



# The Recruitment JOURNAL



Three times award winners

## Welcome

By **Ruella Crouch**, Managing Director

As I write our lack lustre summer is finally drawing to a close and we're well on our way to Autumn. I'd usually be disappointed by my rather pale complexion, but having just had my second child I was rather glad that I didn't have to cope with the intense heat during the final months of pregnancy!

I'm not one to write about my personal life in the pages of this Recruitment Journal but having two children under two and having successfully placed a number of candidates in part-time roles this year, it really got me thinking about the difficulty women still have in finding a true work/life balance within the recruitment industry.

I admit if I hadn't had children of my own I would never have believed that you could still be as successful in recruitment while working from home, or on a more flexible basis hours-wise, but it can and does work. Thankfully attitudes and perceptions are changing and a number of our clients will now consider more flexible working arrangements, however sadly it's not always the case!

As a result of my changed circumstances, we were about to advertise for an additional consultant to work for Ruella James when an ex-employee approached us having also just had her second child. She was looking for a part-time role after a two year break and we were happy to accommodate the request.

We're delighted therefore that Sarah Richardson (neé Hilbbird) will be re-joining Ruella James from the middle of September. Sarah had a fantastic reputation with both candidates and clients alike in the recruitment to recruitment market and prior to her six years at Ruella James worked in both the Commercial and Financial recruitment sectors.

We're envisaging a very busy Q4 and have a huge variety of interesting roles at all levels within our top-tier client base. Please feel free to call us in complete confidence, we are always available until 9pm weekdays and week-ends.

Our referral bonus has been increased to £300 until the end of the year. All we need is a name and number and we'll work hard to earn that referral fee for you! If you've not used us before or referred a friend we hope the testimonials opposite will give you the extra reassurance to do so.

In this journal we've highlighted some of the points to consider when trying to attract staff to your organisation as well as giving our usual overview on the recruitment market.

For candidates we've included a slightly controversial article by Gavin Ingram on work life balance. Many of you may know Gavin from the humorous reviews on the programme 'The Apprentice' where he very successfully related the weekly tasks to the recruitment sector. In this issue we also look at the rise of social networking sites and finally we review the latest books relevant to our sector along with our Legal Update.

We look forward to catching up with you in a few months time, in the meantime have a great Q4.



Ruella Crouch

In our next journal we will be profiling the issue of flexible working in recruitment. Please do email me at [ruellac@ruellajames.com](mailto:ruellac@ruellajames.com) if you currently provide this facility to staff or you work within an organisation that offers it, we'd love your views on how it works.

Kind Regards,  
Ruella.

## In their own words....

**Rather than wax lyrical about our service, we thought we'd let three recently placed candidates do the talking for us....**

"You were understanding, empathetic, listened and generally made me feel totally looked after. You presented me with a list of great potential employers, all who fitted my requirements. Also you didn't force me into any quick decisions or interviews which I was unsure about, I always found you approachable and having my best interests at heart.

Rec. to Rec. agencies have a bad reputation of not listening and being patronising, not least treating you like you don't know the business. Ruella James is the total opposite of this, completely professional, open and extremely knowledgeable and helpful with interview tips/advice - a fantastic agent and well deserved of all those awards! I wouldn't hesitate recommending their service to potential clients and candidates."

*Candidate placed in the position of Branch Manager at La Crème.*

"Ruella James knows the recruitment market like no other. The time and effort taken to really understand my needs and to uncover exactly what it was that I was looking for was exceptional - I felt as though I was dealing with old friends as apposed to a recruitment consultancy! Throughout the entire recruitment process I was made to feel wanted and individual.

There really is no bigger compliment or thank you that I can pay to Ruella James other than to say that, without hesitation, I would recommend their recruitment services to everyone I know within the recruitment industry.

In terms of quality, professionalism, outstanding service and making you feel special, the benchmark for other Rec-to-Rec's has been well and truly set."

*Candidate placed in the position of Consultant at PSD Group*

"I thought the quality of service and speed in finding me my current role was fantastic. From my initial meeting with Ruella and my follow up contacts with Katie - I found your service second to none. I have no hesitation in referring your service to my colleagues and friends.

