

newsnviews

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Where are all the people?

So it's official. Latest figures tell us that in the last quarter UK employment fell for the first time in over seven years - yet the number of vacancies recorded were the highest in 40 years. Logically we can assume that those looking for jobs are inappropriate for the vacancies. This certainly explains why we have been hurriedly drafting in nurses and teachers to avoid growing crises in health and education. But is this really the case in the business sector? Whilst there is a shortfall in areas such as accountancy, we must not be persuaded into believing that the right people aren't out there, thus provoking a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Since Christmas CJR has continued to see an impressive and wide-ranging flow of candidates. At the same time we have enjoyed an equally impressive flow of vacancies, particularly from new clients. There has been a distinct growth in permanent job opportunities as well as a continuing increase in requests for temps. All this indicates a confident market yet, match-making has been arduous. We believe that more vacancies could be filled by acknowledging a fundamental change in the recruitment market and adapting our approach accordingly.

There is now greater balance in the jobs market - generally, neither employer nor candidate has the upper hand.

In order to attract the right people, employers need to impress the candidates as much as the candidates need to impress the employers. Simply offering a good job that is well paid is not enough in a market of choice. It is important to realise that generally, candidates today are better qualified and better informed, taking a more holistic view of prospective employers. Prior to interview they will research to ascertain more than just a company's market position and financial standing. They want to know more about an organisation including its culture, reputation, ethical policy, development opportunities, etc. One or two employers have found this approach disarming but most have been impressed. We have found that this level of candidate interest has led to sure-footed appointments and this should be seen as a positive indicator.

Speed is of the essence

Having identified the right candidates, employers need to move quickly to ensure that their finalists remain interested and available. We have seen a

growing pattern of good candidates being lost simply because recruitment processes are too protracted and decision making too slow. Quality standards in many organisations now mean that a candidate, even at a junior level, can find themselves attending two or three interviews involving various tests or assessment centres. The trouble is that these processes often straddle several weeks, sometimes months, by which time many candidates have lost interest or



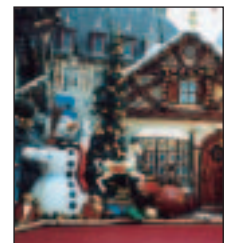
have taken other jobs. Containing these processes in a dynamic climate is essential.

Seek Potential not Perfection

Employers will often ring up and say "I know we're asking a lot but...". There then follows a long list of essential qualifications and experience that gives a whole new dimension to the word 'multi-skilled'. If the manager adheres

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A Celebration to Remember!

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doggedly to these criteria, (s)he may (eventually) over-recruit. Consider the downside of employing someone who can do it all. They may feel under-utilised, move on if there is no room for further development or worst still, they may be complacent - none of these bode well for the company. If, however, the line manager recognises that three or four core skills, bags of potential and enthusiasm are more

than enough, some of the best candidates will appear.

And finally, **Be Objective**. This needs little explanation. As employers we should ask not 'Who do we want?' but 'What do we need to achieve?'. Whilst it is important to find someone whose 'face will fit', this is not the same as saying 'we're a young dynamic company, so no one over 30'. Sound familiar?

-ENTENTE CORDIALE?-



In recognition of CJR's 21st birthday, the Partners decided to make the staff Christmas party special by taking all 16 staff to Lille for the week-end. On the last Friday in November, we left the office early but in the capable hands of our temps and headed to Waterloo to board Eurostar. The two hour journey to the centre of Lille was speedy and enjoyable. Much champagne was consumed and we almost missed our stop!

None of us had ever been to Lille and we were not expecting this ancient city to be quite so beautiful and atmospheric. The cobbled streets and squares were brimming with festive activity - markets, designer shops, art galleries, eateries and bars all seemed to be celebrating Christmas in a way that captured the mood. The weather was appropriately crisp and it was, of course, necessary to huddle in bars

around the 'grand place' testing the various beers and wines, whilst watching our braver colleagues rise perilously high on Lille's giant Ferris wheel to capture a birds eye view of the city.

