



What the future holds for the interim market

The world is experiencing increasing levels of change and disruption, with uncertainty across global economies, changing legislation and global conflicts creating a challenging market for interim professionals right now. However, there are signs that the market is starting to pick up and there are reasons to be hopeful as we move into a new financial year.

Matthew Whipp of IIM Affiliate, [BIE Executive](#), alongside a range of IIM Members and Board Members, give their views on the state of the market right now, what they're noticing already in 2025 and tips for aspiring and new interim professionals.

Contributors to the article are:

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What is the current state of the interim market?

Clearly the interim market has been quite tough over the past 12 months. There are opportunities out there, but there is a lot of competition for these roles and interims are often waiting much longer between assignments than they may have had to a few years ago. This has been compounded by political changes in the UK in 2024, challenges still faced by IR35 legislation, and AI allowing organisations to take shortcuts in the hiring process.

Below, our experts give their views:

- “With continued economic uncertainty, some organisations are slowing down on permanent hiring and in some instances we have seen companies pause on big transformation plans due to budgetary constraints. However, some of those businesses that have been pausing are now realising that the time to act is now before they fall behind the curve. We have also seen a lot of faith being placed in the larger consulting firms (which is somewhat understandable in times of uncertainty), however, we are hearing time and time again that this approach is failing, and it is an expensive failure. Businesses are increasingly pushing towards using (at least in part) highly skilled interim managers to co-ordinate, execute and deliver transformation.” – **Matthew Whipp**

- “The market is certainly still quite deflated. Through last year this was apparent because of the election and then the budget. It seems to have led to companies holding back, in terms of investments in new technology or digital programmes.” – **Debra Hesse**
- “Because of the election in the UK last year and then with the increased tax burden on business there's been a little bit of a wait and see attitude with businesses in terms of future investment. Given that interim managers are often involved in change programmes, I think that is what has led to a tougher market for interim managers.” – **Dr Stephen McCormac**
- “I've noticed a significant shift in the gap between interim engagements. It used to be back-to-back or you were able to choose how often you'd like to work. Nowadays they seem to be few and far between, and there's far fewer opportunities available. Because of the marketplace at the moment, employers have lots of choice, so they're quite picky and they often want to find a ‘Unicorn individual’ – someone with a very specific set of skills and experience to solve a particular problem.” – **Phey Rasulian**
- “If I look at what the interim market looked like in early 2020 compared to now, I would say it's a completely different landscape. Business confidence has not fully bounced back since COVID. There are economic factors, there's been global wars, and businesses seem to be in a holding pattern where vital projects that potentially will help them grow have just been put on hold. So, what we find is that there are a lot of interims on the market. Adding to this is IR35, where I think businesses are still trying to come to terms with what it means for them. It's still quite new and I really don't think that a lot of businesses know how to engage interims and probably don't really understand the difference between a consultant, a fractional and an interim.” – **Diane Ward**
- “AI is continuing the commoditisation of how interims win work, a trend that was started by application tracking and CV keyword analysis. This increases the need for interims to double-down on their networking efforts and to operate more like recruiters.” – **Kevin Briggs**

How will the market change over the next 12 months?

Even though the market is challenging right now, there does seem to be light at the end of the tunnel. With the economic challenges caused by ongoing legislation changes in the US, there is potential that organisations will start to look at their manufacturing and supply chains, leading to large transformation programmes. Also, a period of stability in UK government could lead to more investment from organisations. However, there are still threats, such as consultancies picking up work that previously interims may have delivered.

Here are our experts hopes and predictions for the next year:

- “Over the coming year, I anticipate interim demand to grow. Organisations are increasingly leaning on experienced talent to navigate complex change in areas like digital transformation, AI implementation and cultural change. Couple this with my earlier point around a shift in how companies are perceiving a hybrid model between interim managers and consulting firms, and I think this will only spur activity on further. There's also a noticeable rise in interest around fractional leadership – where organisations tap into senior expertise on a part-time or project basis.” – **Matthew Whipp**
- “AI provides an opportunity for projects and with it brings interim opportunities. Once organisations know exactly what they need to achieve and how to achieve it and the maturity of AI improves I think this will lead to a lot of projects. Things like process improvements and efficiency gains or using metrics and data management more effectively with AI. I think that's where the next wave of interim opportunities will come from.” – **Phey Rasulian**

- “It’s difficult to predict things right now, but with the impact of the tariffs imposed by the US, it could lead to a large amount of change. Organisations that have outsourced services or production may have to look at their manufacturing or supply chains and start to bring things back into their home country. This could create a big opportunity for interim leaders with experience in this space.” – **Tony O’Donnell**
- “The UK doubled-down on legislation, specifically IR35 and Off-Payroll Working, in the post-Covid period when businesses had the greatest need for skills and experience on a flexible basis to aid their recovery. This was extremely counter-productive, on several fronts. I’d like to see a return to confidence in the bona fide engagement of seasoned Interim Managers – they are a source of huge benefit to businesses to help them achieve stability, performance, and growth.” – **Ian Watkins**
- “I’m hoping that businesses cannot sit in this state much longer and that if the UK government continues to talk about real growth and start to create jobs it will bring confidence back to people and companies. It’s going to take a shift like that to start getting things moving.” – **Diane Ward**
- “I think what we can hope for is more political stability in the UK. With no election for the next four years and hopefully no more increased taxation on businesses within this parliament, which will hopefully give businesses more certainty so they can start to invest more.” – **Dr Stephen McCormac**
- “A big change in 2025 in the public sector is that local government in England is changing because counties and districts are being mandated to merge. This might bring opportunities like happens with mergers and acquisitions in the private sector. They will need experienced people to meet their needs right now to support with this process.” – **Andrew Grant**
- “With a flatlining economy, some businesses may find it harder to survive. Interims are a fantastic source of support for businesses finding themselves in that position and for those interims experienced in turnaround, demand is likely to be high. Also, private equity investors remain an important part of the economy and whilst they acquire to restructure to build value, interims are always going to be an important resource for some of these investors. For interims operating in transformation and change, work should be relatively easy to come by.” – **Kevin Briggs**

What is the advice for people looking to get into interim, or those that are early in their interim career?