Furthermore, I felt that Ruella really helped me identify the kinds of companies and environments that would best suit my personality.... I would have to say it is a perfect match in terms of environment and working culture.....I am pleased to say that all of what I was told about the company and business ethics has come to fruition.....Finally, I would like to thank you both for all your hard work and effort in finding me this fantastic role."

*Candidate placed in the position of Managing Consultant at Next Employment*

## You're hired – feedback from recruitment candidates



As everyone working in the staffing sector is aware, the UK is currently facing a skills crisis across a broad range of industry sectors. The ironic thing is that recruitment itself is not immune to the candidate shortage that the rest of the country faces and consultants who are good performers are in strong demand in every part of the market, from temporary agencies to executive search firms. Be it junior consultants or branch managers, competition to attract proven billers is intense. But surprisingly, for an industry which is so good at finding the right staff for its clients, feedback from consultants indicates that recruiters are not getting it right when sourcing staff to work within their own organisation.

According to candidates who have been through the process, the problem is not limited to a few recruitment companies but cuts across the market with the same criticisms being levelled again and again.

The problems begin with the interview process. Candidates are kept waiting in the reception area with no indication when they will be seen. This immediately creates a bad first impression and – as we all know – first impressions count for a lot. Moving on to the interview process itself, the candidate can often find themselves being interviewed by a different person than they expected without explanation or someone who they feel is too junior. They are often not given a tour of the office which, given the fact that if they take the role is where they will be spending 40 hours a week or more, is not a good way to market the organisation. Post-interview many recruitment firms are failing to give robust, constructive feedback which allows the candidate to assess their performance and improve on it. Each of these points, taken on their own, may seem relatively minor but taken together they paint a picture of an organisation which is seeking to put a 'bum on a seat' rather than to take on an employee who will be nurtured to achieve their full potential. In today's skills environment, companies which send out this message are going to find it difficult to attract top class employees who will help move their business forward.

Of course the process of recruiting does not end at the interview process. Some agencies are also guilty of failing to keep their promises, committing the cardinal sales sin of over-promising and under-delivering; this is not the way to foster confidence. The lack of a proper induction process can also mean that someone who has recently joined a company may feel that they are not given enough support to bed into their new role.

In order to compete effectively in the war for talent, recruitment companies

need to think more creatively about how to attract and retain the best talent. Some agencies are too narrow-minded, focusing on where someone has worked in the past rather than the skills they possess and what their potential might be. Interviewers and those responsible for internal recruitment need to take every opportunity to create rapport with the candidate, showing the company in its best light as an attractive place to work. Simple things like giving out company literature or having 'meet the team drinks' during the interview process can create a positive experience for the candidate making them much more likely to sign up. In more competitive markets, it may pay dividends to be more creative about offers perhaps giving a signing on bonus or some other incentive. The recruitment industry is great at finding staff for its clients but, as the turnover figures indicate, less good at looking after its own employee needs. In today's competitive candidate market companies need to manage their own recruitment process carefully to protect their brand and attract the right people. By listening to candidate feedback and taking a few simple steps, organisations can make themselves an employer of choice.

## Market report

Despite the terrible weather, the summer has been positive for the recruitment market with a strong economy continuing to fuel demand for staff as businesses expand their operations. The number of people placed in permanent jobs and average salaries awarded to them increased at the sharpest rates for over seven and nine years respectively, July's Report on Jobs survey conducted by the Recruitment and Employment Federation (REF) and KPMG found. The report also indicated that skill shortages remain a significant problem for recruiters, reflecting tight candidate availability.

"The availability of staff has deteriorated at the fastest pace for over two years and employers need to continue to be creative in their recruitment strategies. With growth in the labour market population slowing down, due to the declining birth rates since the 1960s, it is increasingly important for employers to have attractive graduate recruitment programmes to find and retain the best candidates of the estimated 230,000 who left university in 2007," said Michael Carter, People Services Partner at KPMG.

