





## WELCOME

SIMON KENT EDITOR

Are you proud of what you're doing? Do you believe in your business and work and the value and positive change it brings to your candidates, clients and the organisations you work with? If so do you make enough noise about it so people know what you do?

Modesty sometimes seem appealing, or perhaps companies prefer to let their results speak for themselves. And yet sometimes, making additional noise is appropriate and even necessary. The recruitment industry frequently comes under fire for fees, bureaucracy and more, but the value and difference the sector makes is clear – and extends beyond the £44bn directly contributed to the UK's economy.

In the next few issues of The Global Recruiter we're looking at marketing within the sector – how companies and personal brands can be built and get noticed, and why this is important in such a competitive marketplace. All recruitment companies are unique with their own specialities and approaches, but companies need to demonstrate this and make others aware. You've worked for that difference so tell everyone about it.

At The Global Recruiter Awards next month, this is exactly what we'll be celebrating: the stand-out achievers and innovators in a sector that never stands still. We'll be making some noise – why not join us?

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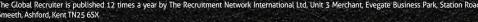
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# OVER HALF OF RECRUITMENT AGENCIES EXPECT REVENUE GROWTH IN 2026

UK recruitment agencies are looking ahead with renewed optimism, with more than half (53 per cent) expecting revenue growth from 2025 to 2026 – a 10 per cent increase on last year's outlook, according to <u>JobAdder's Benchmark Report 2025/26</u>. Nearly nine in ten respondents believe the industry will grow, despite ongoing economic uncertainty and heightened competition.

The positive outlook is underpinned by strong demand for talent across sectors (74 per cent) and a sharp rise in demand for specialist recruitment services (67 per cent, up 20 per cent from last year). Agencies also see opportunities in emerging markets (35 per cent, up 52 per cent year-on-year), highlighting an industry that is diversifying and future-focused. Globally, revenue reports were mixed last year, but confidence is trending upward: 43 per cent of UK agencies reported growth, compared with 27 per cent in Australia and New Zealand. Looking ahead, only 5 per cent of respondents predict a decline.

"We're seeing strong growth in specialist sectors like technology, healthcare, and engineering," said Dan Oates, Recruiter, Founder, and Career Coach at BBFGroup. "Clients increasingly demand tailored recruitment solutions – from executive search to niche talent mapping and focusing on these specialist services allows us to add real value and stand out in a competitive UK market."

While growth is being driven by demand-side factors, technology is emerging as a critical enabler. Confidence in adopting Al has jumped from 73 per cent to 81 per cent over the past year, with 86 per cent of agencies planning to increase usage in 2025. Benefits are already clear:

- 80 per cent are saving time
- 61 per cent report improved team performance
- One in three have won new business through Al

Agencies are refreshing their business development approach, with 59 per cent planning to increase BD

investment over the next year. Social media reach (49 per cent) and AI adoption (46 per cent) are leading strategies, alongside expansion into new markets (34 per cent). Encouragingly, 57 per cent of agencies secure prospective clients in five calls or fewer, though full sales cycles range from two weeks to six months – underscoring the importance of sustained client relationships.

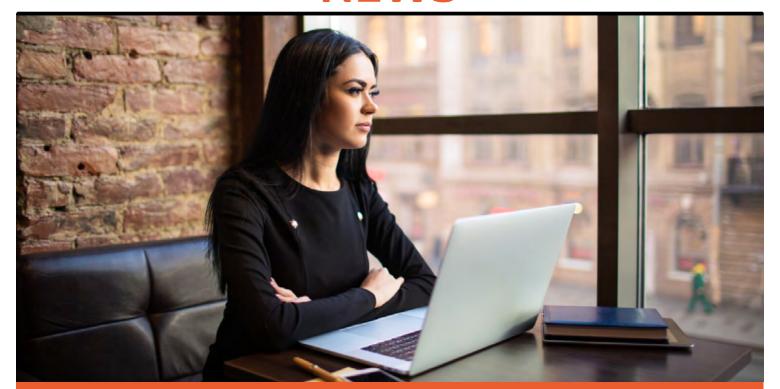
Despite optimism, challenges persist: 52 per cent cite economic uncertainty as their top concern (down from 63 per cent last year), 78 per cent report rising client expectations, and 63 per cent note increased candidate demands. Competition continues to intensify, with 64 per cent of agencies reporting greater agency-vs-agency rivalry and 66 per cent facing heightened competition for client roles.

"Recruiters are proving remarkably resilient," said Martin Herbst, CEO at JobAdder. "Yes, economic and competitive pressures remain, but demand for talent and specialist services is holding strong. What's changing is how agencies are meeting that demand by combining the efficiency of AI, CRM, and ATS technology with the trusted client relationships that remain at the heart of recruitment. It's this blend of innovation and human connection that will drive the industry's next wave of growth."

Now in its second year, JobAdder's Recruitment Agency Benchmarking Report surveys agencies to reveal performance trends, market insights, and emerging technologies – helping recruiters benchmark themselves and uncover new growth opportunities.

In an unpredictable economy, unemployment in the UK has risen to 4.7 per cent, while job vacancies have dipped to around 728,000 as of August 2025, according to ONS data\*. With businesses navigating tighter conditions and evolving workforce needs, UK recruitment agencies are adapting rapidly – with 36 per cent now offering temporary recruitment as a core service, reflecting a shift toward more flexible hiring models.

### **NEWS**



### **ENDING RECRUITMENT GHOSTING**

<u>HRGO Recruitment</u> has celebrated a major milestone having provided personalised CV feedback on every application they received this year -100,000 in total. They've marked the achievement with a £1,000 charity donation.

The initiative was powered by HRGO's commitment to innovation in recruitment. Following significant investment in R&D and software development, HRGO launched Betty, its Al-driven feedback tool. Unlike generic advice, Betty analyses each CV against the specific role a candidate has applied for, and provides tailored, constructive feedback on how well their application matches the requirements.

This approach enables HRGO to deliver meaningful feedback at scale, helping job seekers strengthen their applications while also supporting employers in identifying the best candidates for their roles. To date, 88 per cent of 1,538 respondents have rated the feedback Betty provided as good, emphasising its value to both candidates and hiring businesses.

