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Subject          Life as a Rec2Rec Consultant

Recruitment to Recruitment is without doubt the single toughest recruitment sector to be commercially successful within. Unfairly tarnished by some for being a necessary evil and / or for having no value at all, we thought this month we should shed some light on the challenges, pitfalls and frustrations of life as a rec2rec consultant.

Scott Recruitment was the first Rec2Rec company in Australia, established by Rosemary Scott in 1992. Followed by Dowrick, Ashworth and then Turnaround in 2001. Rec2Rec back in 2001 was a very different landscape to what it is today with only the four main players operating in the market for a couple of years thereafter. At the time a large proportion of the Australian recruitment industry had never heard of the term “rec2rec” and hadn’t a clue what value it could be for them. Recruiting recruiters was an education exercise for many years back then, having to explain to many the value they could get from using a recruitment company recruiting specifically for the recruitment industry.

Today rec2rec is known as a recruitment sector in itself by everyone involved within the recruitment industry. The landscape has changed from having only four companies operating in the space to some thirty plus including many one man bands and many who recruit in a number of markets including a small portion of rec2rec.

So why today, are rec2rec consultants often getting labeled with the same brush of what we referred to earlier by some for being a necessary evil and / or for having no value at all?

As with the recruitment industry in general getting labeled by some for being “used car sales people”, “cowboys” and various other such clichés due to a few bad operators, the rec2rec industry sector has experienced the same treatment from the industry that it actually supports and one that should know

better. This is to say rec2rec has over the last five or six years has a few bad operators that have done the wrong thing by their clients and candidates that they have supposed to be helping and subsequently the one shoe fits all analogy has come into play.

Why has this happened?

Starting a recruitment company is as easy as registering a business name, getting a website developed and picking up the telephone right?

Wrong. Unfortunately, this has been a misconception that hasn't serviced the industry well in any capacity. Too many people have thought this was all it took to build a multimillion dollar retirement plan. Rec2Rec suffered even more so as a number of recruiters looking to set up thought rec2rec would be easy given they had worked with and for a lot of people within recruitment and therefore had a big network to start making placements with immediately. Once again this is simply wrong and very naive.

So why has this led to the sector being tarnished?

Well a number of these start ups came to the realization very quickly their network wasn't quite as strong as they thought, advertising hasn't brought in the results anticipated and the tax man has already come knocking on their door.

And then walks through the door a good candidate..... Thank god thinks the newly started rec2rec. The candidate talks about their career aspirations, the type of culture and company they are looking to work with. The newly started rec2rec not only doesn't know the market well enough to actually help having listened to the candidates needs, they couldn't care less about those requirements as they have their own needs mainly being the bills to pay that are quickly mounting up in the back corner of their office and not to mention take some type of salary to pay the bills at home that are also mounting up. With this they couldn't care less about your career aspirations or needs and desires, their only thought is where can they place you as quickly as possible with who will pay their invoice immediately to make sure they can live another week.

The candidate starts their new job to quickly realize they have been sold a lemon, the client loses the candidate and quickly realize the rec2rec had sold them both down the river and when they asked for a credit or a refill the rec2rec was never to be heard from again.

So, who's to blame? The candidate for not doing their research on the rec2rec or on the company the rec2rec had sold them into? The client for listening to the rec2rec without having thoroughly enough screened the candidate during an interview process? The rec2rec for doing what ever they can to scrape through another month to stay in business whilst providing for their family? Or the recruitment industry in itself for not having any type of regulatory board or minimum entry requirements for new businesses setting up?

I think in the above example everyone has to take some responsibility on their shoulders. It is not as easy as to just blame the newly started rec2rec.

Obviously the outlook for 2009 for the recruitment industry has significantly changed. This will in turn stop many new recruitment ventures from starting on a shoe string, with their budding entrepreneur rightly thinking it might now be a little harder to set up. Good

Over the last two years we have seen some one hundred new entrants to the recruitment industry and it is not only rec2rec where the above example can be played out!!

So, what value do rec2rec's have?

A good rec2rec should be with you throughout your recruitment career. They should be your industry resource to advise you of how your career is progressing and what you need to do to push forward. This doesn't necessarily mean changing jobs, a good rec2rec consultant should only suggest that you change jobs if they have established why you feel frustrated with your current employer and can confidently state why changing employers at this point will actually develop your career. A good rec2rec consultant will be able to tell you about the skeletons in the closets with any potential new employer. They should also be able to tell you the holes in your own capabilities and how you should go about further developing your recruitment skills moving forward.

So why did you say "Recruitment to Recruitment is without doubt the single toughest recruitment sector to be commercially successful within"?

Excellent recruiters are few and far between regardless of what level they operate at, junior or director. This equates to good recruitment agencies are few and far between. Given this if a rec2rec wants to maintain a quality reputation they can only be working with who they perceive to be the professional quality companies and only look to place the candidates who they perceive to be the good recruiters.

Rec2Rec done correctly should simply be laying the cards on the table during an interview process and allowing the client and candidates to reach the right decision without or not that may lead to a placement for the rec2rec. The rec2rec however needs to be almost a better recruiter than their clients and candidates as they need to have the ability to stop the process or at least advise the other party should they think at any stage during the process one side is taking advantage of the other and hiding what skeleton may be lurking.

Done correctly, this equates to walking away from continuous fees in order to maintain ones ethics and integrity. Yet as with any other form of business, consultants in rec2rec must remain commercially viable and bring the dollars through the door.

So how can you be a commercially successful rec2rec?

Work harder than you ever have before. Do the right thing by everyone within the industry you come into contact with. Headhunt, headhunt, network and headhunt some more. Candidates who are simply applying to jobs listed on Seek may be looking for the wrong reasons. Headhunting isn't calling someone at their desk and asking if they want a new job. It's about recruiting intelligently recognising why the person being called may now be looking for a new job. This could be for a number of reasons including they have just had a new manager who has squashed their development, the company they were working for has just been sold and cultures are quickly changing, it could be that their career hasn't taken the direction they had hoped. What ever the reason should you get a headhunt call from a rec2rec, providing they have a base line level of information about you and give you solid reason to why they have called, you should spend the time to catch up with them. Remember this may not mean they are looking to place you in a job here today but should be the start to a relationship that should last the entirety of your recruitment careers.

"I'm looking for a new recruiter to join my business, which rec2rec should I trust?"

One that can tell you more about your competition in the market than you already know without breaking any confidentiality of their pre existing clients and network. This should immediately show you not only should they be able to represent your business correctly but they should also become a valuable industry resource for you moving forward.

Ask the rec2rec if they headhunt? Once again, headhunting is the only real means to sourcing the best the industry has to offer. And we guess you would only want to hire the best so therefore if the rec2rec you have contacted doesn't headhunt then don't waste your time with them.

2009 will lead to many more recruiters losing their jobs to non performance. If you want someone who has recently been let go from a competitor to join your business and in all probability become a non performer with yourselves then why use a rec2rec. All you need to do is simply advertise yourself. There are more recruiters applying to roles than ever before.

This adds to why rec2rec done properly will be harder in 2009 than in previous years. We are currently interviewing more candidates than ever before, weeding though the non performers to try and find those who have a future within recruitment and those who we want to not only look to help secure a new career opportunity today but have a relationship with for the career entirety.