

Welcome

By **Ruella Crouch**, Managing Director

Firstly I'd like to wish everyone who's reading our Recruitment Journal a very Happy New Year.

Next year Ruella James will be celebrating 10 years operating in the recruitment to recruitment sector.

With work playing such an important part in peoples' lives and influencing so many things outside of it, we all owe it to ourselves and our employers to do something about it this year. I'm not suggesting that you all up sticks and resign but face your issues head on and deal with them, let's all stop complaining and focus on the things we do have rather than the things we don't!

I'm also incredibly frustrated by all the doom and gloom in the press. A number of my friends, many of whom now hold Senior roles in the industry, had some of their best years in recruitment during the recession of the 80's. While admittedly the economy has slowed down, it hasn't stopped growing and there are still plenty of opportunities for us all out there.

Nearly every one of us is working in a candidate driven environment, recruitment to recruitment being no exception and if some of the recent comments from our clients are anything to go by the recruitment industry is still in good shape. Just to give you two recent examples, one of our clients is looking to spend over £100,000 recruiting trainees in the first three months of this year and they operate out of just one site in central London. The other emailed us stating that they currently had 32 staff and wanted to recruit another 32 by the end of the year.

So yes, while there is always a bit of negativity at this time of year and a raft of stats that come out about the housing market, oil and electricity prices, credit crunches, retail sales over Christmas etc.. etc... for once in my life there're going over my head, I'm going to stop worrying and make every day both personally and professionally count!

In this issue there's a short interview with the Ruella James team. In addition we'll be looking at the reality behind the recent headlines and some industry predictions for 2008 from some of the most experienced

people in the recruitment sector. With top tips on how to sell in a tough market it's a busy issue, we hope you enjoy it.

Kind Regards,
Ruella



Ruella Crouch



Katie Wakeling



Sarah Richardson

Quickfire Q & A with the RJ Team

What are the strangest interview questions or answers you have ever come across?

Sarah: The strangest interview answer I have ever had was when I asked a candidate if she had a CV and she said that yes she did have a Citroën 2CV!!

Katie: "Tell us something you wouldn't want us to know about you?" We thought this was a potentially trick question to answer.

Ruella: The two interview questions that stand out are one that was asked of a trainee; they were asked to justify their existence, and one that was asked of me personally many years ago where I was asked to describe my earliest childhood memory!

What is the greatest piece of advice that you have ever been given?

Sarah: The best advice I have been given is to appreciate what you have!

Katie: Greatest advice that I have been given is to 'always go with your gut instinct'. It very rarely lets you down.

Ruella: No one ever remembers who came who came second, they only ever remembers who came first!

Who has influenced you the most and why?

Sarah: I have never been influenced by one person in my life. I think different friends over the years have influenced me or inspired me to broaden my horizons, push myself or to really achieve what I really want out of life. They have also been there to be realistic too.

Katie: My Dad. He has a down to earth personality and takes everything in his stride. He is a proud man who has achieved a lot during his life, but still has a good life work balance.

Ruella: My mother, she is a massive inspiration to me.

What is your best quality?

Sarah: My best quality is that I am easy to talk to. I think I make people feel relaxed and at ease.

Katie: I am patient and a good listener.

Ruella: I am a completely non judgemental person which means that people usually open up to me very easily

If you were not working in recruitment what do you think you would be doing instead?

Sarah: I think if I didn't work in recruitment I would still be in a sales role. I am not sure who for specifically, but I enjoy talking to different people, I love being on the phone and going out and about. I also like the flexibility to earn additional commission on top of my basic salary.

Katie: I would be a teacher, I have a degree as a primary teacher.

Ruella: If I wasn't in recruitment I would love to have been a journalist, thinking about it I'm sure the qualities that you need are very similar, good questioning skills, ability to work in a fast paced ever changing environment and the capacity to work under pressure!

The market in 2008

2008: Behind the headlines

If you read the newspapers at the moment you'd be forgiven for thinking that we are about to enter a period of economic recession akin to what happened after the Wall Street Crash of 1929.

Every day we read stories which reveal frightening figures and statistics about what is likely to happen during 2008. Oil prices are on the rise, mortgage applications are falling, the much talked about credit crunch is filtering down from the financial services industry and starting to affect other areas of the economy – the list goes on.