To mark the milestone, HRGO pledged to donate 1p to charity for every candidate who received feedback. Clients were invited to nominate a cause, and the randomly selected winner was <u>Stick 'n' Step</u>, which provides free conductive education sessions to support and empower children with cerebral palsy and their families.

John Parkinson, Chief Executive Officer at HRGO Recruitment, said: "We made a commitment to end ghosting in recruitment, and thanks to Betty, we've

been able to give real, practical feedback to 100,000 candidates this year. I'm incredibly proud that this not only improves the job search experience, but also allows us to support Stick 'n' Step with a meaningful donation."

Sydney Parkinson, Chief People Officer at HRGO Recruitment, also added: "Supporting Stick 'n' Step through this donation is a wonderful way to celebrate the milestone. As a family-owned business, our values have always been rooted in supporting people, and this initiative reflects that. By combining innovative technology like Betty with a people-first approach, we can not only improve the recruitment experience but also make a positive difference beyond the workplace."

Commenting on the support, Sarah Smithson, CEO at Stick 'n' Step, added: "We're delighted to have been chosen as the charity to benefit from HRGO Recruitment's milestone donation. This will help us continue providing free sessions that empower children with cerebral palsy and support their families."

Alongside this milestone pledge, HRGO has also made a number of smaller donations to other local and national charities throughout the year, reflecting its ongoing commitment to giving back to the community.

HRGO Recruitment continues to work with businesses across the UK to improve recruitment experiences while supporting candidates in their job search. By combining innovation with a people-first approach, HRGO is setting new standards for candidate care in the recruitment industry.



## HYDRO ENERGY GROUP ACQUIRES SEVEN SHORES AND VANTARI

Specialist offshore and renewable energy recruiters and part of the Strada Arc investment portfolio, <u>Hydro Energy Group</u>, has acquired <u>Seven Shores Recruitment Group</u> and its defence-focused subsidiary, Vantari, for an undisclosed sum.

The acquisition significantly broadens Hydro's capabilities, extending its expertise into defence and critical infrastructure recruitment – sectors central to security, resilience, and life-preserving missions. The combined entity is projected to deliver over US \$22 million in revenues by 2026, positioning Hydro as one of the few recruitment partners operating across multiple mission-critical sectors.

Benjamin Burns, Founder and Group CEO of Hydro Energy Group, said: "This transaction unites two businesses built on trust, precision, and performance. By combining Hydro's global reach with Seven Shores and Vantari's sector expertise, we are creating a world-class platform to support governments, businesses, and contractors in environments where human capital is critical to success – from powering energy transition to protecting lives and infrastructure."

Justin Cheung, MD of Seven Shores, added: "This partnership with Hydro gives Seven Shores and Vantari the resources and scale to accelerate our mission. I'm also excited to announce that Seven Shores will join the Hydro brand as 'Hydro Technical Engineering'. Vantari will continue under its well-known name, delivering the specialist expertise our clients trust—now strengthened by Hydro's global reach and infrastructure."

Operating across the UAE and UK, the new group brings together deep sector expertise, a global talent network, and enhanced delivery capability. Together, Hydro, Seven Shores, and Vantari form a cross-sector recruitment leader, uniting scale with a human-first ethos.



Gi Group UK's latest candidate survey has found one in four workers say they've experienced discrimination or microaggressions related to diversity, background or identity at work. A fifth of people have also declared they feel a bias around physical or mental health. According to Gi Group the survey has served as a reminder that while Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives have gained visibility, the road to fully inclusive workplaces is still under construction and often under legal scrutiny.

The rising number of employment tribunals related to DEI in the UK, particularly around neurodiversity, signals that there is still much work to be done by HR teams and leaders up and down the country when it comes to diversity, equity and inclusion. While some organisations are leading the way with approaches which work on both a practical and human level, others are 'burying their heads in the sand' and not addressing the issue.

According to Government data, in 2024/25, the Employment Tribunal received 42,000 single claims. In Q4 2024/25, unfair dismissal (23 per cent, up 3 percentage points compared to the same period last year) topped the list, with disability discrimination (11 per cent) fourth. Employees are increasingly challenging workplaces that fail to accommodate invisible conditions and workplace cultures that are struggling to catch up with modern expectations of inclusion.

Over the last two decades, the HR function has undergone a dramatic evolution across all sectors and geographies. "HR used to be transactional, handling contracts and leavers for example, but now it's a strategic voice in the C-suite," says Cindy Gunn, Group Head of People at Gi Group UK. "A big part of a HR's role is raising awareness of DEI. >

### **NEWS**

This has meant building knowledge through education and policy. Unconscious, and sometimes conscious, bias persists which must always be challenged and workplaces must always look at how they best manage the situation. Sometimes, tribunals could be prevented with better understanding and more thoughtful adjustments."

Emma-Louise Taylor, Group Head of Learning & Development at Gi Group, agrees that this is more a cultural issue rather than a policy issue. "People don't want to hide who they are anymore. The scope is broader than race or gender, it's about things you might not see, like neurodiversity or menopause," she says. "The companies keeping up are the ones listening, opening space for real conversation and changing how they support people."

Emma-Louise is clear that inclusion cannot be performative, it must be baked into culture, with leaders modelling inclusive behaviours and being held accountable.

That's where many workplaces fall short according to Cindy. "Reasonable adjustments are sometimes treated as inconveniences rather than opportunities to empower talent. Too often, there's a rush to say 'it's not possible here' without fully exploring how accommodations could work or even what alternatives might exist.

"The mindset remains limited, particularly when DEI is viewed as a compliance issue rather than a catalyst for business and human success," added Cindy. According to the latest Gi Group UK candidate survey, 15.63 per cent of respondents believe bias significantly influences hiring and career opportunities in their workplace. Add to that the 11.65 per cent who report discrimination linked to disability and 20.40 per cent citing bias around physical or mental health, and it's clear that trust within workplaces to handle diverse situations and conditions is still a work in progress.

"Support has to exist even when someone isn't ready to disclose," says Emma-Louise. "It's not about special treatment, it's about recognising different needs."

The companies that do this well embed inclusion into their operations. That includes bias-free hiring, accessible communication, DEI-informed metrics, and bite-sized training that's easy to apply. HR should also tap into employee resource groups, pilot initiatives and maintain feedback loops to ensure inclusion efforts are both scalable and authentic. As Cindy puts it, "Policies must evolve to support a workplace where everyone can thrive."

