

# THE BRIEF

WINTER 2018

## ANDREW BANKS

THE MAN THAT  
CHANGED OUR  
INDUSTRY

### AND THE WINNER IS...

All the fun and glamour  
from the awards nights

### DIVERSITY QUOTAS

Do they actually work?

### FLEXIBLE WORKPLACES

How to keep your  
employees happy  
and productive

### TAKE A PAGE OUT OF HER BOOK

Reflecting on recruitment  
in the 1960s and '70s

**rdsa** / LEADING IN  
THE WORLD  
OF WORK



**WELCOME**

Sinead Hourigan,  
President RCSA

Recently, I was honoured to attend the World Employment Confederation (WEC) conference in Dublin and the RCSA Awards, and I was fascinated about the similarities that exist in our industry the world over. The issues we face in Australia and New Zealand are being felt on a global scale. Everyone is talking about a shortage of skilled candidates, everyone appreciates the constant struggles between HR and procurement over budgets and everyone was equally frustrated about the ever pervasive presence of unethical recruitment and staffing firms devaluing our efforts to promote the industry and our value to the community at large.

But none of this overshadowed the general sense of enthusiasm for our industry and what is in store. It seems that no matter where people came from and no matter whether they worked for an international corporation or a boutique provider, everyone I met demonstrated very similar characteristics. They were willing to see opportunity instead of obstacles. While this may not come as a shock to those of us who have been in the recruitment and staffing industry for a period of time, what shone out to me above everything was the general willingness and capacity to communicate with a broad range of people and demonstrate a genuine interest in how others felt and share in their stories. In a world where AI and robotics are touted to be the next major threat to our industry, it is this very human trait that will always protect us from irrelevance.

We are (and should be) proud of who we are and what we do. We bring value to the communities we work with and we provide an essential service to the clients and candidates we support on a daily basis.

We have all, whether by design or by default, entered an industry where we are surrounded by people who want us to succeed and want to have the opportunity to share that success with us. And, most importantly we, as an industry, love to celebrate what we do every day. Our awards ceremonies were perfect examples of who we are as an industry and where we are going in the future. And going by the incredible stories of our winners, the future of this industry continues to be in good hands for generations to come. Now, that's a good reason to celebrate.

Until next time  
Sinead

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The **Recruitment, Consulting and Staffing Association Australia & New Zealand (RCSA)** is the peak body for the recruitment and staffing industry in Australia and New Zealand. RCSA's purpose is to Lead in the World of Work. RCSA drives professional practice, promotes and protects the industry, enables better business for members and provides opportunities for networking and the celebration of success.

RCSA sets the benchmark for professionalism through standard setting, education, research and business advisory support to our member firms, and accredited professionals, all of whom are bound by the RCSA Code for Professional Conduct, which is underpinned by a comprehensive disciplinary and dispute resolution procedure. RCSA is a proud member of the World Employment Confederation, the

Australian Chamber and BusinessNZ. RCSA publishes *The Brief* to engage, inform and spark conversations around leading in the world of work. For any inquiries or story ideas please contact *The Brief* editor Sarah Morgan at smorgan@rcsa.com.au.



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**COVER FEATURE**

Andrew Banks may be a household name on Channel 10's *The Shark Tank*, but, in truth, he has been a pioneer of the recruitment and staffing sector and was instrumental in transforming a cottage industry into the professional service we know today. We sit down for a chat ahead of his talk at the RCSA conference.

**WELCOME**

Charles Cameron,  
CEO of RCSA



*The only thing that is constant is change*  
— Heraclitus

While this saying has had many variations and meanings over the years, I feel it is the perfect line for this point in time in our sector and for our members.

In my day-to-day discussions with members, business owners, politicians and fellow industry associations, the underlying theme is 'how do we make change easier and, furthermore, how do we reduce the impact of change.'

Right now, we are in the greatest period of change.

Change in the way we work. Change in the way we interact with all tiers of our stakeholders – from candidates to clients to decision-makers tasked with driving our industry forward. Change is certainly a constant for all of us.

But, call me an optimist; I see this as a positive, particularly for our industry.

Change, despite what many fear-mongers might want us to believe, is an incredible opportunity to adapt and seek new opportunities that make us stronger and more viable for the future world of work.

It's just the way you view it. You can view change as either a barrier or as an opportunity to move forward and be a competitive player for the future.

As you will see from this magazine, change is a constant underlying theme. From workplaces changing the way they operate internally, to be a more attractive option for their workforce, to television producers changing the perceptions of candidates who live with Autism and OCD, to business leaders and thinkers from across the globe, arguing for, and challenging our perceptions of, flexible work and diversity quotas.