But what is the truth behind the headlines? Are the prophets of doom and gloom right or are we talking ourselves into a slow down with the constant drip of negative news stories and pessimism about the future? Elsewhere on this page you will read the views of senior and highly-respected figures from within the staffing industry who have years of experience in business. Of course they recognise that 2008 may be more challenging than 2007 but, on the whole, they are positive about what the next 12 months will bring. And they are right to be.

Let's look at the facts. Apart from a blip around the dotcom bubble bursting in 2001 we have enjoyed incredible economic growth for the past decade. At 5.5 per cent interest rates are much lower than they were during the recession in 1992 when they reached an eye-watering 15 per cent. Inflation too is well under control at under 3 per cent and, with an independent Bank of England, is unlikely to rise too much.

Of special interest to recruiters unemployment remains low with skills shortages in many parts of the economy. And what do skills shortages mean? They mean that employers need staff and that recruiters have an opportunity to provide those candidates. There is no question that 2008 may be a more challenging year for the industry than 2007, but talk of recession and slowdown is premature. The underlying reality is that the UK economy is in good shape. For recruiters that means they can forget what they read in the papers and enjoy a happy new year doing what they do best – finding the best candidates for their clients' positions.

What the experts say



"The very nature of recruitment consultants is positive so it is inherently difficult for us to feel anything but positive about the year ahead regardless of the unusual difficulties the market has experienced recently. That said, we are not going into 2008 without an element of caution – it would be unrealistic to say that we expect no change in the tremendous growth we have experienced over the last couple of years. However it is important we put this in perspective - every industry experiences its highs and its lows and while I do think we are a long way off experiencing a 'low' the professional staffing industry will have to tread carefully in Q1 until we see how the industry will fair."

Tara Ricks, managing director, Joslin Rowe



"In 2008 sourcing talent will continue to be challenging as the war for talent becomes more acute. This, in conjunction with the internet and an increasing number of recruitment companies expanding globally, will contribute to an increased global migration of workers and talent being sourced, not just in the domestic country of hiring, but from anywhere in the world.

I believe next year will certainly be challenging and almost certainly more so than 2007. As economic cycles shorten and change continues at a fast pace, companies will need to be innovative, nimble and fast in reacting to market conditions to get ahead.

In 2008 there is a real opportunity for recruitment firms considering global growth to look eastwards – GDP forecasts and growth rates for the next three years are still looking highly favourable and the whole region has continued to prosper, presenting a good opportunity for forward thinking companies."

Uzair Bawany, group managing director, The Contact Recruitment Group



"The truth is it is incredibly difficult to predict the next two months let alone the next 12 months. In the last two/three weeks there has been a noticeable slowdown in demand within the professional services sector, however it is impossible to say definitively whether this is as a result of seasonal demand or indeed decreased industry confidence.

As you would expect during a period of uncertainty clients are playing their cards close to their chest which makes it even more difficult to say with any conviction what 2008 has in store! The general consensus is that the recruitment market is likely to continue to grow next year and while it might not be as rapid as in recent years – it is likely to remain a strong 'bull market'."

Russell Thompson, managing director, LMA Recruitment

Sales tips for 2008

Selling in a tough market

Over the last few months there has been a lot of talk of downturn. Wherever you look and whatever you read, ever since the American subprime crisis, talk of a slowdown seems to be bombarding us from every possible media.

Every expert there is seems to have something to say about whether there will or whether there won't be a serious economic storm and if there is, how long will it last and just how severe will it be?

Here are my top 5 tips for selling in a downturn.

1. Believe you can and stay positive!

One of the problems with all of this talk about a slowdown is that once people believe there is going to be a downturn they start to feel negative about their business prospects. The nature of belief is that people only tend to see what they believe rather than believing what they see. Once you believe that there is going to be a downturn you tend to only notice articles, comments and statistics that support your beliefs.

What's more, your negative beliefs quickly affect your outlook and the way that you feel about your business prospects. Think about it for a second...

If you thought 2008 was going to be a great year for business, your best year yet; how would you feel?