On the Saturday night, we went to Lille's most famous and highly recommended restaurant the 'Sebastopol'. We were not disappointed. The gourmet delights of a five course dinner were enjoyed by all but we disappointed the young waiter when none of us could manage a single one of the home made chocolates accompanying the coffee. Not wishing to offend, and in her best translation, Geraldine suggested a 'doggy-bag'. Clearly the words 'sac de chien' were clumsy, but nonetheless a large white box with ribbons was handed to us on our departure. The Sebastopol staff were smiling, so we don't think any offence was taken...

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Stakeholder Pensions for CJR Temps

We are busily preparing for the introduction of Stakeholder Pensions which will be offered to all CJR temps well in advance of the October 2001 deadline.

The availability of pensions for temps will be yet another incentive for people to regard temping as a rewarding profession, whilst maintaining flexibility for both the temporary worker as well as the employer. Carol Nicholls and Kellie Porter, who run our Temp Payroll and Benefits section, applaud the prudence of the scheme and will, as always, 'be prepared'. They do, however, wish to be acknowledged for their attendance on numerous training days enabling them to cope with the huge raft of legislation that now renders agencies responsible for holiday pay, SSP, SMP, attached earnings payments, student loan repayments etc. As Carol says, '... a massively complex task given the transitory nature of temporary workers and our growing weekly payroll of 200'.

Whilst on the subject, did you know that CJR is the only agency to pay temps in full on the Friday of the week they work (i.e. not in arrears)? That the payroll department has never failed to meet the deadlines set for tax and NI payments. As for preparing and submitting 1000+ P60's every year? Never late - even when HMSO stationery is! **Well done Carol and Kellie - often unsung heroes. You're both absolute stars.**

Our Chosen Charity

Many of you may have noticed that this year's Christmas card was dedicated to LUPUS UK. The savings achieved by designing and producing our own



card each year are donated to charity. We chose lupus because this non-infectious and non-contagious disease is relatively unknown, yet some 50,000 are believed to be sufferers in the UK. It is an autoimmune disease, or type of self allergy that causes the body's immune system to go into overdrive and start to attack itself. The symptoms are many and varied, and the illness often seems to mimic other diseases. This gives rise to difficulties in



diagnosis, sometimes for years. We hope that by raising awareness more funding will be found for research. We now know of several friends of CJR who have lupus. One of them is Sue Hayes who was one of our temporary secretaries for some years. Sue was delighted to receive our donation and hopefully help to raise public awareness for LUPUS UK.



PC TRAINING BUT NOT AS WE KNOW IT

Could your staff benefit from a self-defence course? Ours certainly did. Over four consecutive weeks, WPC's Diane Madden and Laraine Burnett from Croydon's Metropolitan Police, came to our offices and gave CJR staff and temps the benefit of their expertise, through an intensive self-defence programme.

The first two sessions covered awareness and avoidance. We learnt about vulnerability - everything from situations to avoid to tips on body language - or how to be a Rita and not a Mavis (Coronation Street fans will know the difference!). The remainder of the training was more hard hitting (pun intended), learning how to cope

with assault or attack. Many of us considered ourselves pretty street-wise to begin with but by the end of the course we realised how much we had learned. Results were good. Those of us who walked in with Mavis tendencies, strode out as Ritas!

This was a serious subject but Diane and Laraine managed to inject the right amount of humour to ensure a balanced perspective throughout.

If this course interests you contact Geraldine Healy on 0208 680 5777 or e-mail geraldine@cjrecruitment.co.uk.

Thank You

We often receive letters of thanks from our clients and at Christmas many take the opportunity to 'say a few words' in their cards. This year Madeleine Bladon, one of our consultants, was particularly moved by the attached note from one of her younger candidates. With Farrah's permission, we thought it worth publishing.

Dear Madeleine,

I would like to say thank you for helping me to look for a job. You have played a big role in my life and without you, I probably would be in the same old situation. But the New Year will now be something I'm looking forward to, because I have a new job to go to.

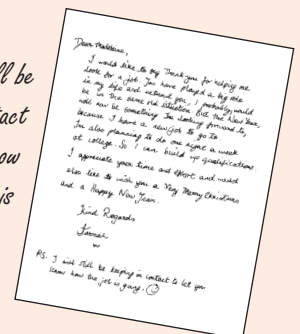
I'm also planning to do one night a week at college. So I can build up qualifications.