With life transitions like menopause gaining more visibility yet still subject to stigma, DEI has moved well beyond surface representation. It's become a measure of cultural maturity and leadership integrity. Employees want to feel seen and supported across all phases of life and work rather than well-meaning mission statements.





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### AGELESS TALENT AS A GROWTH ENGINE

Bettina Schaller, President, World Employment Confederation on why HR services must lead the workforce revolution.

### RECRUITMENT

SKILL

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**EMPLOYEE** 

CAREER

**APPLICATION** 

CV

CANDIDATE

**SEARCH** 



In today's rapidly evolving labour markets, one truth stands out: the future of work is multigenerational. From Gen Z interns to Baby Boomer consultants, the workforce is more age diverse than ever before. This shift is not a challenge to be managed – it's an opportunity to be seized. The HR services industry is uniquely positioned to lead this transformation, and WEC's Social Impact Report 2025, Ageless Talent: How the HR Services Industry Empowers Every Generation, makes a compelling case for why and how. >



### Labour market diagnosis

Labour markets are undergoing seismic changes. Demographic drift, digital disruption, and economic uncertainty are converging to reshape how, where, and why people work. Developed economies face ageing populations and shrinking workforces, while younger regions grapple with high youth unemployment. These trends are creating intergenerational tensions and policy dilemmas that demand urgent attention.

Older workers seek financial security and meaningful engagement but often face ageism and outdated employment models. Mid-career professionals are caught between the stability of traditional roles and the allure of flexible, purpose-driven work. Meanwhile, younger generations crave autonomy and flexibility but risk burnout and precarious employment.

This is not just a demographic story. It's a strategic imperative. Organisations must rethink how they attract, retain, and support talent across all age groups. And that's where HR services companies come in.

### Catalysts of change

Flexibility is the cornerstone of this new paradigm. It is not just about whether people want to work flexible hours or remotely. Flexibility is also affecting how people think about work over the course of a career. Our research, The Work We Want uncovered that 82 per cent of senior executives say that the idea of a person following one career path in their lifetime has gone for good.

Flexibility is therefore the solution to unlock the potential of a multigenerational workforce. Through flexible work models, personalised career support, and innovative partnerships, HR services firms are helping employers to deploy new talent strategies while empowering individuals at every stage of their career.

The HR services industry is no longer 'just' a provider of manpower – it is a strategic partner in workforce transformation. No longer a peripheral consideration, contingent labour is now central to talent planning across industries. Large companies report that contingent workers make up 22 per cent of their workforce on average, with projections reaching 27 per cent within a decade.

This shift reflects a broader move toward agility and adaptability. HR services providers are at the forefront of this evolution, helping organisations integrate contingent labour into their core strategies while ensuring quality, compliance, and inclusion. >

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### Turning generational diversity into competitive advantage

Generational diversity is often framed as a challenge – different expectations, communication styles, and career goals. But the data tells a different story. According to Staffing Industry Analysts, organisations that lead in diversity, equity, and inclusion (DE&I) are significantly more successful in attracting top talent, retaining employees, and winning new business.

Encouraging labour market participation across all age groups is essential – but it must be done sustainably. Without policy innovation, the shift toward flexible work risks becoming uneven across regions, sectors, and social groups, exacerbating inequalities. To truly benefit from 'the flex factor', policymakers must develop frameworks that encourage flexibility and resilience, while employers should implement practices that foster an adaptable and diverse work environment.

#### From tension to transformation

The message of WEC's Social Impact Report 2025 is clear: generational diversity is not a source of tension but a foundation for growth. HR services companies must continue to evolve into strategic partners, driving systemic change across labour markets.

The transition to a multigenerational, flexible workforce is not without friction. But it also presents a historic opportunity to build more resilient, inclusive, and future-ready labour markets. HR services companies are uniquely equipped to lead this transformation. This means advocating for policy innovation, investing in lifelong learning, and designing work environments that support diverse needs and aspirations.

This is about our industry's future growth, but also its social impact – building sustainable labour markets that deliver better outcomes for all.







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## INCLUSION AND BELONGING - AN EVOLUTION

Kate Headley, Founder of RIDI, CEO of the Clear Company and UK Government Disability & Access Ambassador for the recruitment industry charts the fortunes of fair over the past decade.



There has certainly been real progress in inclusive hiring across the UK over the course of the last decade. Following The Equality Act 2010 coming into force, which unified many previously disparate discrimination laws, agencies faced a growing administrative reporting burden. For many businesses, this meant that diversity inadvertently became a box-ticking task, rather than something which offered a real strategic advantage. This, unfortunately, affected the candidate experience, as some saw little evidence of genuine inclusion in recruiters' processes or corporate cultures. Ultimately, the conversation at this time rarely moved beyond compliance, leaving a gap between policy and lived experience. >

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Today, we have moved beyond that stage, and the upcoming 10th anniversary celebration of the Recruitment Industry Disability Initiative (RIDI) awards only demonstrates the progress that has been made, with previous winners still demonstrating their commitment to going above and beyond for inclusion. But how has DEI evolved in UK recruitment, and what does the future hold?

### Social and legal impacts

The decade after the Equality Act 2010 witnessed a shift in the discourse surrounding inclusion and belonging. Social movements – most notably #MeToo and Black Lives Matter – began to challenge the narrow, administrative-led views, exposing corporate complacency and prompting a more critical and expansive approach to equity within the workplace.

Campaigns drove businesses to confront historic injustices and power imbalances that had long gone unspoken. For recruiters, this meant asking more challenging questions related to workplace culture, inequalities, and the representation of underserved communities, both in their own business and with their customers. The clients and candidates they worked with increasingly demanded real accountability and progress, not just fluffy corporate statements, which moved inclusion from box-ticking to confronting real, albeit difficult truths.

Compounding the need for change are new generations entering the workplace, who are increasingly placing far greater value on authenticity, purpose and belonging. There is now real scrutiny placed on employers' diversity reports, and for tangible evidence of inclusive cultures. Increasingly, younger talent wants fair pay, transparent career ladders and genuine growth opportunities; regardless of background. In turn, agencies have had to respond by transforming their hiring processes, with the rise of value-based interviewing techniques and skills-based hiring replacing formulaic competency questions, or recruitment solely based on experience or qualifications.