While the market is tough, there are still opportunities to start an interim career, however people need to go into it with their eyes open and be fully committed to the career choice.

Our experts provide their top pieces of advice around networking, financial management and more below:

- “Interim hiring is outcomes-led, so clients want to know what you’ve delivered, how fast you got there, and what measurable impact you had. Make sure your CV reflects that and build out your LinkedIn profile to match. Also, invest in your network. Most interim roles still come through trusted relationships, so it’s worth putting the time into staying visible, relevant, and connected to the right circles.” – **Matthew Whipp**
- “The work I’ve got has all been through my personal network, where people have reached out directly with an opportunity or a recommendation for something. So, I can’t overstate the importance of networking and keeping your personal network strong, as I think this is the best source of getting new opportunities.” – **Debra Hesse**

- “You need to be clear what being an Interim really means. Wanting something to tide you over isn't an interim choice. An interim is something different. It's basically a change agent. So don't join it thinking it's just something you do when you're trying not to be a permanent. It's an active choice. My advice would be to speak to others that are currently doing it, speak to people in the IIM and ask them: how is it for you?” – **Andrew Grant**
- “I think the ability to network and to keep yourself prominent in the market is key. Do this by continually putting yourself out there - write articles, contribute to forums, get involved in different memberships, attend webinars, speak at events and on podcasts. You've got to make sure that you're extremely visible.” – **Phey Rasulian**
- “My advice to people is to take it as a profession as opposed to a filler. Have it as part of your career plan and take the steps in your career to prepare yourself for interim work.” – **Tony O'Donnell**
- “For me there are four factors. Number one, you have to be comfortable with uncertainty - this is not permanent employment. Two, you need to be prepared for periods of time which are not billed and be clear on how you spend that time, whether on professional development or other areas. Three, you need to have some financial resilience. Personally, I would make sure I have 12 months money in the bank to allow for periods between assignments. Four, have the correct skill sets. I think you need to come to the interim market with a strong track record and a very significant toolkit, whether that's deep expertise or breadth of sector expertise.” – **Ian Watkins**
- “My advice for someone that's going out as an interim for the first time is it's not for the faint hearted. There is no guarantee of income, there is no guarantee of work. Being an interim is something that I've really enjoyed because it's given me the opportunity to work on a wide variety of projects, to develop new networks and to take time off and take control of my work life balance when I've not been in an interim assignment. But you have to have the financial means to look after yourself in those down times. Something I always recommend to new interims is to join the Institute of Interim Management, because we help new interims by giving them guidance on the sorts of things they will need to consider.” – **Diane Ward**
- “I think it's really important for anyone considering an interim career to have a very strong definition of what they do and what their value proposition is. Make sure you know how to market and promote yourself and never stop doing business development. Always be thinking about how you can build out your network and how you can improve your market position.” – **Dr Stephen McCormac**
- “Learn how to run a business and learn about networking – people find it hard but it's a vital survival skill as your first job will come from your existing network. Use your work experiences to seek out adjacent work skills - whilst you have a core set of skills, there's no harm in extending them or developing new ones as you work. Finally, keep an eye on the macro and the future – what trends are emerging in your field and what do you need to do to get on-trend; to what extent does your ability to learn exceed change in the environment?” – **Kevin Briggs**

How can the IIM support its members during this time?

The IIM is a brilliant network and resource for Interim professionals to network, develop themselves and find new opportunities.

The IIM Board Members outline specifically how the IIM can support its members below:

- “The IIM provides interims with a library of information about the practice of interim management, and this is updated as the environment in which we operate changes. We also run workshops to help interims address questions on specified topics through our “coffee” sessions. We are also resurrecting the in-person events that the IIM used to run of topics of

interest to the membership. Another benefit is the IIM WhatsApp group for members to keep in touch, to highlight opportunities, to ask for general advice and to highlight events being run.” – **Kevin Briggs**

- “We provide a strong community for interim managers that allows any member to build a bigger, more diverse network. We also have relationships with quite a few ISP’s such as BIE Executive which can often be helpful for interims that are looking for new work.” – **Dr Stephen McCormac**
- “We run workshops that help people to become that little bit more business savvy. Things like learning how to network yourself or how to write material on LinkedIn. It’s all about helping people to understand that they are a business working on their own account and they have to take some responsibility for finding work for themselves. We're also running some projects to evolve the membership and we do have Members participating in that, because the Institute is run by members for members. Finally, we share opportunities that comes our way that we think might be good for somebody else in the Institute.” – **Diane Ward**

As discussed in this article, the interim market has been challenging in the last 12 months, but there is certainly optimism and potential opportunities coming in the future. If interims follow some of the advice outlined above, there is a good chance that new assignments will arrive in 2025.

For more information on market rates and the state of the market, as well as advice on how to position yourself and take your interim career to the next level, reach out to Matthew Whipp (matthew.whipp@bie-executive.com), or the wider [BIE interim team](#). There are also useful resources and guides on the [IIM website](#).