



Turnaround

PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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

Date September 2008

Subject **Communication – Managing your Business message**

We speak with many recruiters in the agency recruitment sector on a daily basis who are looking to move between agencies or make a change in to an internal recruitment environment. One of the common themes in the desire to move is a lack of belief or understanding of the organisation they are working for, uncertainty about direction and what that means for their career development. We suspect it is not in fact a lack of direction in the company but more likely a failure to adequately communicate their vision and business message to the team. We explored this thought by surveying 100 agency recruiters (not necessarily on the move at the moment) about the communication within their organisation and spoke in depth with 5 experienced recruiters.

It is one thing buying in to the recruitment agency brand as a potential employee, however what happens when you start in the role? Do you truly understand what the company's vision and business strategy are? Are they ever communicated again after you start?

Consultants place a lot of importance on understanding and contributing to the delivery of the business strategy of their employer, and this starts very early in

the relationship. In our research 62% of consultants rated it as a major part of their decision to join an organisation.

The good news is that Recruitment companies have generally got the tick from their staff re internal communication. A majority of respondents (79%) worked in an agency environment where there is regular communication although the formality and forms of communication varied. In the most structured of these the consultant saw a strong connection between this and the success and engagement of the consulting staff as a whole. 'My company runs local quarterly briefings on financial results, operational updates, budgets, people and business plans. We also share our personal and team business plans and have fortnightly e-mail company updates – we certainly can't complain that we don't know how we are going and where the business is heading'.

One experienced consultant said while the smaller companies were less formal in their business communication it was quite appropriate to the intimate nature of the teams and was really important in keeping the teams motivated. Face to face communication is also valued by consultants and there was an appreciation of management making the effort to personally have these two way discussions with staff. Consultants who had an opportunity to ask questions about the strategies and direction of a business really felt they were part of the journey and were motivated to achieve not only their personal goals but also wanted the entire business to achieve.

What about when the news is bad eg. Poor financial results or loss of key people? In our discussions with consultants it became clear that they really want to be treated like adults. If the news is bad they still want to hear it – but certainly not as a tirade of doom and gloom. 'I know things don't always go to plan in any business. I want to hear what steps are being taken to improve the situation and what part I can play in the process'.

Is the communication with clients in line with the internal message? In 76% of cases the consultants surveyed felt there was good alignment between

internal and external communications, and could therefore honestly represent their organisation in the market. Again there was good news in how supported consultants felt in communicating their business strategy or direction with their clients. 82% of consultants were provided either professionally prepared communications (48%) or felt well briefed by their managers (34%) in this area.

Where there were inconsistencies, a number of consultants felt that their values were compromised. 'I realize some information is commercially sensitive and shouldn't be communicated externally, and that is fine. In my last role we were expected to tell clients our Manager was on leave when we all knew she had left! I hated this and left the company soon after.'

The other message that became clear was the quality of the information was also of significance. There was a feeling that there is too much emphasis on purely figures – revenue and profit budgets, forecasts and achievement against these. 'I would like to hear more about the overall business strategy – expansion plans in sector, discipline or geography; structural changes and developments planned over the coming months. It would also be great to get feedback or hear about plans in the more qualitative areas of recruitment – so we know we are doing it better, providing quality outcomes and defining differences of the organization'.

Our research within the recruitment industry concurs with the commonly held view that communication is a key to maintaining a motivated and engaged workforce and improves retention. While a majority of recruitment companies appear to be communicating their business message effectively, there is still scope for major improvement in some organisations.