

Tate

THE Guide⁷

ATTRACTING TOP
TALENT IN AN
EVER-FLUCTUATING
MARKET



WATERTIGHT
GUARANTEE

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FOR SPECIALISTS
in office recruitment



Think



In our first Tate Guide in 2009, ‘Too many candidates, too little time’ we looked at the impact of the recession on the UK jobs market (which was down 19.4% in 2009 compared to the year before).¹ The recession meant that HR managers were inundated with CVs due to high levels of unemployment – particularly following private sector crashes – but not always from relevant candidates.

Now, in 2011, we look at how the employment market has changed and at the new challenges facing HR managers in the UK, in particular how to adapt your candidate attraction strategy to ensure you maintain the best possible workforce for the future.

1. Agile Intelligence, April 2011



WHERE ARE WE NOW?

There are certainly signs of confidence in the market – especially in the private sector as the shoots of recovery continue to grow.

In the first quarter of 2011, the number of people out of work fell by 36,000 to 2.64 million.² In the same quarter, the average number of vacancies rose marginally by 0.2% compared to the quarter before - meaning there are on average three claimants for every available job in the UK, significantly down from its peak in October 2009.³ While this is seen as a positive, industry leaders such as the REC, are warning that the market remains volatile with strikes over pensions and predicted job losses in the public sector due to the government's cost-cutting measures looming large on the horizon.

“In the first quarter of 2011, the number of people out of work fell by 36,000 to 2.64 million.”²”



2. REC, May 2011
3. Agile Intelligence, April 2011



THE PRIVATE VS. PUBLIC SECTOR BALANCE

The changing private vs. public sector jobs landscape is likely to have the biggest impact on the UK jobs market over the next 12 months – posing yet more challenges for HR professionals. According to the REC, a two-tier employment market has already emerged with 60% of public sector employers predicting a significant impact of their workforces as the government cuts start to bite,⁴ thus, causing a state of flux for candidates in the market.

Overall, the Education, Health and Public Administration jobs market has seemingly reached a consistent decline with 28,000 fewer job vacancies compared to 2011.⁵ In comparison, a slight upturn in private sector jobs helped to balance this out – particularly with a shift towards full-time roles.

4. REC, May 2011
5. Agile Intelligence, April 2011



“The UK jobs market over the next 12 months poses yet more challenges for HR professionals.”



SHIFT IN TYPES OF ROLES

During the recession, many companies increased their use of temporary and contract staff in a bid to cope with the fluctuations of demand in the market.

Short and medium-term demand for temporary workers remains strong as businesses continue to look to build crucial flexibility into their workforce planning. A total of 22% plan to add to their agency workers in the next 12 months.⁶

In addition, the REC's May Jobs Outlook has revealed yet more cause for hope. Ahead of the release of the latest unemployment figures, the survey has shown a major shift in employers' attitudes over the past month. This has resulted in a total of 44% saying they intend to increase their permanent staff in the next three months with 5% planning to hire new staff over the next 12 months.⁶ This is supported by further findings by the CBI which found that 29% of employers in its recent survey plan to increase the number of permanent workers they hire over the next 6 months.⁷ However, it is worth noting that this optimism is tempered by uncertainty over the potential impact of the government cuts – causing private sector employers to put these plans on hold while the true state of the economy following the government's austerity measures becomes clear.

6. REC, May 2011

7. CBI, 2011

8. OBR, November 2011

CHALLENGES IN CANDIDATE AVAILABILITY

Staff availability in general is significantly lower than its peak in early 2009 and anecdotal evidence suggests a shortage in the office market of higher level office professionals. Demand for senior level candidates continues to grow despite declining registrations as nervousness about the jobs market pervades the industry.

In the future, candidate availability in all industries looks set to rise as people look to move from a public sector role into the private sector. In November 2010, the Office for Budget Responsibility stated that it expected 330,000 public sector workers to lose their jobs over the next four years – this figure has been revised to up to 600,000 according to recent predictions.⁸ The impact of this shift from public to private sector job seekers has not yet hit. However when it does, it is likely that HR managers will find themselves once again inundated with CVs but not necessarily the 'hard to find' candidates that fill the skills shortage for office professionals.

“HR managers will find themselves inundated with CVs, but not the ‘hard to find’ candidates that fill the skills shortage for office professionals.”



IMPACT ON HR MANAGERS

These trends will undoubtedly have an impact on HR professionals who have already weathered many changes over the past few years. In particular, we can look at the following as important results of recent economic and employment trends.

