

Bringing perm to blue collar

By Gaynor Lowndes, Managing Director of The Recruitment Training Company and The Recruitment and Training Factory.

Permanent recruitment and the blue-collar industries are an uneasy mix. Because of the strong element of casual, contract or temp employment within blue-collar industries, associated recruitment consultants have, at best, a limited knowledge of the perm process, or at worst, virtually no knowledge of the perm process and almost a fear of this very different recruitment beast!

There is nothing wrong with this in itself. Many blue-collar industry consultants only require knowledge of temp/casual recruitment, and that is obviously fine for the roles they are generally required to fill. However, in my experience as a trainer, I have come across a significant number of blue-collar consultants who wish to consolidate their thriving temp/casual revenue with perm opportunities, but simply don't know how to go about it.

Awareness is the key here. Because temp/casual and perm recruitment require different mindsets and approaches, being aware of how attitudes and approaches must change when moving between one and the other is imperative to success.

Here are some key points to remember if you are a predominately temp/casual consultant, wishing to branch-out into perm placements as well:

For your perm recruitment, use a mixture of existing temp/casual clients, and new prospects who have a stronger perm requirement.

I have spoken to many consultants who've attempted to branch out into perm recruitment, and they often go to one of two extremes with regards to their clients. They either waste their time by trying to generate perm business from their existing temp/casual clients only; or they attempt to find a completely separate client base for their perm business, and ignore the few perm opportunities that arise from their existing clients.

The key here is to do a mixture of both. While it may not be wise to rely on existing temp/casual clients for perm opportunities, it can be said with certainty that perm

opportunities will arise from them, and that your rapport with them as a client will serve you well! However, because these perm opportunities may be limited, it is best to, at the same time, prospect for clients with a greater need for perm, rather than temp or casual employees.

Get ready to be persistent!

Business development is an important part of any area of recruitment, whether it be perm, temp, casual or contract. However, a perm desk requires a different brand of persistence to a temp desk. Keep in mind that a client often requires a temp employee in an urgent situation. The client generally cannot recruit a temp themselves, so they will call an agency, thus providing them with reactive business.

Obviously enough, the same cannot be said of perm recruitment. Unlike in the above situation, when a perm vacancy occurs in an organisation, the decision-maker has the option of recruiting to fill the role himself. The point here is that perm recruitment is seen as a "convenience" or a time-saver for many clients who would be quite capable of filling the role themselves. This is why a consultant moving from temp to perm must be prepared to persuade his prospects that it is worthwhile for them to take the option of using an agency, rather than running the process themselves. Make a list of objections that a prospect may raise at cold call, and make a corresponding list of remedies that will overcome these objections and emphasise to the prospect that using your services as a recruiter will save them valuable time, and that your

extensive candidate base and experience in matching the candidate to the role will produce a better result.

Remember what your perm candidates want: Job security

A temp and a perm candidate have completely different needs and expectations. A perm candidate needs and expects job security and stability. I have met a number of consultants who moved from temp/casual to perm recruitment, and realised after a time that they were being insensitive to these needs. As a result of this, they were failing to properly counsel their candidates if concerns about job security were expressed or implied, and some of their matches of a candidate to a particular role were made without consideration of these issues.

As obvious as this sounds, it is an easy mistake to make. Our entrenched and often sub-conscious approaches and attitudes have a powerful affect on the consequences of what we do. The key here is to heighten your awareness of the different needs that perm and temp/casual candidates have, and adjust your approach accordingly.

There is no need for temp/casual consultants within blue-collar recruitment to shy away from generating permanent business. What is often perceived as a lack of ability is actually just a lack of awareness of the changes in approach required to successfully switch between the two. Put the points I have mentioned here into practice, and you will master with ease the opportunities of both temp/casual and perm recruitment. Good luck! ■



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