

Welcome

By **Ruella Crouch**, Managing Director

The summer is traditionally a quieter time in general recruitment terms, however it's usually a very busy time for graduates looking to secure their first position within recruitment and this year is no exception. As usual, we have been inundated with requests from clients for quality trainees across a whole range of recruitment disciplines across the UK. In addition we have been registering in excess of 30 plus new roles a week for experienced consultants and 10 plus roles a week at a management/senior management level.

So the moral of the story! As far as the recruitment to recruitment market is concerned the summer months have not made any difference, we are as busy as ever so if you're an experienced recruiter, whatever your level of experience, recruitment discipline or location, call us now!

Since our last Recruitment Journal we've won the Recruiter Awards for Excellence for Best Recruitment to Recruitment Firm for the third year in a row. Once again we're very proud to have been recognised for our achievements in the provision of service excellence.

We hope that you enjoy reading our Summer Recruitment Journal. Have a fabulous summer, we'll catch up with you again at Christmas!

Best regards,
 Ruella



Ruella Crouch

Tips for the top

Recruitment, as regular readers of this journal will appreciate, is a tough business. But if you want to make it in recruitment, who better to give you advice than those who are already in the job and those who conduct the interviews? We talked to established recruiters (candidates) and the companies who are on the look out for new talent (clients) and asked them for the best piece of advice they would give to someone who wanted to pursue a career in recruitment.

The candidates

I think I would remind graduates looking to go into recruitment that it really is about your personality and resilience - I've got good academics and so did a lot of grads that I came across but that is never going to be enough. Some of them didn't realise that.

(Emma Koo Seen Lin)

Do your research! You can only get so far by winging it. You can easily get a job without the research, however, you could miss out on the opportunity that you really want through lack of it!

(Daniel Clark)

I would say take time to research the markets you operate in as this will build up your knowledge and help you feel more confident when initially speaking to clients and candidates.

(Natalie O'Shaughnessy)

Apply yourself and use your time well, since the people that you will work with will know what works best, the best way to make money for the business and more importantly yourself.

(Mathew Shenton)

Make sure you learn to switch off from it (work) by having a life outside of work.

(Robert Baird)

Persistence overcomes resistance.

(Dave Morris)

Don't expect much in the first six months, but after that you should be billing consistently.

(Paul Wilkinson)

They should go through a rec to rec. It makes life easier and you get a lot more information about recruitment than you would researching on your own. You get prepped, get given good company info and will know what the job involves.

(Sarah Bernard)

The clients

Ensure that you write a relevant and personalised cover letter and highlight related sales/recruitment based skills and abilities on your CV. So many people are now applying to recruitment roles that applicants need to carefully consider how they are differentiating themselves from the rest. This also applies in interview - highlight transferable skills and competencies to what is needed in the role. A lack of sales experience does not matter - we are looking for people who can make the transition in their thinking.

(Jessica Norrish, Badenoch and Clark)

Only consider a career in recruitment if you are truly committed to a sales role in a target driven environment and that in making the commitment to this career you must be prepared to put in the effort necessary to succeed. In making this commitment you will find this a hugely rewarding, fun and well paid career for life. I find that too many people considering this career do so naively in the belief that it is a well paid 9 to 5 HR role.

(Jake Warren, GraingerWest Limited)

Be prepared to work hard and smart - recruitment can be one of the best paid careers for a graduate/sales person, and also one of the worst paid! Ensure you know what you are getting in to - recruitment is a sales role and not as glamorous as people may think!

(Jamal Khan, Finance Professionals - PRO Limited)

Be honest and open at all times with both candidates and clients so you are driven to achieve the best result for both parties, NOT for you! Its the long-term relationship build which always wins over in recruitment because you are dealing with people - although you may feel you are losing out in the short-term! The other advice is to become expert in your chosen field so you can become a true 'consultant' rather than an 'agent'. Lastly, ask lots and lots of questions and listen.

(Jane Shaw, Resource Innovations Ltd)

Feedback forum

We sometimes forget that the interview is a two-way process and that candidates are judging clients just as much as they are being assessed themselves. We asked some candidates and clients about interview experiences to find out the most common problems.

The candidates

Overall clients treated me really well and I got feedback promptly compared to the clients that I now deal with! The only negative experience I had was where the interview never got off the ground and the rapport just wasn't there

(Emma Koo Seen Lin)

I felt fairly treated and even valued by all of the clients I faced. However, I felt that the feedback I received was somewhat vague and to a degree "wishy washy". But now being in a position whereby I am trying to obtain this feedback for my own candidates I appreciate how difficult it is to get useful information from the client. I interviewed with a number of firms and got the same textbook feedback from the majority of them. In the future I would like something more specific that I can use.

(Daniel Clark)

It's an extensive, long interview process. Four interview stages is a little long. I know lawyers who've had to do less!

(Amasis Saba)

Being asked the same questions at every stage, was quite monotonous.

(Bhavna Chadha)

When candidates are not upfront or honest about other jobs / interviews elsewhere. Cancelling interviews at the last minute and one-word answers.