Conversely, if you thought 2008 was going to see a major economic slowdown and that it was going to hit you and your business hard; how would you feel?

Mighty different huh? And remember, nothing's changed here... only your belief. Having a positive and supportive belief structure is essential if you want to succeed in any market but it is vitally essential if you want to keep on selling in a tough one.

2. Get proactive

If this year is going to be tough then you need to be more proactive. Much more proactive. You need to do more marketing and more selling. You need to attend more events and do more networking. You need to do more promotion and more canvassing. Bottom line, you need to increase your sales activities, maybe dramatically.

3. Sharpen your sales skills

If a workman needs a spade and a farmer needs a horse; a boxer needs a defence and a chef needs a recipe; what do salespeople need? The answer's obvious – it's sales skills.

Sales will not go to the journeyman salesperson, the mediocre wannabee or the 9-5 order taker. Salespeople like these could well be in for a rough time.

When did you last read a sales training book on selling? How many sales training audios have you listened to over the last month?

How many sales training seminars have you attended in the last 6 months? For 80% of salespeople reading this, the answer is zero.

If you're in the 20% who have invested in yourself... Great, you're on track. Keep the study up and make sure you stay ahead of the game.



4. Improve your service and focus on relationships

As I write this many companies will be working out how to cut corners. They will try to save money by tinkering with their business offerings. They will try and eek extra profits out of their clients by cutting the bells and whistles from their offerings. This is not a good idea. A Swiss cow with no bells is just a cow and no-one would send postcards of them home!

If business is tight you want to be wowing your clients with the best service that they have ever had, from you or from any of your competitors. Spend time with your clients. Build stronger relationships with your clients. Make sure you truly understand them, their concerns and their businesses. Find ways to help them and add value over and above what they could have ever expected.

5. Leverage your efforts

In a soft market many salespeople only chase the easy stuff. They don't chase the tough stuff. Hey, they're doing alright and they don't need to. They're making sales right?

Wrong.

Most salespeople have all sorts of opportunities which they squander every day and every month because there are seemingly easier things that they can be doing. This is particularly true in an industry or a company where leads have been relatively easy to come by, where sales targets are relatively soft (I could tell you which industries but I'm not going to) or where salespeople are overpaid so don't crave the business (again, I'll keep this to myself!).

So there we are, 5 tips to help you to sell in a tough market. This year may well prove to be an interesting year for some businesses and individuals. Some of this will be down to the market itself. Much of it will be down to you and how you react and respond to what might be a challenging year.

Here's my prediction for the year...

There will be winners and there will be losers. Which are you going to be?

About the author: Gavin Ingham is a motivational speaker & author. Get free tips, articles and strategies and join his newsletter now at www.gaviningham.com

Support sites for 2008

The beginning of a New Year is when many of us decide to make changes in our lives. But all too often, come the end of January, those New Year's resolutions are forgotten and we carry on with our lives much as before. But did you know that if you seek help and support when making life changes you are much more likely to succeed? With that in mind we've put together a list of online resources which will help you to keep some of the more common New Year's resolutions. Good luck!

Giving up smoking

<http://gosmokefree.nhs.uk>

Quitting the evil weed is one of the most difficult things to do. Go Smoke Free is an NHS site which provides you with tips, support and motivation to get off cigarettes for life.



Doing more with friends and family

www.whatsonwhen.com

This site does exactly what it says on the tin with tonnes of info on fun events which you can enjoy with friends, family or that special someone.



Losing weight

www.ivillage.co.uk/dietandfitness/wtmgmt

After Christmas many of us have a few extra pounds we'd like to shed. The ivillage site has recipes, info and top tips for losing weight without damaging your health.



Travelling more

www.adventurecompany.co.uk

If you want to travel more in 2008 look no further than this site with over 200 holiday ideas across the world for adventurous types.



Getting fit

www.abouthealthclubs.co.uk

Getting a bit fitter is something many of us would like to do. This fantastic online resource covers all the health clubs and leisure centres in the UK so you can find one that's right for you.



Getting out of debt

www.moneysavingexpert.com

Has the festive season maxed out your credit card? This site has great money-saving and financial management tips to help you clear those annoying debts.