And the greatest leader of change – our cover boy Andrew Banks, who will lead this year's conference, who talks about how many moons ago over a cold pint of beer at a pub in London he set out to change the perception of the recruitment and staffing industry with two other stalwarts.

What an exciting time, wouldn't you say?

Charles



# DO WELLNESS PROGRAMS ACTUALLY WORK?

Workplace wellness programs are quickly gaining traction as an essential element for a healthy office culture. We chat to a recruitment leader and two professors about their lessons learnt and findings about wellness programs.

It seems wellness programs are not a fad, not a buzz-phrase and not going anywhere soon. In fact, workplace wellness programs are quickly becoming the new norm, as employers recognise happy staff make for higher productivity, engagement and commitment to the business.

Increasingly, businesses have started to understand that helping staff to negotiate the stresses of life, whether they be work-related or otherwise, is a smart business investment.

Giles Keay, Managing Director of Sydney-based Constructive Recruitment, recently introduced the “peoplefirst” initiative for his staff after witnessing the ongoing pressures that balancing work and home life can have on individuals.

Constructive has a core focus on what it calls the “Happiness Advantage” principles which are geared around increasing productivity, engagement and success through ensuring individuals’ happiness and positivity.

Keay said this is now an

ingrained feature of the business following its adoption almost two years ago and included having Happiness Coach Alex Dawson from Positive Scenario as their guest speaker at their 2017 conference.

Keay described the process over the past 12 months as an evolution.

“We have always had a core focus on our employees since hiring our first staff member in 2004 but following our commitment to this strategy we then created a ‘Best Place to Work’ team comprising four individuals in the business who have

pulled together our commitment to our staff, peoplefirst,” Keay said. “The feedback, engagement and support to implement these initiatives by the business has been amazing.”

The peoplefirst initiative has been designed to cover five areas for staff:

- Health and wellbeing
- Rewards
- Flexibility
- Career and personal development
- And the little extras

This includes flexible working arrangements, capacity to work

remotely, incentive schemes which are particular to staff and which can include holidays to Bali for staff meeting their targets, career pathways and guidance and the capacity to alter working arrangements for individuals.

Since the program was introduced 12 months ago, Constructive has reported:

- Staff turnover the past year of only 12 per cent against an industry average of 38 per cent
- Revenue increased 30 per cent year-on-year with six monthly records broken this year

“Our staff are more engaged than they have ever been because they understand that we are looking after them and the results are there to be seen, with record-breaking months almost ongoing although our headcount has remained steady,” Keay explained.

“We are now looking to increase staff numbers over the forthcoming year, but will always stay a medium-sized business, as our culture means more to us than global domination!

“As a company, we are genuinely interested in the welfare of our staff and our commitment to this extends to life outside of the demands and confines of work.

“Life and society are changing rapidly, with technology bringing help but also more pressures, and being prepared to allow staff to do what they need to do to achieve the work-life balance they are after is a good way of attracting the best staff and keeping them.”

Since founding the business 15

“Our staff are more engaged than they have ever been because they understand that we are looking after them and the results are there to be seen with record breaking months almost ongoing although our headcount has remained steady.”

years ago, Keay said the focus on the wellbeing of his staff had always been a guiding principle for Constructive and the peoplefirst initiative was a very successful extension of this.

Key pillars of Constructive’s peoplefirst initiative include:

- Up to 12 weeks paid parental leave for the primary caregiver (regardless of gender)
- Up to 10 extra days in the first six months following birth to the non-primary caregiver
- An additional four-week paid bonus upon returning to work after parental leave
- An Employee Assistance Program and wellbeing walk-ins which are two annual half-hour sessions with



Giles Keay, Managing Director Constructive Recruitment

- a wellbeing consultant
- Above award leave entitlements
- Above industry average commission bands
- Additional loyalty and performance bonuses
- A new program for management and peer-to-peer recognition
- A substantial focus on learning and professional development

“There is definitely a commercial

justification as well as a social case for introducing a wellness program,” Keay said. “And if that is what motivates the change in the recruitment industry, then at least the result is positive change that benefits the employee, their family and circles of friends as well their level of productivity and engagement at work.

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Dr Lindsay McMillan

**“An effective workplace wellbeing program is not about just perks, so it is important that business leaders are attuned to what is going to improve wellbeing and act on it – not just copy whatever seems to be the trend at the time.”**



obligation to try to change this and make our industry more supportive and understanding to people's needs.”

Australian workplace think tank Reventure released its Workplace Wellbeing Report A Future That Works in November 2017, saying that work-funded wellbeing programs, when implemented effectively, are proving to be a worthwhile investment.

The report's author, Dr Lindsay McMillan said his research indicated that a quarter of Australia's workforce believe the focus on workplace wellbeing is increasing and 20 per cent of them would be prepared to sacrifice a promotion for better workplace wellbeing.

