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Subject         Managing your own Recruitment Career

This month we were asked to write about how our candidates (at consultant level) are successfully managing their own careers within the recruitment industry and exactly what are the consequences if you don't!

We will start by boldly saying the majority of consultants haven't a clue about managing their own careers within the recruitment industry. Many unfortunately believe, as they have simply fallen into the industry, that recruitment is only a stop gap, a money making exercise or a stepping stone in their career. (Stop gap for what exactly? Stepping stone to where?). Worse still, there are those that couldn't care less about developing or managing their career as long as someone else is paying them a wage.

This deserved wage concept has been exemplified by most "gen Y'ers". They have taken for granted the buoyant recruitment market of recent years and couple this with their "it's all about me" philosophy; this has led to blatant disregard for corporate structure, corporate discipline and the need to be responsible for their own careers.

Others, less sinisterly, are time poor and too busy looking after their client requirements and candidate career interests that they neglect their own careers (it's the old cliché of the gardener's back yard....)

Fortunately there are still a large number of terrific career professionals within our industry. These are the "career recruiters". This doesn't mean they are the ones racing up the corporate ladders to well paid management roles, but they are the talent amongst us that have recognised the vast career opportunities and challenges that the recruitment industry can present them.

Therefore the first consideration in successfully managing your career within the recruitment industry is that you must embrace your career and be passionate about your chosen profession and the industry as a whole.

Remember, recruiters and recruitment agencies have helped almost every career sector in existence from tax accountants to taxidermists. It is because of you that many people have found employment and because of you that many companies have secured their key personnel. How many of your candidates and clients are passionate about their careers? Why shouldn't you be too?

2009 is not going to get any easier for any of us. We have been quoting figures of 25% of the industry has already disappeared over the last 6 months and we predict another 25% will go within the next 6 months.

For our "career recruiters" this will mean career opportunities.

So who will remain and how can you manage your career in these unsettled times?

Making placements (i.e. billing) is obviously the primary objective of any recruitment consultant; however as with any employment position, recruiters also have a "what" and a "how" scale in their job performance.

The "what" for a recruitment consultant are generally your billings or placement target for the defined period. The "how" is about quality, what you did and the way you went about getting this result.

Those that are successfully managing their careers within recruitment, the genuine Career Recruiters that we are referring to, recognise the significance of the "how". They aren't always the biggest billers within a business, time after time they will be up there on the top of the board and sure they may get outbilled occasionally, but they are the ones with consistent figures and consistent behaviours. They swap leads, they generate referrals, and they help others and contribute to the business holistically, not just with dollar amounts. This, in turn, means they get looked after by their candidates, clients, peers and their managers.

Whilst managing your career within recruitment it is imperative to be working for a professional agency that has a genuine desire to help you develop. They need to recognise that the "how" is just as important for longevity and success as the "what".

Our Career Recruiters will often interview at other agencies and meet up with rec2rec's to discuss their options internally and what opportunities there are in the industry externally that they may consider. This is not to say they are looking to depart their current employment, but instead are seeking to keep abreast of what next career steps may be available to them and what they can do to enhance their skills to position themselves even more favorably within the greater market.

Employers shouldn't be overly concerned about their consultants interviewing in the market. Career Recruiters aren't stupid and won't leave just because

someone is offering them an extra \$5k or \$10k elsewhere. As an employer, if you are paying your consultants fairly, supporting their development, recognising the “how” not just the “what” and giving them every opportunity for success, your consultants will remain loyal to you.

Lastly we will point out that managing your career within recruitment must be exactly that, managing your career. You can heed all the advice in the world, have the best manager and work for one of the top tier agencies, but unless you take responsibility for your own success and results you will never truly manage your recruitment career.

Just what is the impact if you don't take responsibility for managing your own career within the recruitment industry? As we referred to earlier 25% of the industry has already gone, if you don't start taking responsibility now you will be in the additional 25% to go over the next six months.