



## EXECUTIVE NEWSLETTER

May 2007

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### RECRUITMENT TECHNIQUES

#### *Adage Two: Candidate Identification*

In the April newsletter we looked at Role Definition as the first step in the recruitment of senior executives. Continuing on our case history of the recruitment of a Head of Sales for Ilam Plains Electronic Systems (IPES), does the following sound familiar?

After agreeing on role definition, the executive team put their combined wisdom together to source suitable candidates. Between them they knew around four search firms and six recruiting companies. It was agreed that each of these firms would be approached by an executive team member and asked if they had any candidates to fit the role. Additionally, five other individuals were identified working with IPES competitors or who were acquaintances of an IPES executive. They were to be approached direct.

After several weeks IPES had some 12 CVs, seven of them from more than one recruiting firm, and in one case from four firms. None of them looked really good on paper, but the Head of Marketing was tasked to see the best of them. From his series of interviews over three weeks he decided that no one suited the role and recommended the company advertise.

This was duly done. There were lots of calls and another 24 CVs, some of which they had already seen. Once

again no one stood out. By now eight weeks had elapsed, plenty of time had been spent and there was nothing like a leading group of candidates.

Through a "friend of a friend" a likely looking prospect arrived, was interviewed, and as the best of the lot, was recruited. He lasted five months, complaining of too much pressure in the job, as he departed.

Overstated case history? Perhaps. And yes, there is a better way.

With the well-thumbed role definition in hand, an executive recruiter was set about his business.

There are two ways of obtaining a pool of candidates to choose from:

- A well worded advertisement used in a planned campaign, usually in newspapers and on websites; and
- A search of the market in companies that are likely to have executives that meet the requirements of the role definition.

Each of these ways will produce different results. Let's deal with search first.

This is a process of careful and thorough basic research by a specialist researcher. Potential executives are identified and qualified, usually without them knowing they are a target.

These lists are then discussed by the recruiter and the company to agree on the group for closer investigation.

No later than this stage, the company should also provide details of anyone they know who may be suitable for the role. This recruitment process is too important to the company to be anything other than a working partnership between recruiter and company. Everything needs to be on the table.

The recruiter then gets to work to produce the short list, once again done in close consultation with the company. Potentials are approached, discussions held, persuasion prevails. These are well-performed candidates, secure in their job and most often not active in the market place. The good ones need careful nurturing and management to get them to shortlist.

Advertising is very different. People respond to an advertisement; they willingly throw their interest into the ring. The recruiter and company can be more aggressive in their approach.

The advertisement itself is very important. A good ad is a work of art. Not only must it attract response from those looking for a new job but it must also catch the eye of a casual reader and attract him or her to respond. The advertisement must be distinct, concise

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and attractive to the reader.

Once the pool of candidates has been developed from advertising, the process is a similar one of agreeing between company and recruiter which of the candidate's best suit, a series of interviews by the recruiter, and an agreement on shortlist.

There will always be other avenues suggested to gather candidates.

There are lots of global web based candidate databases, full of qualified, well-performed candidates, accessible to companies. A bit like some recruitment firm databases.

Would you have your CV in such a

database? Probably not, due to the public nature of such websites and lack of security in a recruiting firm database. These websites however are useful recruitment advertising media.

Getting back to our subject, the aim or advertising is to produce an agreed shortlist of executives capable of doing the job. And that is the job defined in Role Definition process.

Next month we will look at some suggestions on evaluating the shortlist candidates.

*For any queries or assistance telephone Barry Dreyer or Barry Fitzgerald at Fleet & Partners on (09) 309 3691.*

### The Recruiters

Finding people who may suit us  
Falls to corporate recruiters,  
Expert in the art of seeing  
The essence of a human being.

Extroverted in demeanour,  
None exemplifies a keener  
Nose for candidates who will  
Incline to fingers in the till;  
Or diagnose, in acned faces,  
Propensity for going places.

Professional success consists  
Of minds like psychoanalysts  
And constitutions which enthuse  
At à la carte with interviews.

## CLARITY OF WRITING

On only two scores can *The Economist* hope to outdo its rivals consistently. One is the quality of its analysis; the others is its quality of writing.

Clarity of writing usually follows clarity of thought. So think what you want to say, then say it as simply as possible. Keep in mind George Orwell's six elementary rules ("Politics and the English Language", 1946);

1. Never use a metaphor, simile or other figure of speech which you are used to seeing in print.
2. Never use a long word where a short word will do.
3. If it is possible to cut out a word, always cut it out.
4. Never use the passive where you can use the active.
5. Never use a foreign phrase, scientific word or jargon word if

you can think of an everyday English equivalent.

6. Break any of these rules sooner than say anything outright barbarous.

Readers are primarily interested in what you have to say. By the way in which you say it you may encourage them either to read on or to stop reading.

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