

Maximizing your chances in today's recruitment market

Sean Toms, Managing Director of Robinson Toms Recruitment, gives candidates some expert advice

Is the marketplace at the bottom yet? Interest rates are now 0.5 percent, and expected to be so until the end of 2010. Will quantitative easing help stimulate a recovery? Even the Governor of the Bank of England appears unwilling to try to "time-scale" forecast a recovery.

What is clear is that confidence remains low, and UK unemployment is forecast to rise substantially to over 9 percent, so where does this leave the recruitment sector? In our nine years of recruitment, operating nationally and internationally, the recruitment market appears flatter than at any time before, with fewer positions available, and more people looking than ever before.

If you are a client (i.e. employer) it is a buyer's market. To-date, though, this has not seen our corporate clients reducing the salaries they are willing to offer. They are cognisant that employees know when they have been taken advantage of, and that such a strategy, whilst providing a saving in the short term, would likely see people quickly move on, when the recovery takes hold.

Those clients that are hiring are rightly being discriminating in their requirements to reduce their risk. Those that are hiring "new name" income generators are additionally seeking a clear, and unequivocal, "time-scaled" return on their investment.

There is no shortage of opportunity out there either! With the liquidity crisis, what better time is there to cold-call new customers, to establish how you can help them. It is a brave Sales Director at an equipment vendor, or a brave CFO or Head of Treasury at a corporate customer,



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who chooses to turn away someone who can help them sell more easily, or profitably, or potentially provide them with an additional credit line.

On the other side of the coin, if you are candidate who has been made redundant, or you think you might be, what can you do to differentiate yourself from the many others you will be competing with?

Firstly, be confident. This is easy to say, but if you have already been made redundant you may feel that this is a reflection on your personal performance. You must put this aside, rationalise it as the market, and not you, if this helps build and maintain your confidence.

Secondly, irrespective of your function or your level of seniority, you **MUST** ensure your CV really does sell the value that you have added to both your current, and previous, employers.

Thirdly, be honest with yourself. What skill-set or product knowledge gaps do you have, and what are you doing about closing these gaps?

Fourthly, at interview, whatever the role, you must articulate clearly and succinctly why you are a benefit and not a cost to a potential employer, and that you will fit in quickly and easily into a new environment.

Finally, to give yourself the best chance of success with all the above ensure you partner with a specialist recruiter who has a record of delivery in this sector. This experience allied to a breadth, and depth, and sufficient numbers of client relationships will give you the greatest opportunity.

Whether you are candidate or a client, partnering with an experienced specialist will be your fastest route to achieving your recruitment or career objectives in this climate.

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