The quarterly CIPD/KPMG Labour Market Outlook provided a look at the medium-term employment outlook. 47 per cent of employers surveyed expect their staff numbers to be about the same by summer 2008. More than a third (36 per cent) expect to be employing more staff, but 17 per cent expect to be employing fewer. There is a 19 per cent positive balance of employers expecting to employ more staff over those expecting to employ fewer in a year's time – down from the 22 per cent positive balance recorded in the spring. The positive balance is strongest in private sector services (43 per cent), followed by the voluntary/not-for-profit sector (36 per cent) and manufacturing (24 per cent). The public services again record a significant negative balance, unchanged from the spring survey at –20 per cent. So overall, the market outlook is positive.

# Changing Times

## Social networking sites – use with care



The popularity of social networking sites has grown dramatically over the past twelve months. For example Facebook now boasts over 3.5 million users in the UK, compared with just 500,000 in October 2006. This is rapid growth by anyone's standards. It is clear that the social networking phenomenon can be hugely valuable to recruiters and resourcers. Indeed there are sites like LinkedIn and Ecademy, which are social networks designed entirely for business purposes, and which can be fertile ground for finding candidates. For recruiters the potential advantages are obvious.

But staffing professionals need to be careful as well. Relying too heavily on information garnered from a candidate's personal website could, in the worse case scenario, lead to a discrimination hearing. Having said that, careful use of the resource available is an opportunity too good to be missed. And with the technology still developing who knows what further opportunities will be available in the future.

The Recruitment and Employment Confederation (REC) recently carried out a survey to gauge recruiter's opinions on how the web 2.0 craze is affecting the industry. It revealed that 86 per cent of 298 consultants questioned thought that candidates should think twice before posting certain information on the internet for fear of it affecting their chances of employment. This and recent media attentions have left many candidates feeling wary about how much personal information they post on the web. Fears that they may be judged on their personal life as well as their CV were proved to be not entirely unfounded after it was found that 66 per cent of employers would google potential employees for further 'inside' information.

Anne Fairweather, the REC's external relations manager felt that recruiters should bear in mind that good recruitment practice rests on a thorough assessment of a candidate's skills and references as well as judgement of their suitability for a job: "While there is a lot of information about candidates on the internet, this information should be used with care. A quick glance at the internet could be so misleading that it becomes more of a hindrance than a help," she said.

So the message seems clear, by all means use social networking sites as a resource. But do not rely on them solely and be careful how you use the information you find there.

### How Sales People Can Achieve Work Life Balance - by Gavin Ingram

“Seems to me that there's been a lot in the press recently regarding work life balance. So many people have thrown their hats into the ring that I'm beginning to think that it's the precursor to some sort of twilight world of badly dressed, Brut drizzled, 70's wife swap party. Even the Conservative party has been on record saying that people are more interested in work life balance today than money and possessions.

#### Really?

As a sales author and speaker I meet thousands of people every year and I think the politicians are right that there has been a change and they are right that people are talking about work life balance but they are wrong in their interpretation of this information...

#### Here's the world according to Gavin...

##### People are richer than ever

We are. Just face it. Look at the luxuries people take for granted these days that people would not have dreamt of thirty years ago... Holidays abroad, meals out, binge drinking, designer clothes, house styling, coffee shops etc.

##### People have short memories

Most people say that money is important when they don't have any but once they have enough of it (most) people don't see it as that important. If you can afford to drink coffee at Starbucks you're not really worrying about money therefore you start to worry about other stuff, "Ooh, I feel unhappy. It's all so bad. Things used to be better".

Take the money away and most will quickly tell you that they want the money back and then start saying that they're short of cash!

##### People want possessions – more than ever

Don't kid yourself otherwise. I see car parks full of BMW's. I see shelves full of designer clothes. I see young people starting out in life with massive flat screen TVs. People want possessions.

##### People don't want work life balance they want less work for the same possessions

That's the truth. We've got it better so we want to work less. But we want the goodies too. People aren't talking about forsaking goodies for this so called balance – they just want more for less. I believe we're creating a society that expects something for nothing.

