

# RESPONDING TO MARKET CONDITIONS

Faced with an increasing number of responses for some roles and persistent difficulties attracting quality applications for others, these are demanding times for public sector recruitment in the built environment. Richard Gelder, Public Services Director at Hays Architecture, considers the different scenarios and solutions:

“Fewer jobs and more candidates vying for each available place means that employers can cherry pick the best talent to meet their requirements ...or so the logic goes. However, sourcing the most suitable applicant from a larger volume of responses generated for certain roles brings its own unique set of challenges, particularly around the management and assessment of an increased number of applications that can make a significant dent into daily work schedules.

While a significant number of responses are being generated for certain permanent roles during the downturn, particularly given the decline in the private sector housing and commercial markets, the same is not true for more senior and specialist appointments. These roles have generally not been as affected by the recession to the same extent, which means that attraction strategies need to be tailored to the target audience. Advertising in architecture journals and publications alone will not be sufficient to attract senior architects or specialist skill sets, as the vast majority of jobseekers now look online for opportunities. Therefore, public sector organisations will need to consider the design and delivery of bespoke candidate attraction solutions, underpinned by a tailored marketing and advertising programme to complement the employer brand.

The need for employers to view and actively manage their recruitment costs strategically has never been as important as it is now. Hiring applicants that are not a perfect fit will have a detrimental effect on finances, not only the manual response handling, sifting and assessment aspects but also the other costs incurred, such as training and finding a replacement, which make up the overall cost per hire figure. Public sector organisations therefore not only need to weigh up the benefits of outsourcing response management and response handling in order to reduce the overall time and cost to hire but also consider other expenditure incurred on advertising, for example.

Clearly, a number of issues need to be considered in the current climate, regardless of whether there is a pressing recruitment need or a more fundamental review of long-term workforce planning strategy. As

resources are continually stretched and the pressure to deliver efficiencies dominates the agenda, recruitment can become costly; for example, re-advertising will further drain finances. Although organisations are in a position to attract highly skilled individuals, the challenge remains how to instigate an effective, timely and proven value-for-money solution to cope with the increased response levels. And how to reach those individuals who are in secure jobs and are much less likely to consider moving.

**For further information about Hays' public sector partnerships and approved partner status with Buying Solutions, contact Richard Gelder on 0115 959 8786 or email [richard.gelder@hays.com](mailto:richard.gelder@hays.com).**

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