### Rise of corporate accountability

This broader, societally driven growth has resulted in greater corporate accountability. In 2017, Gender Pay Gap Reporting was introduced for employers in the UK with over 250 employees, which forced businesses to publish salary differential rates between men and women, and subsequently led many to level the playing field. And, shortly after this in 2018, the Race at Work Charter was launched, encouraging senior sponsorship for ethnic diversity programmes and creating a long overdue commitment to launching zero-tolerance harassment policies.

It was also around this time that the business case for diversity, inclusion, and belonging really took off in the wider public sphere. McKinsey published research revealing that companies with greater ethnic and gender diversity were quantifiably proven to outperform and be more profitable than less diverse firms. Broadly, diversity moved from being seen as a moral afterthought to forming a key part of strategic growth conversations. >



### Pandemic-driven changes

The global pandemic of 2020 also drastically affected recruitment in several unforeseen ways. Suddenly, a huge proportion of working professionals were operating on a remote or hybrid basis, which became mainstream employment models almost overnight. However, this quick change did not allow time for new processes and adjustments to be properly tested and embedded, and now we see employers work out what the optimum balance needs to be.

Positively, though, mental health became a more open discussion point in the public domain over this period, and organisations such as the Disability Confident scheme and the Time to Change campaign further encouraged recruiters to consider a broader spectrum of candidates and the support employers could offer candidates and employees alike. We also saw more conversations about an intersectional approach – how race, gender, socio-economic background, health and age interplayed to shape candidates' journeys, and interviewers sought to understand how a candidate's unique perspective could enrich their own and their clients' team dynamics and problemsolving. And for many, particularly those with caring responsibilities and chronic conditions, the pandemic opened some new professional doors. Geography also became a far less critical factor for employers, widening the talent pool further and removing another potential barrier to candidates.

### The rise of Al

The next frontier to cross is the rise of emerging technologies, notably artificial intelligence. All represents a more significant step change in transforming recruitment, with both advantages and potential pitfalls for diversity, inclusion and belonging.

Encouragingly, we have already seen early signs of AI levelling the playing field, with programmes able to anonymise CVs and other markers (like university names) to reduce unconscious bias. In addition, structured interviewing platforms have begun to ensure consistent questioning and scoring, and data-driven assessments can identify aptitude and potential far beyond conventional CV filters. Put simply, AI, if managed correctly, has the potential to rapidly advance fair hiring practices by testing for evidence, not assumptions.

But the outlook isn't entirely rosy. Algorithmic bias is a real threat and has already led to significant problems; Amazon's recruitment tool infamously ignored female candidates after being trained on male-dominated hiring patterns, and this is just one example of many. >



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- 85% would remain loyal with automated onboarding in place.

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Equally, anyone who has used publicly available AI platforms in 2025 will recognise that they are not ready to manage complex issues independently. Machine-made decisions need to be fact-checked and tested rigorously by humans. Likewise, as companies embrace AI, so too do candidates, upping the need for an inclusive, evidence-based and human-centric approach to recruitment to avoid leaving applicants disillusioned and disengaged.

Several notable ethical and legal questions also need answers before AI takes a more significant role in recruitment processes, for example, ensuring a platform has been trained with anti-discrimination laws such as the Equality Act 2010. While regulators are beginning to scrutinise AI and its use in further detail, the UK currently lacks any real legislation to help provide safety, clarity or guidance.

### Looking to the future

With this complex landscape and rapid evolution in mind, what does the future hold for diversity, inclusion and belonging in recruitment?

To start, despite the legislative overhauls and growing momentum of research and corporate commitments, people of colour and candidates with disabilities, amongst other underrepresented groups, continued to face slower improvements in hiring rates, and more work is needed to see real equity for all.

In terms of tangible trends, transparency will become even more critical, and AI platforms that offer clear insights into their modelling and digital thought processes will benefit from heightened trust from candidates and clients. In addition, technologies such as virtual reality could create fairer evaluation environments, which in turn, lead to more equitable assessments. Finally, inclusive leadership development programmes, delivered by humans, will continue to support the use of technology, ensuring that senior leadership fully understand diversity aspirations and responsibilities, and reflects them in their actions.

As we look to celebrate the 10th year of the RIDI awards, it's clear that the issues of inclusion and belonging in recruitment have undergone a huge journey. Over this timeframe, the business case for diversity has become more widely known, legal obligations have strengthened, and we have seen real cultural transformations take place.

The next ten years will demand the ability to blend cutting-edge tools with human engagement; Al will play a huge part, but it can't replace the power of authentic connection and empathy. Ultimately, if evidence-based decision-making and a human-centric approach are embedded in recruitment processes and experiences, we will see recruiter success and workplaces where everyone truly feels they belong.



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# RETHINKING CAREER GAPS IN TODAY'S MARKET Jasmine Escalera, Career Expert with LiveCareer explains why the No Gap CV is a thing of the past.



<u>UK Employment Gap Report from LiveCareer</u> shows that this mindset needs to change. According to the report, in 2025, only 51 per cent of UK candidates had no employment gaps at all, compared with 61 per cent just five years earlier. >



\*\*ESPECIALLY FOR THOSE WHO REMEMBERS THIS









One in three CVs now features a gap of six months or more, up from 24 per cent in 2020, and nearly a quarter of job seekers reported a career gap of at least a year, compared to 18 per cent in 2020. These figures reflect the reality of modern careers, which include gaps due to layoffs, caregiving responsibilities, upskilling or other life circumstances. If career gaps are now the norm, recruiters who continue to treat them as warning signs risk missing out on a significant portion of the available talent pool.

The rise in CV gaps is no surprise given the changes in the world of work over recent years. The pandemic forced many professionals to pause their careers and led companies to let go of employees. Mass layoffs in industries such as tech have also contributed to career gaps. The competitive job market has meant longer job searches, stretching gaps further than in the past. Al and automation are driving a new wave of workforce change, with many roles being reshaped and redefined across sectors, including in the UK, according to a report from LiveCareer. Taken together, these factors have made the linear, lifelong career trajectory the exception rather than the rule.