(Gina Mazzarelli)

Getting accurate feedback in an acceptable time period can really irritate me. The banks have taken up to 4 weeks to inform me that a candidate has been successful and when I speak to the candidate I discover that they have told the candidate directly themselves. Candidates letting you down at the last minute by not showing up for interviews you have taken the time to organise for them is also highly annoying.

(James Tucker)

The fact that there were 4 interviews - seemed quite repetitive, questions such as "what's your favourite animal?"

(Dan Robinson)

The clients

If candidates do not appreciate the value of an open honest relationship I find it very frustrating. Candidates can sometimes hold a mistaken belief that playing their cards close to their chest benefits them, whereas if they are clear on their aspirations and honest with their consultants they can receive a much more consultative approach and potentially benefit from a better career. This issue can also arise with clients and is a very short-sighted approach that results in consultants prioritising other roles/candidates. "closed mouths don't get fed!"

(Jake Warren, GraingerWest Limited)

Lack of preparation.

(Jamal Khan, Finance Professionals - PRO Limited)

The most common problem we come across is the counter offer from the current employer to entice the candidate not to leave once they have started the interviewing process. Candidates sometimes forget the original reasons for wanting to leave the position in the first place and can be swayed by the extra monies that the current employer has magically found for them. It is difficult to make the candidate take stock and consider that this could be a short term fix, and the employer may have already lost faith in their loyalty and could be buying time. Of course in true recruitment style the counter offer only appears at the moment you get the candidate through umpteenth interviews and down to final offer... That's recruitment.

(Kevin Kearney, Eden Brown)

Candidates who have not prepared properly for the interview, who have very little knowledge of Michael Page, our market share and who our competitors are. Candidates not being able to differentiate between the different recruitment consultancies, therefore not tailoring their job search.

(Sapna Sharma, Michael Page)

Potential recruits who have not researched the business let themselves down, after all if they can't make the effort for their own career will they really do so for our candidates and clients?

(Paul Glatzel, ECHM)

Industry overview



Along with the Christmas break, summer is traditionally the slowest period of the recruitment year. With candidates and clients on holiday it can be difficult to sustain billings over July and August. The good news is that, according to the latest Recruitment Confidence Index (RCI) from The Daily Telegraph and Cranfield School of Management, activity in the market is set to increase over the next six months.

The poll found that over 40 per cent of organisations plan to increase headcount between now and the end of the year – good news for everyone in the industry.

The increase in recruitment activity is, however, beginning to slow with 17 per cent expecting recruitment activity to decrease, compared to only 12 per cent last quarter. Just under a third of these organisations (31 per cent) expect recruitment activity for managerial and professional staff to increase compared to only 7 per cent who expect it to decrease. Overall the picture is positive.

Commenting on the findings Shaun Tyson, Professor of Human Resource Management at Cranfield School of Management, said: "There are signs that the labour market is easing somewhat in the face of uncertainty in business confidence, with lower levels of labour turnover and fewer difficulties overall, but the evidence so far is patchy. We need to see if this is a temporary phenomenon, and to look at the trends in future surveys to see what effects, if any, there are from recent events which occurred after this survey was completed. At the moment recruitment activity is still on the increase we believe."

So the message from the market is that, while there may be a few uncertainties in the labour market, recruitment looks set to do well from now until the end of the year.

The world is your oyster

How to headhunt

By Warren Kemp

As the War for Talent intensifies once more, with employers fighting over the best candidates available and candidates increasingly aware of their market worth, headhunting will increase in importance as a method of sourcing the right staff. For those who can do it successfully headhunting is an invaluable tool in the armoury of skills that a top recruiter requires to fill their vacancies. But if you approach someone directly in the wrong way you run the risk of damaging your relationship with them before you even start. Do it the right way, however, and you could be well on the way to making your placement.

Picking up the phone to introduce yourself to a prospective candidate – albeit one that doesn't know you nor is expecting your call should be simple. Then why doesn't everyone do it? Well - confidence and skill play a big part. We can't solve the skill needed in a few words here but we can maybe help your confidence level. So here are

some reasons to have the confidence to head-hunt:

80 per cent of job seekers leave their job because they are under performing – that's 80 per cent of the people applying to your adverts.... And possibly on your database!!

90 per cent of professionals in a recent UK survey said if they were head-hunted professionally, ethically and discretely they would have a conversation even if only out of curiosity.

100 per cent of your efforts will result in a direct answer and one that you can influence.

If the figures above stack up (and they do) then that means only 20 per cent of the people on your database or answering your ads are worth working with. Head-hunting will gain you access to the real performers- the ones your clients really want to hire. It also means that 9 times out of 10 when you phone someone up (if they can talk) you can have a conversation about their aspirations- if you control it properly. Finally you know exactly where you stand with the hitters in your market – straight away.

Another fact that should make you think whether to head-hunt or not: 5 years ago 85 per cent of



the people attending head-hunting training were from search houses- out and out head-hunters. In 2005, 85 per cent of attendees are from main stream recruiters – simply adding headhunting to their tool kit-to use when they need it.

