

# HR MARKET NEWS

## MARKET INSIGHTS

Whether they be active or passive the job market has not seen an influx of candidates to this extent for quite a while. Volume is significantly up and as a result we have been busier than ever in managing the candidate side of the recruitment process. While volume is something our infrastructure is set up to manage we are very aware that this phenomenon is creating a headache for many of our clients when they advertise themselves.

Some interesting trends and experiences have been shared by many of our HR candidates and it will be interesting to observe how practice changes over the coming year. Many of these candidates have found that things such as having their application acknowledged and being redirected after interviewing for a role via a personal phone call is quite a novelty! We have been thanked on a number of occasions for actions that we consider to be common courtesy. In a typical market the job search process can be a stressful situation, let alone in times of economic uncertainty. This is exacerbated when applicant volumes are high making the "competition" so much tougher. Not getting back to people nor even acknowledging their application is unacceptable – especially from an agency. We are currently receiving a lot more messages of gratitude than usual – just because we are doing our job! It seems that small gestures are now making a very big difference.

From a client perspective it is also important that we manage our client's brand and reputation as well as our own throughout any interaction we have. When we hear about the lack of basic candidate care the question has to be asked, "How is this affecting the client's employment branding?" We certainly sympathise with HR teams and hiring managers that lack the resources of an agency and have to bear the load of application lists that reach +100 in length. It reminds us of the days a few years back when the whole concept of 'unbundled services' became a popular option for clients. Indeed we have seen the renewed need for this and have begun offering this option ourselves. It can be a very effective way of containing costs but outsourcing the more painful and time consuming parts of the recruitment process.

Our thoughts are backed up by new research from international labour economics consultants, Aberdeen Group. They predict that employers will look to change the mix of recruitment services they outsource as the labour market continues to soften. "Sourcing and advertising will become less challenging, but screening, interviewing and selection will become much more difficult and critical" the report said. It recommended that internal recruitment and HR teams focused on outsourcing the parts of the process that would "reduce the burden" on internal HR executives, and free them up to focus on wider strategic HR issues in the changing economy.

## EMPLOYMENT LAW UPDATE

### AGREEING TO REDUCE HOURS

The Government's new Job Support Scheme has received a lot of publicity recently. While innovative, the scheme has limited application – it is only open to large private sector employers and has very specific requirements. However, smaller employers or those who want changes beyond the parameters of the scheme without government assistance are still able to consider reaching an agreement with their employees for this to occur.

While employers cannot unilaterally reduce days, hours or pay rates, it has always been open to the parties in an employment relationship to agree to such changes. An agreement of this nature is significant because it alters important terms of the employment agreement, and therefore must be approached carefully. For instance, the discussions need to take place in good faith, employees need to be told and have the opportunity to take advice about the proposed changes, and ultimately any agreement needs to be documented.

In most cases changes of this nature will be proposed for the entire workforce, or at least for a defined group of employees. Therefore to achieve agreement it will be important that the reasons for the change are genuine (e.g. to protect jobs), that the employees can see and understand this benefit, and preferably that it is for a defined period.

**The Buddle Findlay Employment Team can be contacted on +64 4 499 4242 or visit [www.buddlefindlay.com](http://www.buddlefindlay.com)**

To have a further discussion about anything in this newsletter, to share suggestions or for a general chat about anything HR please feel free to contact any of us in the Wheeler Campbell HR team. We would love to hear from you.

- ▶ Lynda Fraser
- ▶ Hannah Gee
- ▶ Sara Kidd

04 496 9963 | [lynda.fraser@wheelercampbell.co.nz](mailto:lynda.fraser@wheelercampbell.co.nz)  
04 496 9964 | [hannah.gee@wheelercampbell.co.nz](mailto:hannah.gee@wheelercampbell.co.nz)  
04 496 9256 | [sara.kidd@wheelercampbell.co.nz](mailto:sara.kidd@wheelercampbell.co.nz)