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Staffing Solution in the IT Sector

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Biography

Matt Weston is currently the UK managing director for Robert Half (https://www.roberthalf.co.uk). Prior to his appointment Matt was the Director for professional staffing across the UK South, encompassing the finance and accounting, financial services, human resources and administration recruitment.

Having worked for Robert Half for over 20 years and starting his career as a recruitment consultant for finance and accounting in 1999, Matt is the epitome of leadership by example. This philosophy to success focuses on three core areas: passion, people, and process – without all these three aspects in alignment the organization will not succeed. His dedication to excellence for our clients, candidates and employees sees him lead an executive team with an openness to innovative solutions that are always grounded in our founding principle of 'ethics first'.

With extensive experience in recruitment, Matt is a familiar industry figure and is often called on by the media to discuss the current trends impacting the future of work, recruitment trends and leadership advice.

Matt has a degree in Business Administration from Cardiff University.

Keywords Recruitment, Staffing solutions, Flexible workforce, Permanent employees, Fixed-term contractors, Temporary workers
Paper type Research

Abstract

New research from international recruitment agency, Robert Half UK, reveals that over 70% of UK workers are currently reassessing their career options despite COVID-related job insecurity. Though the 'war for talent' may have shifted to a 'war for jobs' in the last few months, businesses must continue to prioritize attracting and retaining key talent as they look to rebuild post-lockdown explains the author of this article.

Introduction

Staff are a company's most valuable asset in navigating short-term disruption and achieving long-term growth. However, the pressure COVID-19 has placed on business demand, operations and bottom-line results has forced companies to reconsider their staffing solutions to better navigate the realities of this evolving situation.

Whether looking to temporary workers to assist with business continuity, contract workers to rapidly implement critical initiatives, or bolstering internal excellence through permanent employees, there is no one-size-fits-all staffing solution. In this climate, every company will need to adapt their workforce structure to efficiently meet current needs and drive future growth with, in all likelihood, a reduced overhead.

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In assessing what the best staffing solution for your business during COVID-19 is, here are some key considerations:

Permanent employees – Advantages

1. **Tapping into the complete employment market:** Companies will always endeavour to retain their top talent, which means that the best candidates for your vacant roles are often those currently employed elsewhere. In a tumultuous market, employees highly value job security and are less likely to change roles for a temporary or contract offer, making permanent contracts a very effective recruitment tool to gain access to a wider talent pool.

2. **Keeping excellence in-house:** Recruiting existing contract or temporary workers to permanent positions is an excellent method to keep invaluable skills, relationships or knowledge within the business. Permanent roles are particularly important for those in people management positions, as a turnover in leadership can negatively affect business continuity and stability.

Considerations

1. **Resource-intensive investment:** While a top-performing permanent employee is an invaluable asset to a company, it is worth considering if offering a full-time contract is the best option as they are generally more long-term in nature; require more resources and training; and are a less flexible option than other comparable staffing solutions.

2. **Bad long-term fit:** In times of crisis, it can be tempting to base hiring decisions on short-term priorities. However, prioritizing an applicant's technical skillset or short-term value over their cultural fit can result in an unsatisfactory relationship that will be a drain on morale and productivity in the long-term.

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Fixed-term contractors – Advantages

1. **Access to niche skills:** Fixed-term contractors provide access to specialized skills that can assist with business-critical projects such as implementing cloud computing services. These often require technical skills that are of value to the project at hand, making a short-term contract the most cost-effective staffing solution.

   As companies look to new growth initiatives to stimulate their recovery phase, contractors can also provide an informed yet objective perspective on considerations such as risk and compliance, change management and/or financial viability.

2. **Defined commitment:** The niche skillsets that a contract role typically targets often command above-market salaries. By establishing a defined duration, required deliverables and fee, a fixed-term contract can be designed to fit within any budgetary constraints a company may have in place while ensuring no additional expenses once the critical business need is met.

3. **Highly adaptable to new environments:** Experienced fixed term contractors are familiar with immersing themselves in new environments and delivering value and outcomes with minimal lead or orientation time.

Considerations

1. **Access to benefits:** Depending on the organization and employer contract, full-time contractors can get access to certain company benefits, including paid sick and annual leave.

2. **Less company loyalty:** Temporary employees may not have the same level of loyalty and dedication towards your business compared to a tenured permanent employee. In a less favourable employment market, they might also be on the lookout for a permanent contract and will jump ship as soon as they have secured one.

3. **Lack of in-house knowledge:** When fixed-term contractors finish their project or business initiative, they often take the legacy knowledge with them. It is therefore important companies make sure they spend sufficient time on transferring that knowledge to the company's permanent staff.

Temporary employees – Advantages

1. **Maximum flexibility:** With many organizations not having a clear outlook on their mid- and long-term staffing needs, they would benefit from the temporary staffing solution as they are not required to provide an end-date to the employee and can cancel the temporary contract with no notice period to be served.

2. **Aid business continuity:** Temporary employees can provide immediate assistance to an organization, meet surges in demand and fill in the short-term gaps without overburdening other team members. They help sustain productivity and drive business continuity at a time of disruption.

3. **Cost effective:** As many companies face budgetary constraints, temporary employees offer the flexibility to quickly scale up or down based on evolving business needs, without having to add a permanent employee to the company's payroll.

4. **Hit the ground running:** Professionals who have experience in short-term assignments are familiar in operating in – sometimes stressful – new environments and industries, making them well-positioned to hit the ground running.

Considerations

1. **Highly competitive salary:** Within the temporary talent pool, there are many who possess in-demand, niche skillsets. These highly experienced subject matter experts, who are generally challenging to find, can typically command above-average day rates that are higher than their peers who possess a broader skillset.

2. **Less company loyalty:** Temporary employees may not have the same level of loyalty and dedication towards your business compared to a tenured permanent employee. In a less favourable employment market, they might also be on the lookout for a permanent contract and willing to jump ship as soon as they have secured one.

3. **Lack of business knowledge:** While temporary employees may possess valuable technical skills, they are often not in a position to bring the institutional knowledge required for certain unique business circumstances.

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A mixed staffing solution

Every staffing solution has pros and cons, but having a flexible approach allows companies to build an agile team that is responsive to changing conditions without compromising on the required institutional knowledge and business-critical skills that will support the company through COVID-19 and beyond.

Using a specialized staffing firm like Robert Half can help you build the right team to ensure continued business success. We have a pool of highly skilled, pre-vetted candidates, and we can handle for you the time-consuming details of the hiring process. We can also advise you on the fair market rate for salaries in the current COVID-19 pandemic – and beyond.