

People Talk

News and views from Chiumento



Barratt Development helps its people build their futures

Approach

In 2008, Barratt Development found themselves in the same predicament as many organisations. The economic crisis had led to a reduction in lending and construction work had slowed right down. It was therefore essential that Barratt reacted accordingly and prioritised their projects.

This re-evaluation process resulted in 1300 redundant roles. To support them in this change, Barratt looked at a number of HR consultancies with an emphasis on flexibility and the personal

touch, as well as tailored programmes to suit their clients. They also wanted to do the right thing by their senior staff who were highly valued, long standing employees. Chiumento was selected as they had "the right focus for what we needed. Other consultancies would offer the same with less flexibility and for more money" commented Jayne Mee, Group HR Director.

Looking further afield

It was essential that the chosen consultancy had a clear understanding

of the construction industry. Barratt was keen however, that affected employees explored other avenues in addition to house building. They also did not want to lose sight of the message that they had always tried to convey to their employees "There is something about the Barratt image – and looking after people. We wanted to show compassion. We wanted there to be fair treatment as there is always an opportunity where, if we can, we may be able to take them back."

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Working closely with Barratt Development, Chiumento developed two six month, director level programmes. A primary aim in both programmes was to equip individuals for potential employment outside the construction industry. Some had not job hunted recently so Chiumento offered programmes that covered basics such as CV construction and interview skills whereas others were well equipped for their job search but needed the expert guidance of a career coach.

Valuable support

Neil Johnson, Construction Director, was involved in the management of one of the major divisions within Barratt that had to be drastically reduced in size and budget. His role was made redundant at the beginning of July and he was offered Chiumento Career transition support.

Having already gone through an outplacement programme in the past, Neil did not hesitate to take up the offer of outplacement from Barratt. "I had been at my previous employer for 27 years so when I left I really needed help with my CV and job searching. My needs were different when I left Barratt's but I knew that outplacement support would be useful in other ways" he continues, "I already understood what outplacement was when it was offered so I knew the benefits and I was pleased to be given the Director Service. I had already established a good network so this time round I decided to use the support in a different way. There was never a doubt as to whether I would take up the programme, why wouldn't you?"

Time to think

Neil was introduced to his coach Robin, and began his programme with Chiumento.

His objectives focused on getting the right job rather than the processes leading up to a job search. Robin

was able to identify ways in which Neil could benefit most from the programme "He needed encouragement really just to make sure he maintained his self confidence. It was a question of reminding him how good he was." Neil felt that he already had a good understanding of an interview situation and was generally satisfied with his CV, however he wanted to make the most of the guidance and support that Robin could offer him, "It makes a difference being able to talk things over with an expert rather than a colleague or a friend."

Neil's coach Robin, felt that Neil should take his time in deciding his next move. "Robin advised me not to dive in", says Neil, "but rather to take things slowly. I was able to prioritise and really think about things. He also advised me on how to approach things. Robin did tweak my CV a bit and I took advantage of the financial guidance and workshops as they are always useful."

A happy ending

Within six months, only a few of which Neil had been actively looking, he saw a role that fitted his skill set perfectly. After talking his options over with Robin, at the beginning of December Neil applied for the job via a recruitment consultant. The role of Project Director happened to be with the company he had worked for previously. Neil was anxious about how to approach the situation at first but built up the confidence to apply. After an interview Neil was offered the job straight away, and by mid December he joined Vinci (who had recently acquired Taylor Woodrow Construction from Taylor Wimpey). Now settled in his new role, Neil says "I couldn't be happier here."

■ To find out how Chiumento Career transition and outplacement services could help your organisation, contact 0845 070 6691 or email careertransition@chiumento.co.uk

Resourcing Trends Survey – A taste of what is to come

- On a positive note, over 50% of HR professionals and recruitment consultants are still recruiting
- It is felt that candidates do not spend enough time on their CVs resulting in unnecessary mistakes and glaring omissions
- In a change to previous findings, more than 50% of HR professionals and recruitment consultants spend two minutes or more looking at CVs! Surveys in the past have found approximately 30 seconds to be the most common.

Watch out for the full report, out soon.



Spoilt for choice?

