; as spawned an array of similar online platforms for many industries including the hospitality industry.

Moreover, the combined pressures of mass unemployment and underemployment, fiscal austerity policies, and rising inequality, an increasingly precarious and shrinking middle-class workforce has welcomed new ways to market its assets even if the only asset available is embodied as labour power (Booth, 2015; Hill, 2015; Mirani, 2014). A project conducted by the Benenson Strategy Group (BSG): a survey of 601 driver-partners conducted in December 2014 (BSG 2014) and a survey of 632 driver-partners conducted in November 2015 (BSG 2015) suggests that driver employment history with retrospective information on driver-

partners earlier work experience. This data offers a picture of what they were doing prior to partnering with Uber.

Approximately 80% of driver-partners reported that they were working full-time or part-time hours just before they started driving on the Uber platform. Only 8% of driver-partners in 2014 (and 10% in 2015) said they were unemployed just prior to partnering with Uber. This low percentage is notable given that, for the economy overall, about 25% of new hires came from unemployment and 70% came from none-employment in 2014 and 2015 (Hall and Krueger, 2017).

The large share of drivers who partnered with Uber while they had another job suggests the role that Uber plays in supplementing individuals' income from other sources. Prior to partnering with Uber, 6% of drivers were students, 4% were retired, and 3% were stay-at-home parents. Among those working prior to partnering with Uber, 81% reported that they had a permanent job that would be there until they left, were laid off, or were fired, and many appear to have continued in those jobs after partnering with Uber (Hall and Krueger, 2017).

Recent work in the US about Uber suggest that nearly half of Uber's driver-partners (48%) have a college degree or higher, considerably greater than the corresponding percentage for taxi drivers and chauffeurs (18%), and above that for the workforce as a whole as well (41%). This data suggests that this type of demand platform work is used either as a top up of income and the high number of college educated suggests that the US middle class are trading down in job roles to continue earning.

Clearly the flexible nature of the work, suggest that many gig workers use the platforms as a way of earning 'pin money', or extra income, it is difficult to put actual numbers on people working in the gig economy because combined with the fact that employers are reluctant to make data available and the turnover of gig workers is likely to be very high makes it very difficult to estimate the number of gig workers in the hospitality sector (Rowson and Cavagnaro, 2018).

Reports by SPERA (2016) indicates that internationally, the Gig Economy has been having a much bigger impact than first thought, and currently more than a fourth of the US workforce is officially part of it

(SPERA, 2016). However, again no specific data reports on the US hospitality sector. The SPERA report in 2017 suggests that researchers project that approximately half the US and UK working age population will move towards work in the gig economy, but again the research does not extrapolate hospitality workers (Rowson and Cavagnaro, 2018; SPERA, 2017).

There is evidence that for many workers, the move into the digital economy may not be voluntary; OECD data suggests most people take platform-facilitated contracts of limited duration because they cannot find permanent work or to supplement more traditional part-time employment. The OECD (2016) estimate that some 60 per cent of Uber drivers were looking for ‘proper’ employment before starting with Uber (OECD, 2016).

In reality the odds are stacked against the gig worker and many are trapped in the work environment, where all the rules are made by the on demand platform to protect and support the employer at the expense and insecurity of the worker, whom in many cases carries all the financial risks and insecurity. Often the choice is stark with gig work or no work. For example, platform owners reserve the right to modify the agreements with workers at any time, which renders the contractual relationship that governs workers’ conduct making this highly insecure and detracts from their ability to appeal particular regulations or decisions. Moreover, many Terms of Service (ToS) agreements also give platform owners the right to terminate workers’ user accounts when they decide that these workers have somehow breached the agreement (Aloisi, 2016).

The following legal case brought in the UK in May 2017 by the Independent Workers Union of Great Britain (IWGB), aimed to force Deliveroo to accept the collective bargaining rights of its members. But in its ruling, the Central Arbitration Committee, which oversees collective bargaining law, concluded that Deliveroo couriers are self-employed because they have a right to ask a substitute to perform a job for them. By law, anyone with the right to do this is classed as self-employed, and self-employed workers aren’t entitled to collective bargaining rights.

However, employment relations experts claim Deliveroo manipulated the system to offset its liabilities. Deliveroo changed its contract with its workers to include this crucial ‘substitution clause’ just 11 days before the CAC hearing (Tims, 2017).

This legal precedence gives leeway to hospitality employers who will be able to classify more workers as independent, or self-employed contractors, this will offer clear benefits to hotel and restaurant management. One such benefit would be more flexibility in worker hours this means the ability to operate leaner, even if shorter minimum shifts would require raising hourly rates to compensate. Management would have more leeway to determine market pricing; rates could increase and decrease with the availability of labour required, even so far as by the peak hours, and the day of the week.

This would offer significant benefits to hospitality employers, using gig workers would free up time and cost from traditional recruitment methods, reduce admin, pay only for workers when needed and increase more flexibility in shift patterns. That said, however, at the same time creating greater pressure on gig workers, as they would be required to provide all their own equipment, for example room cleaners could be expected to provide their own cleaning materials, uniforms and protective clothing. They would be classed as self-employed and be responsible for their own pension, holiday and sick pay.

However, there is an alternative argument and in a recent survey, Rota 2017 asked its thousands of Members (gig and short-term contract workers) what is most important to them when it comes to their work. And it wasn’t pay that ranked number one. It was flexibility, supporting the commonly held notion that millennials crave a healthy work-life balance. Flexibility was followed by job security (or enough shifts being available) (Moss, 2017a). There is some evidence to support this that today’s generation of staff desires the ability to choose when and where they work as opposed to being pushed into a fixed roster, while being guaranteed shifts when they need them Moss, 2017b).

CONCLUSION

Over the last few years, hospitality employers have started to recognise the value of the phenomenon that labour market experts refer to as the ‘gig economy’, where short-term, freelance or zero hour contracts replace permanent employment. This appears to be a prolific employment practice especially among younger people who are semi-skilled or unskilled workers. This chapter has tried to identify some of the advantages and disadvantages associated with the gig economy. In that it creates greater flexibility and reduced employment costs for the hospitality industry, in many cases it offers flexible working arrangements that some people use to top up a salary gained from full or part-time employment. However, there is a downside in that many people working in the gig economy are captive workers in that there is little opportunity for work available to them outside of the gig labour market.

The full impact of the gig working and the so called gig economy is as yet unknown and the purpose of this chapter has been to identify the many issues surrounding this new reality faced by many workers in the new emerging labour market. It is clearly too soon to say whether this new way of working will have a significant impact on more traditional jobs in hospitality although there is some evidence emerging to suggest that this might be the case.

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