

Are You Attracting The Best?

By Victoria Capsey, Senior Consultant

As anyone would know who has tried to recruit strong marketing or business development professionals this year, the market is undersupplied with outstanding candidates. Strong applicants therefore have an overwhelming choice of very acceptable, decent career moves and employers. Accordingly a difference in company image, role, package etc can give a huge advantage to a firm. There is an increasing need for firms to not only select in accordance to their requirements, but to actively and effectively sell their vacancies to the applicant base.

Resources Group believes that the role of the recruitment consultant is not only to make an effective match, but also to explain the subtle differences between companies and roles to help guide individuals through a maze of options. However, it is crucial that the employer 'sells' their vacancy and one area that clients can definitely improve upon is the job description presented to potential employees.

On occasion, we have even found applicants requesting to cancel applications after receiving a dry and over-detailed vacancy specification.

This can therefore put an employer at a disadvantage in a competitive marketplace, requiring us to 'sell' the vacancy all over again and persuade the applicant to attend an interview to see for themselves the benefits of the company, environment and role.

Consequently we would recommend the following tips on the presentation of job specifications, which is based on applicants' feedback and could give employers an opportunity to present themselves in the best possible light:

1. Company Introduction

This is a must on every job spec. Keep it to around 50-60 words and put it at the top of each job specification.

2. Use positive superlatives

Instead of using words like 'work' or 'do' try 'overseeing', 'actioning', 'managing' etc...

3. Sell the 'essence' of the role

Focus on how the role fits into the company, how it interacts with other departments, clients or members of staff.

4. Don't be over selective in your criteria

Overstating selection criteria can be a turnoff for applicants - very few if any 'tick every box' and it could give them a feeling that they are not qualified for the role, therefore making them reluctant to apply.



Is Professional Services An Open Or Closed Door?

“Previous experience in a partnership environment is essential or highly preferred.”

By Giles Taylor, Group Director

This has been a common request included at the end of the majority of job specifications that we have received over the 12 years that Resources Group has recruited in the sector.

Between 2000 and 2002, we undertook research into the backgrounds of candidates that we had placed with our Professional Services clients. In what was still a relatively immature market, over 50% of the candidates had moved from one professional services firm into another.

Five years on and much has been said about the expanding skill sets required for professional services firms. In particular where it has been a candidate led market, clients have frequently specified to recruiters that they would be open to candidates from outside the professions. But in reality is that the case?

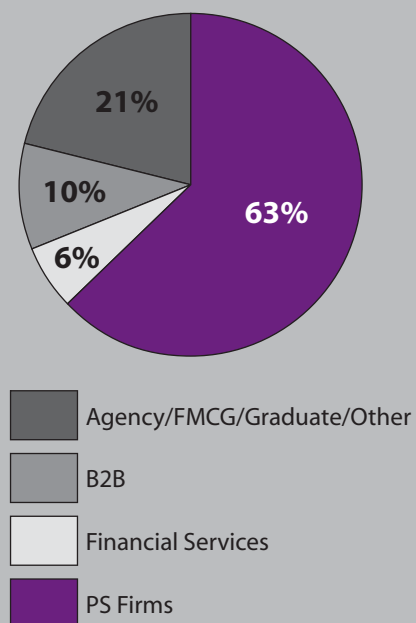
Resources Group has placed over 300 candidates into PS firms over the past 2 years and our latest research provided interesting findings when it was compared to the same research we conducted in 2002. As evident from the pie chart opposite, between 2005 and 2007, 63% of candidates we placed came directly from another PS firm - 13% more than in 2002. A small proportion came from Financial Services and other business-to-business firms. We then combined candidates that came from Agencies, FMCG companies and recent graduates, to make up the last 21%. It should be noted that many of these candidates were at the junior end of the scale and needed little or no previous experience.

Based on our findings, we propose that over the past 2 years it has become even harder to move into a professional services firm, and many candidates without prior PS experience would vouch for that. One of the prime reasons for this is that there are now far more marketing and business development specialists available from within the sector, even more so than 5 years ago. Consequently, when a role becomes vacant (even in the current candidate led market), competition from within is even greater.

As Marketing and BD functions continue to evolve, internal expectations have most definitely increased and screening processes have become even tougher. This in turn has resulted in the net being cast wider and outside of partnerships. Firms are interviewing a range of applicants – with and without PS exposure to keep their options open. This means the door is not necessarily closed, but in many cases when interviews reach late stages, an employer may possibly go for a candidate who has partnership experience, over one that does not.

