



Turnaround

PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Company **Turnaround Group**
Telephone 03 9620 7744
Email enquiries@turnaround.com
Web www.turnaround.com

Date May 2008

Subject **Career Expo's**

It's that time of the year again. As most colleges and Higher Education institutes complete their annual Career's expo's and yet to graduate students make they way back home to read the mountains of glossy marketing material, we spoke to a number of NSW and VIC education institutions about the activities of the last four weeks.

Having spent the last year planning for this significant calendar event, the majority of those we spoke to confirmed that this year had been their biggest since formalizing their career expo activities, with the larger Educational institutions stating that corporate attendance was up on last year.

Representation from Government Departments, Professional Services, Banking and Accounting Service sectors was again particularly strong this year.

All the usual names were there, the large national and international players with slick recruitment propositions geared toward attracting the cream of the crop. With the apparent skills shortage firmly at the back of every exhibitor's mind, the trophy cupboard was there to be filled – and filled it was. The larger, national and internationals have an incredible reach, and budget when it

comes to attracting the talented today – they always have. But how are today's small and medium sized businesses fairing against the larger players? It's at the small to medium size end of the market that the war for talent bites hardest at the very heels of productivity and growth – not the top end.

Representation by the small to medium size players this year, continues to be an issue, but is this because they have been squeezed out of the hunt, or just haven't clued themselves up on what a graduate recruitment campaign can bring to their business? From our research it would appear to be the former reason with a number of those respondents from the colleges and universities we talked to indicating that they 'selected' exhibitors for their large career's day, which often meant relegating the smaller organisations to sub-events later in the year.

So where does the role of the recruiter fit in to this?

When asked, only two of the institutions we spoke to confirmed that recruitment companies had or were attending their Career's Expo and in order to do so they had been required to prove that they were representing genuine roles – not a great deal of trust demonstrated there.

A couple even commented that recruiters would only be invited if they had any space left and this would be offered at the last minute – almost like being invited out for dinner and then being given the table next to the toilet door.

If and when recruiters were invited / allowed to attend, then it was commented that these were typically the smaller, more specialised agencies who were seen as being able to advise rather than just sell.

The relationship between educational institutions and the recruitment industry is typically poor and lacks credibility – primarily due to lack of information and an abundance of mis-information.

Of the Corporate's who were attending this year, the majority had recognised the value of attending such an event many years ago and as such had their own dedicated internal recruitment function to facilitate selection. One organisation with spoke to, a large international financial services firm, commented that this year's event had been one of the most competitive they had attended. They typically sought to identify and then hire around 10 graduates into one of their specialist division per year. But even with an instantly recognisable brand, even they were finding the competition presented by the Banks a significant challenge.

With a generally held belief that the recruiter's place is not at a career's expo, this is clearly an area of opportunity for us, but how do we get our voice heard? The role of the recruiter for these organisations was therefore more about qualified and experienced candidates at a more progressed stage of their careers.

Firstly, we need something to say and we need a voice that people want to listen to. The recruitment industry fails to provide this and yet we hold a unique position – visibility both up and down the recruitment line.

The industry's capacity to actually consult with a candidate rather than just sell the job with the best corporate brochure is huge, but where the primary industry metric is revenue we will continue to follow the same path.

We have some outstanding talent within industry but more often than not, no visibility to it. So why not make a start by introducing the new face of the industry to those very people who will be our candidates and clients in a couple of years. We all hear our colleagues repeating; "our candidates today, are tomorrow's clients".

It seems that some may have forgotten that today's graduates are tomorrow's candidates and clients.