

# Q&A

**Gaynor Lowndes, Managing Director, The Recruitment Training Company interviews Jesse King, a 19 year old trainee currently enrolled in the 10-week comprehensive Recruitment Excellence Program offered by The Recruitment Training Company.**

## **Jesse, what attracted you to the recruitment industry?**

Well Gaynor, I suppose it always comes back to the thrill and excitement of the job, doesn't it?

I had always had a pre-conceived notion of the "Office-job": Dull, sterile, lonely... in short, mind-numbingly boring.

Talking to and reading about people in the recruitment industry completely redefined my "Office-job" notion. Here was a vibrant, energetic profession that thrived on people and relationships. Suddenly, the seeds of interest began to grow inside me.

This interest was soon confirmed, when I observed recruiters in action during in-house training. I remember a particular agency in Sydney, where I got to observe a temp desk being built. I was sitting off to the side, and I distinctly remember that I just couldn't keep still, the atmosphere and buzz in the room were so infectious. To be honest, I just wanted to jump up, make a beeline across the room, grab the phone off the consultant, and build the desk for her. I know that sounds crazy, but it's the kind of kick I get out of an industry like this.

## **How did you go about learning about the industry?**

My first port of call was my copy of the Job-Guide, which gave me a summary of what a recruiter does, and the skills and qualities needed to be successful.

I then went on to your book, Gaynor: "The Art of Recruitment," a book which manages to be refreshingly concise, yet at the same time detailed and highly informative. I came away feeling like I understood not just the recruitment process, but also the tips and strategies which can be the difference between good recruitment and great recruitment.

Then, as I mentioned before, I enrolled in a training course: The Recruitment Training Company's Recruitment Excellence Program. This is a ten-week course which develops all the skills needed for, as the name suggests, excellence in recruitment. I spend one day a week in an interactive, classroom style session, and the remaining four implementing on the job, the skills I learnt in the classroom, and being assessed on my application of them.

## **What type of company are you attracted to and why?**

Company culture is really important to me. How can you be successful without a vibrant,

positive work atmosphere? It can't work! As a trainee, I've sat in training sessions with top-billing consultants only a few years older than I am. I wondered what their secret was, and I needed to look no further than their office atmosphere and culture. Energetic, fun, friendly, close-knit... All these personal factors have a direct impact on the company's success, because, in short, it's a positive place to work. It's as simple, and straightforward as that. I'm sure anyone reading this interview would agree with me when I say that a company with a culture like this is an attractive company.

## **What are the issues facing inexperienced recruiters coming into the industry?**

The biggest issue seems to be a lack of adequate training. I consider myself one of the lucky ones, in that I'm undertaking a training process where the theory leads directly to a practical focus. I know of other training courses where the theory is given greater priority than the practice, and where the training time-frame is so constricted that there's barely a few days to even begin to develop practical skills. Then, of course, there are those inexperienced recruiters who simply get thrown in the deep end, on their first day of work. A priority definitely needs to be given to adequately training new recruiters, or the industry can only suffer.

## **What are the tasks you most enjoy and least enjoy in your job and why?**

I love writing ads. I've always enjoyed playing with words in order to achieve the greatest meaning and appeal. It's interesting to put yourself in the candidate's shoes and ask: "If I were him/her, what would catch my eye? What would get me interested?"

I'm going to go for the obvious with the "Hated" job: Cold Calling. I battle this demon everyday, and I know I'm not alone. It takes a lot of getting used to, when you're first starting out. But here's the trick that most people miss: Simply maintain the old cliché: A positive attitude.

Negative thoughts are a part of life, so the trick is to find a way to "Release" them from your mind. Commit to only allowing positive thoughts to remain. Find a way of doing this that works for you. This is how I do it:

**Step 1.** I take a negative thought, and I vent all my worries and fears associated with that thought. In this instance, it will include all my fears about calling: "Personal Rejection" by the person on the other end, fear that I will fail to

meet my call objectives, Discouragement at how previous calls have ended up etc. I don't rationalise at this stage, simply "Listen" to my honest fears as they come up, childish and irrational as they may seem.

**Step 2.** I rationalise these thoughts. I've listened to my emotional side, now its time to hear the other side, my ration. I go through and rationalise each of my concerns, one by one. This is where I remind myself that the person on the other end doesn't even know me, and therefore can't "Personally" reject me. When they say "No," they are simply telling me that they do not have a need for my services at this time. And rather than getting discouraged at previous calls that I haven't handled well, I focus on calls I have previously made, which were successful.

**Step 3.** Now that I have dealt with my negative thoughts, I make a commitment to release them from my mind, and keep the positive rational thoughts there.

## **What traits do you think you need in order to be successful?**

A positive attitude (as above) and exceptional people skills. This includes the ability to intuitively sense what makes a client or candidate "Tick," so that you can approach them and sell your services in a way that makes them feel comfortable with you, and in a way that grabs their interest, and ultimately their commitment.

## **Many of my clients ask me about motivating and retaining Gen Y – do you have a comment as a Gen Y trainee recruiter about strategies that can be used to motivate and retain Gen Y consultants?**

It comes back largely to what I said before about the importance of positive, fun company culture. A Gen Y has no loyalty to a company for the company's sake, but will want to stay if the company culture makes coming to work a positive experience. ■



**Gaynor Lowndes** is the Managing Director of The Recruitment Training Company and has over 17 years recruitment experience, gained in Australia and the UK.

The Recruitment Training Company provides training and consulting services to the recruitment industry in Australia and New Zealand.