It will also be interesting to see how this changes over the next couple of years particularly with many of the larger legal firms changing their teams from practice based to sector led. In these circumstances there will undoubtedly be further call for candidates with specific industry exposure, and recruiting managers will have to go wider than just the professional services sector. So most definitely the door will be ajar if not wide open!


Sector Experience of Marketing Professionals Placed in Professional Services Firms 2005-2007



Interview Tips For Junior Candidates

By Jodie Russell, Consultant

You have finally graduated, you have a great placement year under your belt and the celebrations are over! Its time to join the workforce, but first you have to get through those nerve-racking interviews. You know the interview stage is a vital part of the selection process, but what should you expect? Or more importantly; what do you have to do to shine? The following tips will help your first interview seem like a dream rather than a nightmare!



Preparation is the key to success. In today's day and age, with the Internet at your fingertips, there is no excuse for not having done your research. How much you prepare is a very good indication about the type of employee you will be. Being well prepared at interview suggests to a potential employer that you are organised, hard working and most importantly, interested. At very least have a good look over the firm's own website. Knowing competitors and reading recent news articles is also a great way to go that extra mile.

Anticipate what questions they will ask you and prepare possible answers. Try not to make them sound too robotic and prepared, but you will have a new level of confidence if you are asked a question that you have really thought about the answer to. Prepare questions beforehand; there is no shame in bringing them into your interview on a piece of paper, it shows preparation and consideration.

Know how to get to their offices. A practice run before hand is a great way to take a bit of stress out of the actual interview day.

Remember you only get one chance to make a good first impression and your appearance plays a large part in this, remember you are being interviewed by a professional services firm so be as business-like as you can.

Go into as much detail as you can without rambling. They will ask you what you know about the firm and this is a good time to show you have done your research. Make sure you know what it will be like working within the marketing team of a professional services firm - your consultant can help you out on this one.

It is not only about what you say but also how you say it. Remember to be confident, but not arrogant, and make sure you remain professional even if the conversation becomes relaxed.

The most important piece of advice is to be yourself! Remember you are there not only for them to find out if you are right for the role, but also for you to make sure the role is right for you.

Good luck!

By Samantha Mair, Consultant

Competition between Professional Services firms has, over the last decade, prompted the vast majority of City-based firms to snap up the services of Marketing and Business Development professionals, in order to ensure that their business is firmly in the minds of their potential and existing clients.

However, marketing within the regional firms has traditionally been on a smaller scale, focusing more on local clients; in some cases foregoing conventional marketing altogether, and instead relying on word of mouth or loyalty to keep their client base strong.

In an article last year, our Regional Specialist Colette Norfolk observed that there had been a shift in desired job location for many candidates; stepping away from the expense and stress of London living, and instead choosing to enhance their work/life balance by moving to a regional firm - and this seems to be an ongoing trend.

continued overleaf...



Regional Firms Move Into The Limelight

Regional Firms Move To The Limelight (continued)

Many regional firms, especially those based in and around the Home Counties, are benefiting from experienced, innovative marketers joining their Business Development teams - and several City firms with offices around the country are choosing to run their marketing from branches outside London. The Midlands too has seen an influx of smaller firms looking to expand their marketing teams, as the opening of regionally located offices of the City firms means that competition has increased, prompting the smaller firms to up their game in order to stay strong in their local business sphere.

So the matter remains: will this relocation continue? According to ongoing research, it seems to be a high probability; and considering that an increasing amount of business generation is realised through telephone and internet-based sources, the future need for London-based marketing departments certainly raises some questions.

New Appointments At Resources Group

Since our last newsletter, Resources Group is pleased to announce three new appointments to the team.

Jodie Russell and **Samantha Mair** have joined as Consultants looking after Assistant and Executive positions with existing clients as well developing new business in wider areas of the professional services sector.

Liz Cummins has also joined the team and will focus on account management working very closely with Giles, Colette and Victoria.



URL And Email Upgrade

Resources Group has now acquired the full URL **www.resourcesgroup.com** (formerly www.resourcesgrp.com). Email addresses will also change to the new format (e.g. gtaylor@resourcesgroup.com), though previous email addresses and web links will still work for the next 12 months.

Our website is also managed in-house which enables us to advertise vacancies within minutes of receipt, coupled with an applicant registration system, 'My Resources' whereby people can receive the very latest jobs by email, newsletters and other bulletins.

For the very latest opportunities, information and advice, please visit our website - **www.resourcesgroup.com**

Resources Group T: 020 7242 6321 F: 020 7831 7121 E: info@resourcesgroup.com W: www.resourcesgroup.com

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