### The new mindset

This shift requires a new mindset. Rather than viewing career gaps as red flags, recruiters and hiring managers should see them as opportunities to understand the full value a candidate can bring to a role. Many people use time away from traditional employment to build new skills, whether that be through courses, certifications, or freelance projects. Navigating employment gaps can also help employees develop resilience, adaptability and problem-solving skills, which are qualities valuable to any employer. For others, time spent caregiving, volunteering, or pursuing entrepreneurial ventures can translate into unique perspectives and strengths that enhance creativity and innovation within any company.

The challenge, and opportunity, for hiring managers and recruiters lies in whether they can rethink how they assess candidate gaps. Rather than glossing over these candidates early in the process, recruiters can make small but powerful adjustments to their hiring processes to ensure the right talent isn't overlooked. >

### What recruiters can do differently

Reframe screening criteria: Instead of rejecting candidates with career gaps, adjust processes, such as screening questionnaires, to allow candidates to showcase all kinds of skills and achievements, including those gained outside of traditional employment.

Update interview practices: Encourage hiring managers to ask open, inquisitive questions about career gaps, such as, "What did you learn during your employment gap that could add value to this role?" This transforms the gap into an opportunity for candidates to highlight key strengths and boost their confidence, especially since 30 per cent still feel employers consider career gaps a major red flag, according to MyPerfectResume.

Educate hiring managers: Use key data, like LiveCareer's findings, to show that career gaps are no longer the exception but a common part of an employee's journey in today's workforce. Help hiring managers recognise the competitive advantage of embracing career gaps and considering candidates with non-linear career paths for available roles.

Focus on skills over gaps: Promote a shift toward skills-based hiring by encouraging hiring managers to evaluate candidates based on adaptability, problem-solving, and diverse, non-traditional experiences, over a linear career journey.

The end of the no gap CV is not about lowering hiring standards. Rather, it is about recognising the true potential of every candidate and ensuring equitable hiring practices. With more candidates presenting with CV gaps, recruiters and hiring managers who embrace this shift will unlock a new talent pool that can help their companies stay at the cutting edge of creativity, innovation, and growth. The question on every hiring manager's mind should now be, "What does this gap reveal about the candidate's ability to perform in novel ways in this role?" By taking a more openminded approach, companies can uncover new skills and perspectives that might have otherwise been missed. In doing so, they can ensure new hires are not only stronger but also better prepared to meet the challenges of today's rapidly evolving world of work.





## It shouldn't take 10+ tools to make one placement.

The market has changed — why hasn't the tech kept up? With Loxo, every output ladders up, and every click counts.



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### RECRUITMENT MARKETING

BUILD YOUR BRAND
STRATEGIC POWER OF PERSONAL BRANDING

RETURN TO CONTENTS 30



Simon Kent, Editor, The Global Recruiter

"This series we're aiming to unlock the full potential of your recruitment business through marketing. From creating a brand to communication, from automation to reputation it's time to demonstrate your value and pave the way to deliver the best services to clients and candidates."

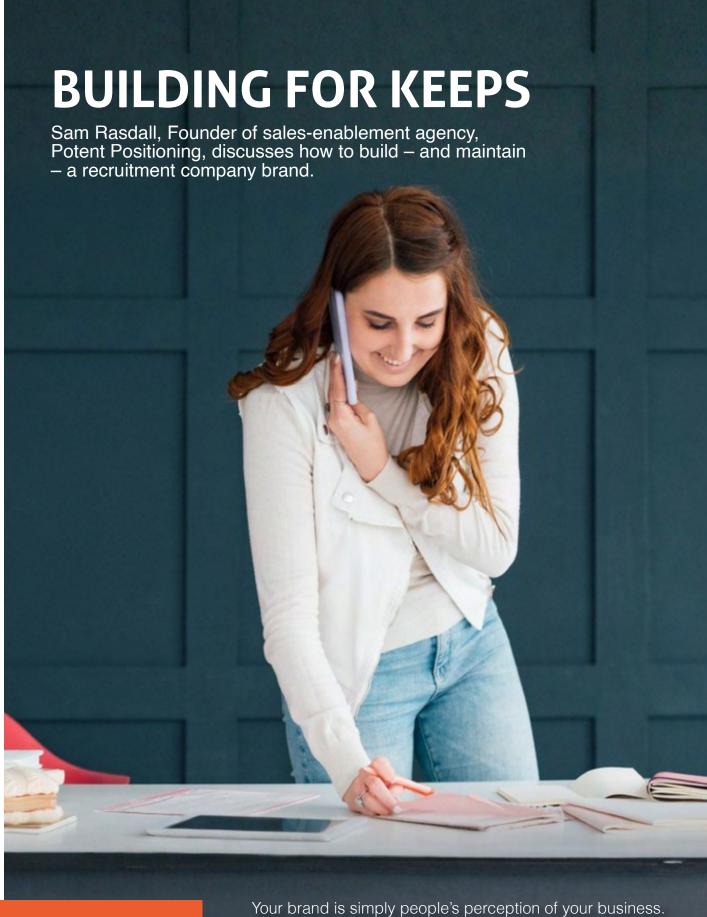
### WELCOME

Marketing has become so much more than just telling people what you do. Today's technology, techniques and communication media are demanding and full potential – able to drive engagement and bring new people to your business, all while raising your profile. With a little knowledge and creativity the sky really is the limit.

This series we're aiming to unlock the full potential of your recruitment business through marketing. From creating a brand to communication, from automation to reputation it's time to demonstrate your value and pave the way to deliver the best services to clients and candidates.

As technology and the online environment continues to evolve it's time to make sure your marketing strategies reflect where your audience is, and communicate to them in a way that works. And it's imperative that this happens because if you don't reach out to your customers, someone else will.

So that just leaves one question: how much noise do you want to make? ■



Your brand is simply people's perception of your business. Branding, therefore, is the strategic art of shaping that perception so we can be seen precisely how we want to be seen by the people we want to see us. That's it. >



### Why bother?

Because your brand enables you to make more money while providing the same (or fewer) services.

