

Article One: The Art of Recruitment Book Reviews

Last month we asked our readers if they would like to review Gaynor Lowndes' current book - The Art of Recruitment. Here we publish two of the resulting reviews.

By Declan Collins

The Art of Recruitment by Gaynor Lowndes is a "how to" guide to the basics of the recruitment profession probably best suited to relatively new recruiters. That said, it does offer a good reference point for most of the fundamentals that we can all do with being reminded of from time to time.

The book is broken down into 8 major sections that attempt to cover every aspect of the process from candidate and client dealings, to time management and motivation. A nice feature of the book is it splits sections to cover the differing approaches for temporary and permanent recruitment whenever this is necessary.

The first section is titled "The Recruitment Process" and this handles candidate registration and interview techniques. These are explained well but I was disappointed that under the reference checking paragraphs the author failed to mention the networking possibilities of such a warm call.

Next was "Candidates", covering everything from sourcing to offers and resignations. Again all the main points are covered but you did get the feeling that anyone reading about recruitment for the first time would think that it is easy to source candidates of quality. Sourcing was covered in just over a page with the result that the importance of the area was somewhat understated.

"Clients" was probably one of the better sections. Topics covered included categorising clients based on future value, building client relationships, selling retained services, and taking job details (this was very well handled and included a separate section for temp and perm). The much neglected Client debrief (after each interview) was also mentioned but I felt this should then have been cross referenced to future Candidate briefings. Making offers, counter offers, and post placement follow up were all handled well.

"Sales" dealt with all the aspects of business development from cold calling and chasing ads to marketing candidates and using referrals. It gave a decent breakdown of the various types of sales calls including scripts for them. Objections were mentioned but techniques for overcoming them was not.

"Time Management" was handled well and covered all the usual suspects – structuring your day, planning, desk management, and balancing work and play.

"You" was a self motivation, how to achieve success chapter covering goal setting and stress management among its topics.

Finally, the book was rounded off with a section on "The Art of Writing Ads". A fairly basic look at the techniques and important aspects of ad copy for various mediums.

While I think the book is quite basic in its techniques and ideas there is no question it covers a large portion of the basics a recruiter needs to know. For less experienced recruiters, it makes an ideal reference point, and, for the more senior people, it is a good reminder of some of the basics

they may be neglecting. Overall I'd say buy it if you are a new comer to recruitment or even in your first couple of years. If you're a bit more experienced I think you will struggle to find anything new in it but it may be a good place to revisit some basics.

By Don Leslie

Gaynor Lowndes has distilled nearly 20 years of recruitment industry experience into a useful primer for new and junior recruiters. "The Art of Recruitment" is a slim paperback which slips easily into any handbag - or manbag - and contains practical advice and anecdotes which will help recruiters on temp and perm desks alike.

I warmed to her immediately: the introduction tells of a single mum making good in the UK and Australian recruitment markets for office and professional staff, and she's not afraid to share her mistakes as well as her successes with the reader. She writes with warmth and humour, and is quick to praise those from whom she has learned and who have helped her on her journey. Her experiences made her a successful recruiter, and she's keen to pass on her knowledge as a trainer, and now an author.

The book is written in a simple, straightforward fashion. The steps in the recruitment process are articulated succinctly, and the chapters on candidate and client are up there with the best. Indeed, the first half of the book could comfortably replace many an agency's induction manual.

The second half of the book I found less compelling, however. A lengthy chapter on sales starts well, emphasising that our industry really is about selling, not HR, but falters when she tackles more difficult issues: handling objections, for example, is covered in half a page. A section dealing with major accounts and tendering doesn't seem appropriate in a book aimed at the novice, and is too rudimentary for the experienced consultant. And the final chapter on the art of writing ads looks tacked on – almost as if her editor had asked her for another couple of thousand words to get the book above 100 pages. I think the author has scope for improving the second edition.

Gaynor's most important message though is not diminished by these criticisms. What shines out clearly from the pages is Gaynor Lowndes' enthusiasm for recruitment. She demonstrates that it is attitude, as much as skill, which makes a successful recruiter. Her own story is proof that anyone with drive and determination can succeed in our industry. And if the book helps inspire the junior recruiter, she will have achieved something indeed.

Biographies of Reviewers

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