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PRESS RELEASE
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Date April 2008

Subject **Careers in Recruitment**

Is a career in recruitment all that it is 'cracked up to be'?

With over 4,000 online advertisements for recruitment consultants on one job site alone, it is hard to believe that the industry is growing that quickly. To look at it in another way, are so many people leaving the industry today because a career in recruitment just isn't for them any more?

So is a career in recruitment all that it is supposed to be or is the industry failing to retain talented recruiters and hence the constant churn?

Speaking to a number of Career Officers from local schools and colleges this month, not one admitted to a having spoken to a student in relation to a career in recruitment. So is recruitment considered to be an actual career? The immediate answer to this is a resounding 'Yes', with every member of our research group agreeing that recruitment was considered to be a mid length, real career – however the longevity to which it would be was a real sticking point, and the reason for this.....It's image. Consultants with even the shortest of tenure in industry recognised this as being an issue.

Q: What do you believe to be the general perception of the recruitment industry in Australia?

“...it has an image problem, we are seen as chasers. Far too many shark recruiters out there that give the rest of us a bad reputation”

(Executive Recruiter – 3 years experience)

“...it’s not the greatest, HR Departments think they are superior to us and candidates see us as a necessary evil”

(Trainee - <1 years experience)

“That we are cunning and just after the quick dollar”

(Recruiter, 3 years experience)

On the positive side, more established recruiters were seeing some small shifts in attitude toward their profession, with a general acknowledgement from clients and candidates alike that not all recruiters are the same.

Consultants acknowledge the concerns relating to the image of the industry – primarily because they are the ones dealing with the opposition and feedback from clients and candidates alike on a daily basis. Consultants from the smaller / boutique style of recruitment agency were better equipped to manage this type of feedback typically because the management team were closer to the operational front end of the business and had a handle on the current recruitment market.

There is widely accepted acknowledgement that the industry continues to tolerate what are perceived as being ‘cowboys’ without recourse and that penalty for bringing the industry into disrepute often only occurs when external authorities are involved or when some significant event, usually personal accident, occurs.

So an age old question; “How to regulate those ‘cowboys’ that don’t join an industry body such as the RCSA or ITCRA?” Perhaps this is where a return to Employment Agency Licensing for those who chose not to join an industry body comes back into play.

The common misconception is of course that all recruitment companies are the same; regardless as to size, sector, etc. however when phrases like 'necessary evil' continue to permeate to the top of the list of feedback comments in relation to recruitment companies – then clearly something needs to happen

So why do people chose recruitment as a career? Are the initial expectations in relation to a career in recruitment being realised? And to pose a further question, where do recruiter's see themselves in five years from now?

The good news here is that 80% of our research group believed that a career in recruitment was everything that they expected it to be and this was applicable to those recruiters that had anywhere between 12 months and 7+ years recruitment experience.

Of the remaining 20% who had stated that a career in recruitment wasn't everything that they were expecting, only 4 of that 20% were in their first year of recruitment. This then begs the question of the remaining 20%; "why are you still in recruitment?" The answer was pretty simple – financial gain.

Interestingly of those respondents stating that recruitment wasn't living up to the expectation, they were also consultants / recruiters who had worked at one or more recruitment company for less than a year on more than one occasion – umm! A word of advice then, if you have working in recruitment for 5 years and you are now with your 5th recruitment company – perhaps it just isn't going to work.

When considering joining the industry, new recruitment consultants were split 50/50 in terms of whether they should join a small / boutique or larger national or international recruitment company.

Both had their relative benefits and merits – with training, systems and established networks of clients and candidates the principle reasons given for joining one of the larger players. The perceived benefits to joining a smaller

player, centered around the personalised, local service they provide to their clients – and of course to them as an individual.

Looking at how a career in recruitment has changed over the last 10 years, we asked our research group to comment on; what has changed, what was better and what was worse.

Candidate shortage was of course the top answer here however coming a close second was the fact that clients were encouraging face to face relationship development with their chosen recruitment companies rather than keeping them at arms length.

What does it take to be a good recruiter these days?

From a recruiter's perspective, Tenacity and Resilience are seen as being the two primary qualities needed to be successful in recruitment these days with honesty and integrity still key behaviours in the profile.

I suppose it is reassuring that of the 100 people we spoke to in March, not one regretted the decision to join the recruitment industry. The disappointing aspect of this research is that only 50% believe that their long term career goals lie within the industry.

Other facts and figures from this month's research:

Q: If you could change one thing about the recruitment industry what would it be?

A's: *"Reduce the number of agencies in the market place" (Recruiter, 5 years experience)*
"Get rid of managers who don't recruit, but just manage" (Recruiter, 5+ years experience)
"Focus recruitment companies on looking after their recruiters" (Recruiter. <12months exp.)
"Register/licence recruitment companies" (Recruiter, 7+ years experience)
"Blacklist dodgy recruiters" (Trainee, less than 12 months experience)

Q: What advice do you give to people who ask you about a career in recruitment?

A's: *"Tell them the absolute truth – the ups and the downs and that it isn't at all glamorous"*
"I joined the industry thinking that I would be able to apply for a good job myself, I have been in recruitment for 7 years, I am still waiting for that job"
"Bloody hard work, but can be rewarding"
"It's an emotional roller coaster. You have to be prepared for the knock backs"
"It's fun and can be exciting. It has a definite buzz around it"