"I spent a whole lotta time sittin' & thinkin' Sittin' & just thinkin' 'bout you If I didn't spend so much time sittin' & drinkin' We'd still have the chance to place you where I thought I knew"

(Adaptation by WBKemp of Elvis Costello 1981)

Sourcing Secrets

By Mike Walmsley

In the early days of my career I was very good at winning business, gave great service and believed clients would come back to me even if I didn't fill the odd role due to candidate shortages. But that approach only allowed me to earn £50K a year and unless I started to fill a much higher percentage of my vacancies I would never earn as much as I wanted to.

So I decided to do something about it.

To become a Super Biller you have to make a conscious decision to find most of the candidates yourself. And in case you think I'm just talking about headhunting, be aware that headhunting is only one of over 30 ways to find good candidates for free without advertising or the internet.

So where's the best place to start? Take a moment to think of all the people you've worked with in your current and former companies. How many names do you have in your mind even after just 30 seconds thought? Is it really any different for your candidates? The secret is to get them to tell you those names.

But maybe you're thinking that you already get recommendations from candidates? The difference is that a recommendation is re-active (only around 5% of candidates refer due to good service) whereas a referral is pro-active, and with a pro-active approach referral levels can reach 50% plus. The basic starting point is simply to look after the candidate professionally, then at the end of the conversation explain a role that the candidate cannot personally do and ask "who do you know who can do this particular job?".

Super Billers also pro-actively get names and contact details out of their candidates' minds in many other ways. For example, you interview a candidate who claims their reason for leaving is that their manager is "a tyrant". If the candidate is telling the truth, isn't it reasonable to think that other



people in the company feel the same way and may want to leave? If a temp tells you that their booking via a competitor is finishing in a week, why not find out how many other temps are also finishing?

If you approach referrals with a Super Biller mentality, candidate shortages become a thing of the past, and your own personal success as a recruiter will skyrocket.

Summer reading for recruiters

While many of us might like to be lying next to the sea on a white, sandy beach at this time of year with our favourite blockbuster there are also some fantastic new recruitment books which have been recently published and which are worth a look.

Drawing on the experience of people who have found success and balance in their work, **Take Control of Your Career** (McGraw-Hill, September 2005, £12.99), by career strategist and author, John Lees, takes a refreshingly different look at career management, from the perspective of while you are in a job and wanting to move onwards, upwards or sideways. Whether you want to take your next step up the career ladder, move to a more interesting job or devote more energy to learning and living, the book invites readers to examine what they mean by career success, how to set goals and strategies for achieving them. Building on the findings of extensive research about above-average career progression, *Take Control of Your Career* shows you how to learn the art of career awareness, self awareness, the ability to understand what you are looking for from work and how to match this to the needs of an employer.

In **Recruiting Excellence** (McGraw-Hill, July 2005, £10.99), authors Jeff Grout and Sarah Perrin offer an insider's guide to attracting, selecting

and retaining top talent. They outline how important employer branding is and offer many new practical hiring strategies. *Recruiting Excellence* is a comprehensive blueprint to capitalising on the massive influence of people-power on a business.

The authors maintain that the dynamics of the modern work environment have evolved. Recruiters must respond by adjusting their hiring and firing strategies accordingly. Employing great people is only the first step to building a winning team.

Recruiting Excellence goes above and beyond the search and selection process addressing the many considerations at stake when seeking to find the right fit for candidate and company. *Recruiting Excellence* is billed as a must-have handbook for all HR professionals and indeed anyone in business who has the responsibility for hiring people. Key features include: common recruitment failings, firing and how to fire with minimal commercial impact.

For those who want to read some fiction **Meat Market** (Vanguard Press £6.99) follows two days in the lives of several employees working for Job Market - a recruitment agency in London's Covent Garden. Shirley is the boss. She doesn't suffer fools gladly, so isn't particularly popular. She is in denial over the ageing process and ripe for an affair, but who with? Ritchie has only been at Job Market for six months, but has already made an impact, professionally and personally. Beverley thought she had it all going for her, until Shirley does something which could make life even better.

Angie is head of the Fashion Division. Very nearly divorced, with two children, she wasn't aware that she was ready for another relationship - until a colleague starts to show an interest. Ellie is the Personnel Officer. She's not one for gossiping and tries not to get involved in her colleagues' affairs. This is an enjoyable romp through the recruitment world!

Summer fun on the web

With another month of summer left to enjoy, here are some websites you might want to check out to make the most of August and September before the UK weather returns to normal. First off **www.whatsonwhen.com** is a site everyone should have in their favourites folder. It's a searchable and comprehensive list of events - everything from sports fixtures to festivals - from the UK, Europe and beyond. So if you're planning a weekend away, check it out.



For those who are staying closer to home but still like the finer things in life **www.toptable.co.uk** allows you to pick and choose between some of the best restaurants in the UK. With reviews of the food and a handy online booking function it's a great site for the foodies.

And for those with itchy feet there are numerous sites which offer great travel deals including **www.cheapflights.co.uk** and **www.expedia.co.uk**



From all the team at Ruella James
Enjoy the rest of your summer!