Money follows perceived value. In B2C, for example, you pay extra for Nike over an own-brand trainer because the brand signals value. B2B is no different. We don't have product packaging; we have websites, marketing, socials, case studies, reputation and service levels. Nail these, and the market perceives us as a brand that provides more value; and therefore, one that people are willing to spend more money working with.

Your brand dictates the price you can charge.

### Nudge every touchpoint up the KLT scale

KLT scale = the 'Know, Like, Trust' scale. Every interaction (sales call, marketing post, DM, email, complaint handled, service delivered, etc.) nudges people up or down that scale. People won't buy from you if they don't know who you are. They're more likely to buy if they like you. They definitely won't buy if they don't trust you to deliver the outcomes you claim.

Every engagement should increase trust while delivering real value along the way.

### Get forensic about your ICP

We need to be appealing to our ICPs (ideal customer profiles), and to do that, we need to know exactly who they are. Job titles and geographies are not enough. We need to know much more to be effective.

What specific characteristics do the people you close share?

Which common events precede them becoming a lead?

How does someone feel before and after you've solved their problem?

If you're unsure, start by asking current clients three questions:

- "What specific problem did you come to us to solve?" (X)
- "What positive emotions did we create/ negative emotions did we remove?" (Y)
- "What's the end result of that emotional change after the problem was solved?" (Z)

Now you know who to target (people with X problem, feeling Y about it, who want to be in Z position), how to target them, and how to qualify them. Your pipeline simplifies. Your win rate increases. And you stop taking calls with the wrong people.

### Position like you mean it

Whilst ICP clarity defines the sliver of the market you're best suited to serve, now you need to analyse the outcomes you can deliver and the problems you reliably and regularly solve. Only care about what they think and if what you're creating resonates with them and their problems.

Most brands fail here because they try to appeal to everyone. Don't. Actively push away non-ICPs so your true ICPs feel you're speaking directly to them.

### Sell outcomes (and feelings), not features of services.

Understanding problems isn't enough; you must understand the emotions around those problems and the desired emotional outcomes. While competitors sell features and benefits, you sell the outcome and the emotional impact that the outcome has on your customers. >

Better still, guide prospects to say it themselves. Ask questions that surface pain, urgency, and their own definition of success. Lead them down the breadcrumb trail until they ask, "So... how can you help us with this?"

### A simple call structure that helps: (G-PUNT-Q):

Goal (what they want), Problem (what's in the way), Urgency (cost of inaction), Need (what they believe the solution must include), Trust (why they came to you; what else they need to see), Quantify (confirm and agree their #1 desired outcome, its emotional meaning, and what's needed to get there).

### Purpose, vision, mission

Yes, the real-world purpose is to make money. But your stated purpose is why you exist beyond revenue. Ironically, studies show a strong purpose helps companies accelerate the real purpose of making more money! It unifies customers and teams, fosters a sense of belonging, and informs decisions. Tie it to the emotions your ICPs experience in the journey you facilitate.

Vision and mission? Avoid the "be the go-to leader" nonsense. Nobody cares about YOU being the best and only beneficiary of your vision.

- Vision: inclusive, long-lived, even unachievable. Your north star that benefits more than just you, there to inspire.
- Mission: present-tense, measurable steps you're taking to reach that vision.

### Values that actually mean something

Values can be one of your most potent brand weapons... or a boring, bland wallpaper. They tell prospects how you do business, what you care about and whether you are the type of company they are aligned with. They must be real, uncompromisable, and behaviour-shaping.

Create a big messy list (use a 7×7 grid), then interrogate each candidate value brutally: is it important, compelling, relevant in three years, easily communicated and implemented? Keep only the ones you'd fire your top biller for breaking. >





Phrase them as actions ("Always think innovatively" instead of "innovation") so people can do them and you can implement them far more easily. If your culture prefers more actionable guidance, pair values (the "why") with brand principles (the "how") for punchier statements that are even easier to embed.

### Differentiate like you want to win

Prospects don't care why you're different (yet). They only care about what you can do for them. So tie every differentiator to an outcome they value. Avoid dressing up generic features ("great database") as points of difference. If you're newer, build around the thing you're genuinely outstanding at. If you're established, mine your best data set – your current customers.

Then communicate each point of difference with a punchy headline (a few words) and a short explanation (less than 50 words).

Finally, compare yourself to alternatives directly or indirectly. You don't need to be combative, but do make it unmistakably clear where you're better. Differentiation in recruitment is difficult – but it doesn't have to mean reinventing the wheel.

### Proof beats promises, every time

Anyone can claim greatness. Back it up.
Aim for a review from every customer
while the iron's hot (right after results). Use
names and companies where possible.
Your prospects' brains are wired to trust
real people. Prioritise testimonials from ICP
look-alikes; a glowing quote from the wrong

seniority level can hurt your perceived positioning.

Level up with video testimonials. Five minutes on Zoom can answer: the problem, hesitations, why they chose you, how the process felt, whether the outcome landed, and how life feels now.

You control the narrative via questions; they do the convincing. Chop videos into social snippets. Add LinkedIn recommendations, often the first place prospects check.

So much peacocking goes on in this industry, but far too few share real results and evidence of their greatness.

### Clarity statement, headlines, tagline

People need to know you're right for them fast. Build a simple clarity statement and put it front and centre: We help [ICP] who are [problem] to achieve [outcome] by delivering [your solution]. Turn your core messages into a bank of short headlines, then choose one enduring tagline (max five words) that's memorable and resonant.

Your headlines will evolve; the tagline is what you become known for.

### Give your brand a (consistent) personality

People buy from people.

Treat your company like a person. Use Jung's archetypes as a starting point, then get specific: if your value set prizes seriousness and precision, a "Jester" vibe probably jars. >



Define how your brand speaks, dresses, and behaves; then infuse that personality into everything you do. Language and tone of voice, every design decision (e.g., how curvy your font is), sales materials, socials, employer brand, support, and so on!

Minor channel-by-channel tweaks are fine; wholesale inconsistency erodes trust and kills compounding effects over time.

### Tell better stories

We're hard-wired for narrative. The most important one?

Customer stories.

Cast your ICP as the protagonist with a problem; you're the guide with the plan; the plan leads to success; and you paint the new world you created. That last step matters most: prospects "feel" the after state and mirror it emotionally.