“Our research has found 74 per cent of Australian workers believe workplace wellbeing programs are worth the time and money, which speaks volumes,” Professor McMillan said. “An effective workplace wellbeing program is not just about perks, so it is important that business leaders are attuned to what is going to improve wellbeing and act on it – not just copy whatever seems to be the trend at the time.”

In his report, Professor McMillan

said the emphasis on wellbeing in the workplace had “gripped Australian workplaces”.

“Wellbeing is not a buzzword to attach to any new HR strategy but rather it requires careful consideration,” he said.

The report revealed five key things employers need to know

- 75 per cent of workers understand wellbeing to relate to physical and mental health
- 74 per cent of workers believe wellbeing programs are a good investment of time and money
- 51 per cent say family is one of the biggest stressors in their life.

The University of Sydney recently

Workplace Environment report revealed employees have a number of key psychological needs “that if ignored will reduce performance and wellbeing in the workplace”.

Those needs are autonomy, competence and relatedness at work. The report said factors which contribute to a high-performance workplace “include the organisation's culture and values, and the social contracts between the management and employees”.

“Engaged employees are more productive, have higher job performance, take less sick days, have higher customer satisfaction ratings, are less likely to leave their job, and hold themselves and their organisations in higher esteem,” the report found. One of the report's authors, Professor Anthony Grant added: “By taking an inside-out approach to wellbeing, employers would be rewarded with greater innovation and customer-facing outcomes, while reducing work-related stress at the same time”.

With the evidence suggesting healthy workplaces perform better simply, isn't it about time these became standard for all businesses? ■



Professor Anthony Grant

**“By taking an inside-out approach to wellbeing, employers would be rewarded with greater innovation and customer-facing outcomes, while reducing work-related stress at the same time.”**

before they introduce a wellbeing program into the workplace:

- 51 per cent of workers think unrealistic workloads negatively impact workplace wellbeing
- 38 of workers believe low team morale has the most negative impact on workplace wellbeing

released a world-first study looking at workplace wellbeing and how positive psychology in the workplace extends beyond HR.

The Towards a Positive Psychology of Buildings and Workplace Community: Delineating the Benefits of the Positive Built

# THE Art OF work

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NOOSA 2018

With only a handful of tickets left for the 2018 RCSA International Conference, this year's event will be a sell out.

We'd like to thank all our Members & Sponsors who have already booked their spot in Noosa this September. We can't wait to see you there.



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# How a chat in a London pub REVOLUTIONISED RECRUITMENT

Andrew Banks may be a household name on Channel 10's *The Shark Tank* but, in truth, he has been a pioneer of the sector and was instrumental in transforming a cottage industry into the professional service we know today.

It was in a London pub, somewhere near Waterloo Bridge on a chilly winter afternoon in the late 1980s, that three men gathered to have a chat and in doing so, arguably changed the face of recruitment forever.

Those three men were Andrew Banks, Michael Page and Robert Walters – all accomplished recruitment professionals who had started to establish their own successful recruitment empires.

"We were all really passionate about recruitment and wanted to meet to talk about how we could make a difference in the industry at the time," Banks said. "We wanted to change the perception of the industry to one that could do better for clients, candidates and those within the sector."

"There was a common desire to raise the standard of service in the industry so we each created frameworks around how to list jobs, conduct a decent interview, candidate assessment and training."

"It meant creating frameworks around our own selection processes so we could attract and find staff with the right emotional quotient (EQ) to work in this industry, who had the right personality and knowledge to be of value."

"We had people come from accounting, finance, education, whatever sector, as long as they

could sell and had the EQ we could transform them into recruiters, and good ones at that."

Banks will be a keynote speaker at this year's RCSA Conference to be held in Noosa on Queensland's Sunshine Coast, from September 5-7 with the theme *The Art of Work – Creative Ideas for a Brighter Future*.

Given the theme, Banks is a fitting keynote speaker having built two successful recruitment firms, one which held 17 per cent of the Australian and Asian markets during its heyday.

But it was a long and winding path to his true calling in recruitment. A road that travelled via medicine, acting and restaurant ownership, and across continents.

When Banks finished school in England, he had his heart set on a career in medicine before his unfortunate dislike for the sight of blood put paid to that aspiration.

So, with a knack for accents and a love of the theatre from school productions, he acquired his actor's Equity Card and earned £50 an hour doing a variety of accents.

Meeting up with some Aussies in London, Banks was convinced to try his fortunes in Australia and arrived here in 1973 and acquired a stake in a Sydney restaurant. When he sold it 16 months later, Banks realised his first real capital and his taste for business grew.