Managing increased numbers of candidates

The increased number of former public sector workers on the market certainly poses an issue for candidates. A recent survey by Barclays Corporate and the Financial Times found that 57% of companies said they were not interested in former state employees, with 52% saying it was because they believed these workers were “not equipped” for a job in their business.⁹ HR professionals will need to use all of their experience to effectively blend the public sector candidate skills to private sector requirements to truly benefit from the experience and abilities of these potential employees.

Recruitment planning back on the agenda

As confidence grows and private sector firms look to the future with the increased recruitment of permanent staff, recruitment planning will play an even more important role for HR professionals. Planning will not only be important for effective recruitment but also to help firms with forecasting and budgeting for the future. For hints and tips on how best to approach this, please see our Tate Guide 3 *‘Planning for effective recruitment’*.

Attracting the very best in the market

While staff availability grows, some positions remain difficult to fill due to reported skills shortages, in particular in executive assistants and HR on the permanent side and secretaries on the temporary side.¹⁰ Top level office professionals remain highly sought after in the market and despite high candidate availability, attracting the best in the market remains a key challenge for HR professionals.

“The Financial Times found that 57% of companies said they were not interested in former state employees with 52% saying it was because they believed these workers were “not equipped” for a job in their business.”



9. BBC News, February 2011
10. Agile Intelligence, April 2011



OUR TIPS ON ATTRACTING TOP TALENT

At Tate, we've put together our top tips on how to attract the top talent in the office support and professional market taking into account current market conditions.



1. Be a destination employer

Attracting the very best employees that will be committed to and believe in your company is always a challenge. Looking at your employer brand and defining the culture of your organisation can be really important to ensure you attract candidates that will be the right fit for your business. For more ideas on how to do this, why not see our Tate Guide 5 *'Becoming a destination employer.'*

2. Offer support and guidance

This is especially true for private sector companies looking to attract candidates from the public sector. Effective support and guidance will be essential for potential employees to make this transition and additional training may be required. If you're targeting former public sector workers, why not outline this support package from the offset to offer reassurance and help to attract their valuable skills.

3. Think flexibly

A recent Agile Intelligence survey¹¹ found that the number of women looking for jobs continues to be higher than the number of men. Therefore, thinking flexibly about working hours and benefits could be an important part of your recruitment strategy, ensuring that women with children are not alienated from the recruitment process.

11. Agile Intelligence, April 2011



OUR TIPS ON ATTRACTING TOP TALENT

4. Be competitive

Let's face it, while added value benefits are great, in uncertain economic times, candidates are looking for job security and competitive pay. Post-recession, in the private sector, salaries are on the rise but the impact of the past few years has caused increasing diversity in salaries offered. Why not review salary surveys that relate to your industry and make sure your pay and benefits package is competitive to attract the very best?

5. Don't discount on age

Youth employment remains high with just under 20% of all 16 – 24 year olds outside education listed as unemployed during the first quarter of 2011.¹² While legislation prevents any age-related discrimination, it is always worth looking at relevant candidates at both ends of the age spectrum as there could be more candidate opportunity and availability. Workforce layering is important in any organisation so engaging with both younger and older candidates should be part of any healthy recruitment strategy. For our tips on recruiting across the age spectrum, see Tate Guide 6 '*Facing the recruitment and HR challenges of a multi-generational workplace*'.

12. Office for National Statistics, June 2011.

13. Recruiter Magazine, April 2011.

14. Jobsite, 2011

6. Think online

The way in which people look and apply for jobs has changed radically over the past few years. Online recruitment continues to experience 26% year on year growth across Europe¹³ and 2010 saw a 200% increase in people applying for jobs using smart phones.¹⁴ While old fashioned networking remains a favourite for job seekers, the internet has also changed the way in which people do this. Make sure that you use techniques that speak to the modern candidate when looking to fill a role and use social media such as LinkedIn to find out more about your potential candidate prior to interview.

7. Work in partnership

Working in partnership with a specialist recruiter in your field can often yield great results when searching for the perfect candidate. Specialist recruiters make it their business to develop a network of the finest talent in their industry which you can tap into. If they don't have the right person to hand straight away, they can work with you to develop a strategy to find someone with the exact skills you're looking for and make sure you cover a broad selection of online and offline methods to appeal to a wide range of job seekers.

“2010 saw a 200% increase in people applying for jobs using smart phones.¹⁴”



CONCLUSIONS

Overall, the ever-changing economic market continues to pose fresh challenges for HR professionals. The private vs. public sector balance is certainly set to cause changes in candidate availability and attraction as public sector cuts start to impact.

For more information on how Tate can help you with your office recruitment needs, please call your local Tate office on 0845 345 4141

At Tate, we have been specialists in office support and office professionals for over 25 years and can guide you through the recruitment process as well as giving you the best advice to ensure you retain your talent.

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