**Don't be fooled.** If you think that this is going to be easy you're going to fail. Because it's fools gold. Don't buy it. Don't believe it. Don't subscribe to it. If you want goodies, if you want possessions, if you want to buy yourself a comfortable living, if you want to retire comfortably at some point in the future you have to do your time. Least in sales you do.

Sales is not some reality TV instant gold rush but it is one of the best ways to get whatever you want. Whatever your education or background, success comes to those who sell the most.

Success in sales requires consistent hard work and consistent effort. Sales hurts and this is where you start to pay!

Gavin Ingram is a sales author and speaker. To read more articles by Gavin Ingram or to check out his seminar schedule visit [www.gaviningham.com](http://www.gaviningham.com)

# Legal update



October marks one of the two months each year – the other is April – when new government regulations come into force. While there are no changes this year which will have as big an impact on the recruitment industry as the Age Discrimination rules did in 2006 there are still a number of changes which companies and individuals need to be aware of. First the good news, from 1st October the statutory entitlement to paid holiday increases from 20 days to 24 days. This measure was brought in to prevent unscrupulous employers from including public holidays in their employees' annual leave allowance. The National Minimum Wage (NMW) also sees an increase from 1st October with the main rate going up from £5.35 to £5.52 per hour while the development rate rises from £4.45 to £4.60 per hour. The rate for workers aged 16 to 17 years increases from £3.30 to £3.40. New rules on flexible working also come into force, increasing rights for those who adopt. The new regulations add private foster carer, and the spouse, partner and civil partner of a private foster carer, to the list of those people who are entitled to request a contract variation asking for flexible working arrangements in order to care for a child. Later on October 24th the Data Protection Act comes fully into force and manual filing systems are required to be fully compliant with the regulations. Finally a single equality body, called the Commission for Equality and Human Rights, is introduced. The body will merge the Commission for Racial Equality, the Equal Opportunities Commission and the Disability Rights Commission, and take responsibility for the new laws outlawing workplace discrimination on grounds of age, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

# Book reviews

## Recruiting Excellence

Jeff Grout and Sarah Perrin (McGraw-Hill Professional)



You want to fill your company with smart ideas, fill it with great people. In times of boom or bust, it is the people that provide competitive advantage. Recruiting excellence explains how the dynamics of the modern work place have changed, and how this has impacted on recruiting strategies. Split into three sections, **Part one** - takes a step back, looking at the strategic environment: the candidate's agenda, changing employment market, employer branding, alternative means of sourcing new

recruits and alternatives to taking more staff on board.

**Part two** - takes a practical look at recruitment - addressing the process, use of consultancies, headhunters, advertising, CV's and application forms. It also explains the psychometric tests, their use and effectiveness. It gives tips on interviewing and the final selection.

**Part three** - After the selection- examines making the offer, probationary period and how to retain key recruits. A great recruitment read.

## S.U.M.O.

### Your Relationships - How to Handle Not

### Strangle The People You Live and Work With

Paul McGee (Capstone)



This is the second book in the S.U.M.O series (it stands for Shut Up, Move On) and is out this month. The book contains practical and straight-talking advice on the world of relationships both in and outside of the workplace which can help to improve all aspects of working life.

The book includes the seven realities you have to be aware of when dealing with people,

the two biggest reasons why people keep repeating the same mistake in how they deal with people and how to change it as well as the skill one leading business guru describes as being absolutely critical to practice if we're to develop better relationships. It also features six ways to tackle confrontation in the office and describes the seven S.U.M.O characters we meet in life. With recruitment being all about people this is a must-read for consultants.

# Our personal recommendation



**Freshbusinessstinking.com** is an online resource for small business owners, directors and entrepreneurs. The site allows information hungry and time-poor business decision makers to source information and advice which will help them to run their businesses more effectively and efficiently.

Running a small business can be a lonely existence - you need to wear many hats and keep up to date with the latest developments and thinking. The pace of business is continuously accelerating and the site is aiming to be a resource where you can find the information you need to help drive your business forward. It includes news, business advice and documents such as employment contracts and purchasing agreements. **Freshbusinessstinking.com** comes highly recommended for anyone interested in business so why not put it in your favourites!