I appreciate your time and effort and would also like to wish you a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Kind Regards

Farrah xx

PS I will still be keeping in contact to let you know how the job is going.



The Key Skills Qualification

The Key Skills Qualification introduced into all post-16 curricula in Sept 2000, is one of the most significant recent policy moves in education and training. Employers have long bemoaned the inadequacy of communication, numeracy and ICT (information and communication technology) skills among school and college leavers. The Key Skills Qualification is designed to meet the needs of employers for the future and to develop employable young people, whether they opt to find a job at 19 or go on to higher education. Significantly, UCAS has agreed to award points for this qualification for university entrance.

CJR has always been supportive of initiatives that forge a better understanding between education and employers. Following previous years work with the CEBP (Croydon Education & Business Partnership) our staff are continuing to work with local schools, colleges and student centres through work placements, mentoring projects and now, Key Skills workshops.

Recently we worked with students from the Phil Edwards Centre

and Ashburton School. We highlighted the importance of key skills and discussed strategies for problem solving, working with others and improving students' learning and performance. Groups were involved in brainstorming sessions, role play, mock interviews and presentations - all calling for preparation, planning and team work.

Students have been very receptive and overall response has been positive. Schools have found that having a 'business partner' involved lends credibility to the scheme. Students appear more attentive and will readily listen to an MD, a Marketing Manager or a Consultant sharing experience, views and advice on 'real' office life. These initiatives have also helped our staff to develop their own skills by testing their ability to motivate students (mainstream and non-mainstream) and plan creative projects using realistic role play situations.

If your company is interested in working on such initiatives through organisations like CEBP, telephone Gary Strudwick at CJR on 020 8680 5777 or e-mail gary@cjrecruitment.co.uk

Candidates Who Stand Out From the Crowd

► **HR Manager** An excellent candidate with experience at senior level overseeing the full personnel function - strategic and operational. Extensive working knowledge ranging from employment law, change management, performance management to payroll. Great attitude, with an 'energetic' aura - gets on with things and motivates others in an empathetic way. Confident, easy to talk to liaising with management and employees across all levels - really enjoys being involved, working independently as well as on team projects. Seeking a challenging position. Likely to be a valuable asset to have on board. Salary £30k.

(Ref: 501458 / GH)

► **Marketing Executive** A confident and articulate candidate with excellent experience of the marketing mix. Strong customer focus with experience of brand loyalty campaigns, product development, time-frames, project work, critical path and market information analysis. Understands the relationship between marketing activity and consumer, as well as the bigger picture involving manufacturer, trade and all parties involved in the supply chain. Totally focused on the task/project assigned, and approach is both professional and enthusiastic. Sector experience includes: insurance, finance, telecoms and manufacturing. Salary £26k

(Ref: 503553 / GH)

► **Call Centre Supervisor** An intelligent, friendly and focused candidate with solid experience working within a customer service environment. A mixture of confidence and maturity combines well with a professional approach to work and colleagues. A sound insurance background including household, recovery, credit, loans and motor claims. Shows good organisational and communication skills and strives to improve her ability to perform at the highest level. Possesses all the relevant PC skills and has experience of working in fast moving environments. Previously worked within teams providing supervision, training and guidance. Salary £26k

(Ref:90093/GS)

► **Administration Manager** An organised and experienced administration manager with good interpersonal and communication skills. Customer focused with a professional business and financial background. Demonstrates a hands on approach to work and willingly works with teams during busy periods. Successfully introduced a cross-training programme and showed ability to encourage the support of staff and clients at all levels. Well presented, a good sense of humour with a positive and professional approach to the office environment. Looking for a varied and challenging role offering further development opportunities. Salary c£25k

(Ref:90061/GS)

► **Personal Assistant** A first class PA. A highly professional, smart, friendly and very approachable candidate with excellent interpersonal and organisational skills. Made redundant last year and currently temping in order to keep her skills up to date. This PA has an excellent background working at very senior level. She can bring with her a wealth of experience which includes complex diary management, organisation of detailed travel itineraries and an extremely flexible approach. A confident candidate with all the drive, initiative, tact and diplomacy which is necessary when working at top level. Highly recommended for interview. Salary c£24k.

