

# Gough Recruitment: Prepare to be inspired

By Gaynor Lowndes of The Recruitment Training Company and Gaynor Lowndes.com

The team at Gough Real Estate and Property Recruitment are long standing clients of mine and completed the Recruitment Excellence program in 2007. They are based in Sydney (with interstate branches), and I can honestly say that, as a business, as a team, and as individuals, they have something special! In short, they are a youthful, motivated team of recruiters who focus on basic needs. They keep it simple.

I spoke to three of Gough Recruitment's key players: Director Joel Barbuto (who is only 28 years old), consultant Darren Gorrel (who still bills up to 50K in a single month), and candidate resourcer Ella Toohey. They gave excellent insights into the basic "building blocks" of recruitment success.

## Client relations

In the current economic environment, the team at Gough understand the importance of providing real value to prospective and current clients.

The notion of the "value-add" is mentioned often in recruitment and other sales professions, but what does it really mean?

"We're basically using (the recession) as an opportunity to put better quality candidates out there in the marketplace", says Joel. The idea, he says, is to market A-grade candidates as a stronger alternative to B-grade team members.

Joel also notes the importance of putting a personal stamp on client services, especially in a people business such as recruitment. He believes that clients don't want to communicate with an email address or a voice on a telephone – they want to get to know you.

Darren agrees. Each week he goes "door-knocking" to real-estate agencies without an appointment, and asks for quick chat with the director. "It's about getting out there and meeting people face to face, which is the best way to build or service an existing relationship."

## Candidate management

As a resourcer, Ella has an excellent track record of repeat business and referrals from her candidates. Candidates come back to Gough when they need a change, and Ella has placed some candidates up to three times.

Ella believes that the key to her success is simple: she is approachable. "It's all about making people feel relaxed, and body language is an important part of putting people at ease and building rapport."

But how has Ella dealt with the change from a candidate-short market to a recession? "I had to adjust quite substantially. During a recession, clients expect more. So it becomes less about the volume of CVs we send out and more about quality and detail."

Ella admits that, as a "big-picture" thinker, she has to be very intentional about focusing on the details. "We need to verify everything. We now use a very precise reference checking process...and nothing happens without a very detailed job description to ensure the best fit."

## Maintaining a great team

Many team leaders see Gen Y recruiters as a real challenge to manage. What does Joel do in order to keep his team (all of whom are under 35) close-knit, motivated, and bringing in the revenue?

"You need to keep the vibe up, and support little things", he says. "We do social activities, and have mini-awards for when we hit our monthly targets. Last month, for example, everyone received a subscription to their favourite magazine, delivered to the office."

Joel believes in offering direct practical and emotional support to his team. "It's management's role to really know their people well, and to be in the trenches with them. I believe in one-on-one. If someone is under-performing, then together we look directly at

the reasons why, and what needs to be done about it."

## Personal motivation

Rejection, knockbacks and deals falling over are all just a day at work for a recruiter.

Darren tells me about how he once lost three deals in a day. "It's a people business, and people change their minds. Don't take it personally", he says. "Instead, just look at tomorrow as another day to create positive opportunities."

For her part, Ella says that the vibrant team environment at Gough keeps her going through the good times and the bad. "I love the work hard, play hard mentality. It's relaxed, but there is also a drive to achieve, and a great open-door management policy."

As team leader and director, Joel says a positive state of mind is essential for the smooth running of the business. "If I'm negative, then it flows through the business. People are followers, they want someone to follow, so you just have to nip it in the bud and stay positive, for your own sake, and the team's."

I believe that the team at Gough Recruitment shines as an example of simple, bottom-line recruitment excellence. I encourage recruiters everywhere to learn from their approach, so that as an industry we can get back in touch with basic keys to prosperity and success. ■



**Gaynor Lowndes**  
set up The Recruitment Training Company in 2001 to provide specific recruitment skills training to recruiters.

*It has grown to be the largest provider of skills-based training to the recruitment industry. In addition, Gaynor provides success coaching services via GaynorLowndes.com.*