It's persuasion that doesn't feel like selling. Your video testimonials can double as story fuel, so stitch them into case studies and get specific about the customer stories you're telling.

### Don't start with logos

Visual identity matters... There is a whole article in those themselves! But their creation only comes after the substance and foundations above. Otherwise, you're guessing ("I've always liked blue...") and briefing designers blind.

Build visuals that express your ICP-aligned personality, then bring the brand to life digitally: website, social system, landing pages, lead magnets, tools/automation, and a launch plan.

Build this right, and your brand becomes a sales-assisting machine. Impacting marketing responses. Increasing sales velocity. Selling for you whilst you sleep.

# THE STRATEGIC POWER OF PERSONAL BRANDING IN MODERN RECRUITMENT

Robert Woodford, Founding Director & Marketing Consultant at The Marketing Junction looks at the strategic power of personal branding in modern recruitment.

Recruitment today isn't what it used to be. Gone are the days when you could fire off a job ad, wait for a stack of CVs, and pick the least questionable candidate. In our hyperconnected world, recruiters and headhunters are practically swimming in competition. To stand out, you need more than a good LinkedIn headshot and a collection of motivational quotes about hustle culture.

Personal branding has gone from nice extra to basic survival kit. Done right, it helps you build trust, prove you actually know what you're talking about, and create connections that last longer than the average candidate's probation period. And if you're rolling your eyes thinking 'great, another buzzword', fair enough. But unlike 'synergy' or 'disruption', 'personal branding' can actually make you money.

### **Why Personal Branding Actually Matters**

Recruitment is all about people. OK – so no groundbreaking pronouncement there, until you look at the average recruiter's LinkedIn feed. It often reads like a corporate press release got lost in a sea of job postings. Boring hell – a piece of vanilla in a sea of beige. The recruiters who thrive are the ones who stand out, and personal branding is how you do it.

Think of LinkedIn as your shop window. A good personal brand makes you look like a trusted advisor instead of just another person firing off InMails at 9pm on a Friday. Candidates want someone who gets it, not someone who looks like they copied their bio from a generic job spec. And yes, clients too, because let's be honest, they're hiring you, not just your agency's snazzy logo.

Research by us (The Marketing Junction), and backed up by LinkedIn, show recruiters with well-developed personal brands achieve 47 per cent higher response rates from passive candidates and secure 31 per cent more client meetings. That's not vanity metrics. That's actual business impact.

### Building credibility without sounding like a robot

The golden rule is be authentic. That doesn't mean turning your blood test results into a LinkedIn saga (unless it somehow explains the ups and downs of recruitment), but it does mean showing a bit of your actual personality. Unless of course you are a complete knobhead.

Recruiters with strong brands are the ones who mix expertise with relatability. They share insights, talk about industry trends, and sprinkle in real-world stories. Sometimes even memes. Yes, memes, the universal language of the internet. You can give top-tier market insights and still laugh about the candidate who thought business casual meant Crocs.

Becoming known in a niche helps too. Being the go-to recruiter for a niche beats being one of 10,000 recruiters who do a bit of everything. Specialists get remembered. Generalists get lost in LinkedIn the way socks disappear in the laundry: mysteriously, tragically and forever.

### Social media without the existential dread

LinkedIn is the obvious starting point, but it's not the only game in town. Blogs, podcasts, industry forums, even TikTok (yes, TikTok recruiters are a thing now, and no, as I was born an old man I am not entirely sure how I feel about it) can all help showcase your expertise. >

The trick is consistency. If your last post was Happy New Year 2022, you're basically a LinkedIn fossil. Keep showing up, keep sharing, and adapt your tone for the platform. LinkedIn equals polished but personable. Instagram equals eye-catching, story-driven posts. TikTok equals short, sharp, and refreshingly human.

And don't be afraid to celebrate wins. Landed a big client – share it. Helped a candidate land their dream job – post about it. Attended an event and finally met that LinkedIn contact in real life – definitely post that, bonus points if you include the awkward selfie where nobody knew where to look.

Video content has become increasingly vital, with LinkedIn reporting a 231 per cent increase in video engagement. Translation for the camera-shy among us is you probably need to get comfortable on video. The good news is you don't need a Hollywood studio setup. Decent lighting and actually looking at the camera will put you ahead of 80 per cent of your competition.

Pro tip though, posting your lunch is still not branding.

### Branding hacks for recruiters who don't have time

Between screening candidates, calming clients, and wondering if your inbox breeds at night, personal brand building can feel impossible. But here's the secret, with the right hacks, it's not that painful.

- Record Your Calls and Netflix Your Own Genius That brilliant advice you gave a candidate? Clip it, post it, done. Al tools can even transcribe and polish it. Who knew you were binge-worthy?
- Al as Ghostwriter (Smarter Than Autocorrect)
   Brain-dump into your phone, let Al tidy it up, and there you have it, LinkedIn-ready content that doesn't look like you typed it mid-coffee spill.
- Batch Like Meal Prep (Content Tupperware)
   Spend one afternoon creating ten posts, then schedule them. Future-you will send you a thank-you beer.
- FAQs Equal Content Goldmine
   If candidates keep asking is this salary realistic or why won't they call me back, congratulations, you've just written next week's posts. Their confusion is your content calendar. >



- Steal From Yourself (The Only Time Plagiarism is Encouraged)
   Blog into LinkedIn post into newsletter into webinar snippet. Recycling isn't lazy, it's efficient. It's also environmentally friendly in a digital sense we're still working out the logic on.
- Video Without the Drama
   No, you don't need studio lighting that makes you look like you're interrogating suspects on a crime show. A smartphone and decent audio are fine. Natural light from a window works wonders. Your bathroom mirror does not.
- Template Your Stories (Mad Libs for Recruiters)
   Use simple frameworks like Problem, Solution, Result. Insert your actual day, and there you go, content that sounds like you actually wrote it because, well, you did.
- Behind-the-Scenes (Embrace the Mess)
   Show your desk chaos, the Friday pizza lunch, or your team celebrating a placement. Relatability equals reach. Perfection equals nobody believes you're human.
- Automate the Boring Bits
   Scheduling tools are your best friend. Think of them as your brand PA, minus the salary negotiations and Christmas bonus expectations.
- Series Over One-Offs (Netflix Logic)
   People love episodes. Monday Market Insights or Friday Fails make you easier to follow and harder to forget. Plus it removes the weekly panic of what to post.
- Crowdsource to Your Network
   Polls, hot takes, Q&As. Your audience creates the content while you look deeply
   engaged. This is not manipulation, this is community building. Probably.
- DMs and Emails Are Secret Blog Posts
   If you've written a smart reply privately, strip the identifying details and post it publicly. Efficiency level somewhere between impressive and slightly concerning.

