



## moving on or missing out

The environment we all operate within has been described by many as VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous). The executive recruitment market is no different and whilst we have seen periods of intense activity (second half of 2012 and 2013) we have also experienced quieter periods (Q1 in 2013). However, as we move into 2014, we are cautiously optimistic that the outlook is positive and, more importantly, sustainable.

### Why the optimism?

With the improving economic conditions, organisations are starting to look at investment and growth rather than cost control. This is directly leading to reviews of their people strategy and questioning have they got the **right talent** in the **right roles** for the **right market conditions**? The HR function itself is no different.

We have seen the oil and gas sector at the forefront in significantly increasing global recruitment with pharmaceuticals, technology and telecoms sectors also showing signs of increasing demand. A further positive indicator of growing organisational confidence is the increase we are seeing, across all sectors, in senior resourcing, development and OD roles which are key to supporting growth. We anticipate, experience, knowledge and specialism in this area will be a much sought after capability over the forthcoming months. Unsurprisingly, we have also seen a significant demand for senior reward roles too. This is all a marked departure from our experiences in 2012 where tactical, operational generalist roles were in greatest demand.

With a more 'buoyant' market, the 'power' has started to shift from employer to candidate. Some clients are more alive to this than others and are responding accordingly, however we encourage all organisations to keep the following in mind when hiring:

### What should clients do differently?

#### SPEED

Simply being quicker than the competition often wins the day. Moving quickly through the recruitment process also keeps the relationship warm and avoids having to reinvigorate candidates between stages.

#### ENGAGEMENT

Maintaining engagement and close contact with preferred candidates through the process has been shown to make the difference between a successful hire and a rejection.

#### ATTRACTIVE OFFER

Be aware good candidates are receiving multiple offers and, for the first time in a number of years, 'counter offers' from their existing employer.

#### REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS

Good candidates are in demand and hiring for potential always comes at a premium. Don't focus purely on experience. Keep potential, development and succession in mind.

#### COMPETITIVE MARKET

Clients need to be aware of the need to compete for good talent. Assuming candidates are only considering one opportunity is naïve and realisation may come too late that the candidate has a preference for another role.

#### HONESTY

Candidates are expecting transparency, clarity and, most importantly, honesty about the organisation, role, culture and strategy. Trust needs to be built at an early stage in the process and remember, through social media and extended personal networks, candidates can easily find out if something is being covered up.

## advice for candidates

- People want to know what you have done and where you made a difference, all evidenced with hard commercial data that demonstrates an understanding of the business.
- A CV that draws out the achievements, not tasks, and relevant experiences appropriate to the role.
- Displaying honesty and integrity, self-confidence and self-awareness are essential.
- Contributing strategically whilst showing the preparedness to roll sleeves up, get stuck in and deliver.
- Depth in a specialist area is attractive.
- LinkedIn and other social media channels are exceptional tools but nothing beats a personal, face-to-face connection.
- Be open-minded about what you are presented with. Put yourself in a position to be considered for roles.

### What's next?

Whilst competition is tough, if the market remains positive things may return to a full candidate-driven market. We experienced this pre-downturn and it is important to remember that the last six years have not been 'normal'. However, the experiences over the last six years will shape the thinking and business for the next six in an environment which, undoubtedly, will remain VUCA.

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