The impact of a downturn on acquiring talent by Ian Gooden

At the outset of the last downturn for UK Plc my then Managing Director said to me "your job (Head of Resourcing) will get easier every day from now on. You'll be spoilt for choice." On the surface you could understand his view. The maths looked simple – higher unemployment + fewer vacancies = quicker and cheaper recruitment. Sadly the equation is not always that simple.

For starters recessions often create real capacity problems for recruiters. Desperate job seekers become far less selective in their choice of applications – meaning not only do application levels rise but so do rejection rates as 'spray and pray' becomes the order of the day.

Those of us who recall application levels in the early 80s recession, will be truly thankful that technology has come on in leaps and bounds. Now, more than ever, you may be grateful for the investment you made in that ATS system.

Higher rejection rates also create problems for both your corporate and employer brands as you turn away candidates who may also be customers. How you handle the rejection process now may impact heavily on your recruitment in the eventual upturn. Not to mention how customers will react to you when their spending power returns. Perhaps we should re-word an old saying to "...no fury like a candidate spurned."

My own experience is that top talent often goes to earth in a recession. Afraid to give any hint of disloyalty to their current employer, those who are confident in their performance and value in an organisation can often simply choose to sit tight and wait for the upturn. This, of course, is very bad news if your organisation is looking to hire world class talent as this audience progressively closes its eyes and ears to the external market.

This bunker behaviour also exposes the weakness in many of our most common recruitment tools. They require the candidate to 'blink first'.

On and offline advertising, contingency agencies, career fairs etc are all essentially reactive recruitment tools. They depend on active job

seekers and can struggle to reach the high performing or high potential candidates most treasured by hiring managers.

The answer potentially is search. However the cost of executive search has historically been prohibitive – particularly if it coincides with real pressure on budgets. Fees of 30% or more of package (which often means 50% or more of base salary) are still commonly quoted. Yes, some providers will work for less – but our own experience shows that price cuts often result in compromise. At worst, the 'search' can involve little more than a trawl of the agency's existing database and contacts rather than original, high quality research. A hint: always look for the advertising costs hidden away in the search proposal – a genuine step to ensure diversity of applicants or a very real give away that the consultancy doesn't trust its research?

Over recent months Chiumento has been looking at how we could help our clients realise the benefits of search but at a fraction of the historic costs. By teaming up with some of the best independent executive researchers in the market (in many cases the same researchers used by the top Executive Search firms) we believe we are close to an answer. By keeping our overheads low and leveraging our renowned expertise in quality candidate and project management we've developed a prototype product that we believe we can bring to the market at less than 50% of the historic costs. Plus we'll fix the fees from the outset so no matter what

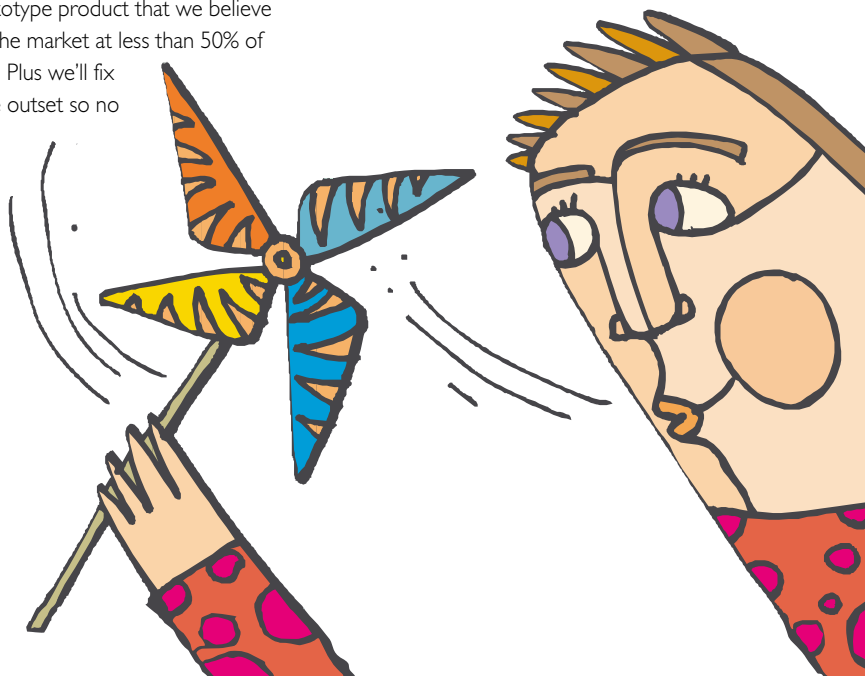
you have to pay to prise that prize candidate from their current employer you'll never pay a penny more than we agree up front. Which Chiumento believe is the only ethical way to do business.

