

# Open letter to our clients

**“I believe that the only way to develop a decent relationship with your recruiter is to retain him/her to find you the best person for the role.”**

**For a long time** the recruitment industry has had a bad name, especially with HR professionals and I believe it has a great deal to do with the sheer numbers of recruitment companies looking for work. Instead of being a value add to HR Departments, recruitment consultants have become a necessary evil.

Every day I hear the voices of members of HR departments that just wish I'd evaporate into thin air. They keep their voice mail on all day to avoid calls from recruitment consultants canvassing for work because they get so many! I speak to some HR managers who get between 10 and 15 calls per day. No wonder an 'us' and 'them' situation has developed. Each week, I hear stories from recruitment consultants about how they avoid HR departments at all costs and prefer to canvass line managers directly. This practice only exacerbates the situation as HR becomes more negative towards recruitment consultants. I also have a belief that all recruitment companies are perceived as providing the same thing and can be bullied into operating on a 'transactional' basis. Let's face it, how would you feel if you had spent time developing a relationship with one of your most difficult line managers. This manager has always thought HR Departments were a waste of time and provided no real benefit to him/her. Anyway, you've worked really hard to convince this individual of your departments worth, only to find that instead of briefing you on a role, he/she has gone external.

That's exactly how recruitment consultants feel when they spend time trying to develop a relationship with you, only to find that you have briefed a number of agencies on a particular role.

The point is that it doesn't have to be like that. The simple fact of the matter is that by choosing a career in HR or working for an organisation where managers recruit for

themselves, you will come into probably daily contact with the recruitment industry.

I cannot stress that you get what you ask for from recruiters. If you brief 3 agencies on the role, expect a not very thorough search and to receive lots of resumes that 'kind of' fit the job description. Most clients work this way and then wonder why they receive 'below standard' service from their recruitment suppliers. If I was one of those agencies I would know that I'd have to work quickly (so I get the candidates resumes to you before my competitor, in case we are both putting the same candidate forward) which means that I probably wouldn't match the brief to the candidate skill all that well because of the lack of time I have.

It is never wise to work this way. You pay the same fee whether you receive the service mentioned above or a more detailed service because you have briefed the consultant exclusively (that is you have not briefed anyone else on the role).

I believe that the only way to develop a decent relationship with your recruiter is to retain him/her to find you the best person for the role. This allows the time required and I can assure all readers that you will be guaranteed a better quality shortlist.

Look at it this way, a permanent recruiter normally works on 10 jobs at any one time (numbers may change depending on the city, country and specialisation of the recruiter) of that 10 jobs, 7 are contingent, 2 exclusive and 1 retained. All attract the same fee.

If you were a recruiter where would you spend most of your time? On the retained and exclusive roles because a) your client has instilled their trust in your ability and b) you are more likely to get a fee (or successfully fill the role.)

Logical? Why then do most of you continue to work with your recruiters on a contingent ba-

sis and then complain about the quality of candidates AND the quality of service you receive?

If you have done your initial research properly and appointed the most appropriate recruiter to service your needs, then there is no reason why you shouldn't retain their services. Depending on your requirements, you may need to appoint a number of specialist recruiters to service your needs.

Next step is to be clear about your expectations and communicate them accordingly. Like any good relationship, constant communication is the key. ■

*Gaynor Lowndes is the managing director of The Recruitment Training Company which provides specialist training to the recruitment industry.*

*This is an excerpt from Gaynor's second book The Art of Recruitment for Non-Recruiters which will be available from July 2005 through Recruitment Extra.*



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

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

Send your training issues to us. Email [editor@recruitmentextra.com.au](mailto:editor@recruitmentextra.com.au)