The point isn't to become a full-time influencer with a ring light collection. It's to show up consistently in ways that feel achievable, because recruiters who are visible get remembered. And recruiters who get remembered get business.

And if in doubt – speak to your marketing department. They'll love it so much, you might end up with a hashtag strategy, a content calendar, and a small marching band. >

### The future of not being forgotten

The recruitment industry isn't slowing down. Virtual hiring, Al tools, new social platforms, it's all changing how recruiters operate. But if there's one constant, it's that people trust people more than logos. They always have, they probably always will.

Recruiters who stay ahead will learn new tools and tech (and not just pretend they understand AI while nodding vigorously in meetings). They'll build real relationships, not just follower counts. They'll create content that solves problems, not just shows off. And they'll stay consistent, even when the market shifts and everyone panics.

And yes, video is now basically mandatory. So get comfy in front of the camera, whether you like it or not (Don't worry – everyone hates seeing themselves on camera at first. You'll survive. We promise.).

### **TL;DR: Here's What Actually Matters**

Recruiters with solid personal brands don't just look good online. They get better results. We're talking nearly 50 per cent higher response rates from candidates and over 30 per cent more client meetings. That's not fluff or feel-good nonsense, that's business impact you can actually measure.

So if you've been treating personal branding like a someday project filed somewhere between learning Spanish and finally reading that book everyone recommended, consider this your nudge. Start posting. Start sharing. Start showing who you actually are, personality guirks and all.

Because in the end, the recruiters who win are the ones who are visible, authentic, and, dare we say it, actually a little fun to engage with. Revolutionary concept, we know.







Recruitment is a hugely crowded industry dominated by big brands with up-and-coming outfits trying to nibble away at their success. And then there is the constant stream of start-ups trying to get established with many struggling to achieve their dreams of success.

In addressing the question of how important is brand awareness, let's firstly consider just four big consumer brands like McDonalds, John Lewis, BMW and Dyson. Ask yourself what do these companies stand for? What are they offering? How do they differ from their competitors? Each brand has its own market positioning and offering which has been carefully constructed and thought through – and of course promoted by continual through-the-line activities over many years. You can apply this same approach to every big brand you can think of. But in recruitment...?

Do the same for your particular recruitment agency. Can you actually differentiate your company from your competitors? Is your company just a name or is it a brand that actually means something to your two target audiences of clients and candidates?

Yes, you can be successful without a brand just by being good at selling but as you grow, your brand – or lack of – becomes infinitely more important.

Q: How have you created the brand for Austin Lee? What was the starting point and how do you build the brand in relation to the business?

A: In truth, when we started, we had a name and simple logo and we were a

sales operation. Nothing more, nothing less. Any success we had was down to our ability to connect with people via LinkedIn and the phone. The phone – remember those days?

We aimed at procurement, business operations and IT. Eventually, we recognised that we were spreading ourselves too thin and were anything but a specialist – we just chased sales and we were reasonably successful at it. Later we realised that we needed to specialise and we chose a sector that appeared to offer the space to operate in, to be financially rewarding and to become a true specialist to clients and candidates alike. As we had already placed a few SAP candidates in Europe, we chose to position ourselves as ERP & CRM Advisors. At last, a niche.

Then I went back to re-read two books that helped me as an advertising man; Disruption and Beyond Disruption both written by Jean-Marie Dru. I highly recommend both.

From there, we set about differentiating ourselves via a logo that declared our specialism, then a targeted website that actually had movement in it – how many moving websites are there in recruitment? not many I believe. Then innovative video, then promotional material that was so 'out there' it actually shocked some people. The latter is a finalist in the Best Marketing Campaign Global Recruiter Awards 2025. We don't expect to win as the winners in these awards tend to go to the big brands – perhaps this sort of proves my point about branding! >

- Q: What do you consider to be the most effective channels for getting your brand to the market?
- A: Getting to your target audiences is evolving and getting ever harder. Creativity must play a big part in both the messaging and the channels used. I predict that client-focussed direct marketing will become more prominent over the next three years along with even more digital events for both clients and candidates. The bigger brands will allocate more A&P spending to support themselves, making it harder for the chasing pack to compete with them.
- Q: What is the balance between brand consistency and the brand evolving to reflect changes in the company and changes in how to communicate the brand?
- A: In advertising, we often said to clients, 'when you are tired of your image or campaign, your target audience is only just getting to notice it'. So consistency is absolutely critical provided of course you created a convincing image and message in the first place. And that's where testing came in. I urge brand guardians not to make frequent changes but once you are convinced that you have it right via research, you should stick with it and make minimal changes. Chopping and changing things only dilutes what you might have created previously and definitely confuses your target audiences.

If you have big changes to the company with say a new 'division', your overall branding and positioning must be reconsidered but wholesale changes should be avoided at all costs. In consumer marketing terms, we would talk about 'stretching the brand' like Mars Bars and Mars ice creams or Apple phones and Apple Watches.

- Q: How are changes in technology and the use of Al changing marketing techniques?
- A: If I could predict this, I would be another Jeff Bezos of Amazon fame. But there's only so much room for another genius. And that ain't me. However, whilst some might believe that new tech and AI will have a radical impact on recruitment, I myself am not so sure. Since I have been in recruitment, there have been so many 'new' initiatives that have turned out to be just fads. A couple I recall is the push that everyone should be a 'personal brand' on LinkedIn. Some adopted it but mostly its past its sell-by date. Then DEI came and thankfully they/them are starting its decline. There have been others

Al will help some of us but right now, I cant see a radical jump forward. But I am not guaranteeing that I am right on this at all. Best to ask Greg Savage or Jeff Bezos. I believe Jeff is on his US\$500 million superyacht at the moment if you want to ask him.