Like all new parents we're proud of our baby. To give us a reality check we'd like to engage some of our clients to steer the final stage of product development. That's why we are putting together a Product Development Panel to help guide this and other new resourcing solutions from Chiumento to maturity. If you would like to be part of the Panel we'd welcome your involvement. In return for your time, we will offer your organisation the chance to trial our new products at highly attractive rates.

So, just maybe, we can make your life easier.

■ For further information on Resourcing solutions contact resourcing@chiumento.co.uk

Ian joined Chiumento in June 2008 and is the Director of our new Resourcing solutions practice which will include our existing Interim management team. Ian has over 25 years' UK and international resourcing expertise gained from roles as diverse as Head of Knowledge Management for a global recruitment advertising business to more recently heading the UK resourcing function of a FTSE 100 business. He is a Chartered Member of CIPD and BPS Level A and B qualified.



Energising Business

Organisations in the UK are demanding ever-higher performance from their workforces. People try to comply but the usual method of putting in longer hours has backfired, leaving employees exhausted, disengaged and prone to sickness.

Employers risk losing staff to 'healthier' environments. Longer days at the office do not work; time is a limited resource. The good news according to our new research, is that unlike time, personal energy is renewable.

Key findings from our research, which was based on the responses from more than 350 organisations, include:

- There are three types of energy that affect people at work – physical, emotional and mental
- Getting emotional energy right at work – in particular through having appreciative colleagues – gives people the biggest productivity boost
- Emails and meetings have the biggest negative impact on productivity
- The average employee is unproductive for 1.6 hours a day and employees are burnt out by Friday
- Most respondents feel they work reactively rather than doing what they had planned
- Respondents who regularly eat breakfast, eat lunch away from their desks and take regular exercise are better equipped to cope at work
- Interim and contract staff are seen as being equally as productive as permanent employees, confirming their ability to hit the ground running.

Chiumento recommends that organisations create a culture which helps staff to:

- Leave on time, allowing for early evening meals and more exercise
 - Take a proper lunch break and regular breaks from their desk
 - Know how and when to offer thanks and show appreciation
 - Manage time well and follow a sensible email code of practice
 - Set up meetings of no more than 90 minutes – only invite those who have an active part to play
 - Work remotely if it helps – but don't feel obliged to if it doesn't
 - Recognise how their productive contribution benefits the organisational bottom line.
- For a copy of our research 'Energising Business' or further information on talent issues, please contact talent@chiumento.co.uk or telephone 0845 070 6691

Fiona Sandiford

Fiona Sandiford joined Chiumento in September 2005 as a business development manager. Since then she has built strong and trusting relationships with many of our clients, but in the last year, was stricken for the second time with cancer. Whilst she battled this second onslaught, sadly she lost the fight in October 2008.

Fiona was a very effective relationship builder and loved working with clients to help them achieve their goals and personal objectives. Empathetic, caring and creative, she had a deep understanding of career transition, recruitment and talent management and was a valued member of the team.

We are proud and delighted to have known Fiona and very sorry to have lost her. She leaves two sons in the care of their father and family.



In November, Chiumento was again pleased to sponsor the Personnel Today Award for Talent Management. This was the 10th year of the awards - there were a record number of entries and some stiff competition. Well done to Barratt Development, Big Lottery Fund, British American Tobacco and Magnox Electric (North) who had

been innovative, resilient and brave even to reach the shortlist under the present market conditions. We would particularly like to congratulate Mouchel for winning the award. The HR team exemplified how commercial success is inextricably linked with how to attract, retain and develop people.



The individual approach to HR

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