(Ref:0626MB)

► **Sales Support Team Leader** A self motivated, highly focused candidate who enjoys being challenged. Helpful, well organised and extremely productive. An effective communicator at all levels, industrious and takes pride in work and achievements. Strong people-management ability, enjoys seeing objectives met. Seeking c£23k.

(Ref:0811/PW)

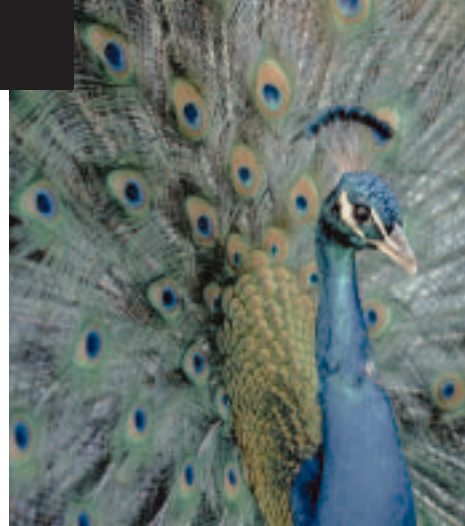
► **Unqualified Accountant** A versatile and tenacious candidate, professional with excellent communication skills. This candidate is very much a team player used to working in environments where he has been called upon to put his hand to a variety of tasks. He gained excellent all-round experience encompassing book-keeping, sales/purchase ledger, payroll, VAT, management accounts and he has a wealth of systems knowledge, confident of his ability to quickly learn any new packages. A very committed individual who is available at short notice. Salary c£23k.

(Ref:408013MB)

► **Graduate with working experience** A very personable, intelligent and articulate maths graduate, who possesses a great personality and an organised and flexible attitude to work. Effective communication skills combine with over a year's retail management experience. This candidate enjoys the challenges of problem and query resolution and approaches challenges in a logical and well thought out manner. Currently seeking a company that actively train and develop their staff. This candidate is available with four weeks notice and is looking for a minimum starting salary of £16k. plus.

(Ref:900120/JB)

► **Team Secretary** An extremely friendly and enthusiastic team secretary who is currently working on temporary assignments for Catherine Johnstone Recruitment. Now looking to return to a permanent secretarial position within the commercial field. Able to offer valuable secretarial experience having worked



both on a one to one basis and as part of a team. Sound PC skills using a variety of packages and systems, including Windows and Apple Mac. Combines a good education with a solid employment background and has the ability to blend a great sense of humour with a professional work ethic. Smart and presentable. Would suit a lively environment with a friendly and informal approach. Salary c£16,000 p.a.

(Ref:900169/GS)

► **Business Manager** A successful Business Manager looking to capitalise upon his strong sales and account management experience. Strong experience in managing and increasing a portfolio of demanding clients, sales management and negotiation. Seeking c£25k.

(Ref:900163/PW)

► **Part-time worker** A personable, reliable mum-returner who has recently finished a Diploma in Admin and Secretarial Procedures and is keen to put these skills into practice on a 15-20 hours over 3 days a week basis. Ideally seeking a varied administrative role with PC usage and people contact and the chance to develop. This candidate has a willing and flexible attitude, a typing speed of 45-50 wpm and is available to start with immediate effect.

(Ref:900111/JB)

► **Office Junior** A delightful young applicant. Bright, bubbly and confident and keen to begin a career within a commercial environment. Good systems experience gained whilst at school and keen to take the opportunity to learn more and expand her knowledge. Current work experience in retail has enabled this candidate to develop excellent communications skills at all levels, both face to face and on the telephone. Used to handling customer issues from service/product enquiries to more serious matters of complaint. A real team player who also enjoys responsibility. This candidate likes to use her initiative and organise and plan her workload to meet the demands of the role. An outgoing and enthusiastic first jobber, who is likely to impress at interview. Salary c£10k.

(Ref: 900173/MB)