"I had to ask myself, what does a university drop out, actor, restaurant owner do with themselves?" Banks said. "So I moved back to Europe and was working in HR for a construction company doing recruitment for them."

"I'm not a frustrated Leonardo DiCaprio who went into recruitment. I was frustrated until I found my calling at 29 and went into recruitment. Before that I really didn't know what I wanted to do."

"And then recruitment became my obsession. It represented security, food in my stomach and was a job I loved."

Returning to Australia in 1980, Banks knew he was destined for a recruitment career and answered a job ad for a position with Geoff Slade. Banks reflected on his four-year stretch with Slade saying "we were a good team."

In 1985, Banks invited fellow recruiter – and his strongest competitor – Geoff Morgan out to lunch. The rest, as they say, is recruitment history.

"Morgan was the only competitor I had who I wasn't able to get clients from," Banks said. "I would approach Morgan's clients and they wouldn't even meet with me. So it made sense to go into business with him."

"Geoff had been in recruitment for 15 years and I only had four years' experience, but we were both ready and figured that two heads were better than one. The timing was just right."

And so Morgan and Banks was founded with just four staff and grew

to realise a 17 per cent market share – a feat which has never been repeated by another company.

In 1995, the company was listed and in 1999, when it merged with US listed Nasdaq company TMP/Monster, was realising revenue of \$900 million annually with a

people. We created a platform, system and frameworks to allow us to keep growing."

Banks said he was looking forward to attending another RCSA conference, having last attended a decade ago. He said his presentation will "remind us of the noble purpose

used to be that recruiters were paid for finding and selecting people."

"Now recruiters are finding that anyone can find a fish in the sea, with company's databases becoming virtual oceans of candidate details. But fish swim and this is where recruiters really need to understand what bait or lure to use to attract the best fish."

When asked what he would like his legacy for the recruitment sector to be, Banks didn't hesitate though given his long list of achievements, he easily could have.

He could have answered he wanted to be remembered as a pioneer of online job listings with website Jobhound, the first of its kind in Australia before Seek.

He could have pointed to his successful career as an author of four books on recruitment, or being an inaugural inductee to the Recruitment International (Australia) Industry Hall of Fame in 2014.

Or perhaps being voted, in 2015 with business partner Geoff Morgan, as the Most Influential People in Recruitment in 60 years or maybe even winning the Ernst & Young Australia Master Entrepreneur of the Year Award in 2004 for sustained success in business.

Instead his answer was stunningly simple: "If I could choose just one thing, it would be helping to professionalise the industry and raise the standards of delivery." ■

**Make sure you secure your tickets to hear Andrew Banks and other fellow presenters speak at this year's RCSA Conference in Noosa. For details visit [rca.com.au](http://rca.com.au).**

“And then recruitment became my obsession. It represented security, food in my stomach and a job I loved.”



Andrew Banks and Geoff Morgan

workforce of some 2,000.

"When we started, we had 3,000 competitors and 300 of those in Sydney alone," Banks said. "They were all small companies, with the biggest company having about 15

of the industry and why that noble purpose will support excellent service delivery and therefore, success".

"Anyone can have a great career in recruitment today," he said. "It

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## AUSTRALIAN 2018 WINNERS

The Australian RCSA Awards were held at Melbourne's Peninsula Docklands on June 14 with MC comedian Dave Hughes making sure the guests were kept laughing throughout.

### AND THE WINNER IS ... OUR INDUSTRY

There was a lot to learn and discover at this year's RCSA Awards events in Australia and New Zealand, not least of all is that bigger venues will be needed for next year.

Thank you to Volcanic for sponsoring the pre-dinner drinks and photo station in Australia and New Zealand.

Also thank you to RDBnow for sponsoring the entertainment in both Australia and New Zealand. And the winners were...



**RECRUITER OF THE YEAR** - Jane Lowney, Head of Engineering & Infrastructure Australia at Robert Walters: Jane has developed a reputation for being ahead of the game not least because of her willingness to chase projects and teams. In 2014, Jane heard about construction plans for the 1,700km Inland Rail Project, and she has helped to develop the Brisbane team for the project from just five to 150. Award sponsored by SEEK.



**RCSA OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION** - James Witcombe, Director and Recruiter at SMAART Recruitment

**MARKETING CAMPAIGN OF THE YEAR** - Apprenticeship Careers Australia (ACA) for its #DontWorkForJackson campaign: In a bid to highlight traineeships and apprenticeships, the campaign featured Australian NRL player Matt Moylan and comedian Jackson Doherty. The multi-media campaign, aimed at youth, was a viral sensation. Award sponsored by Indeed.



**EXCELLENCE IN SAFETY & RISK MANAGEMENT** - Adecco Group: In 2017 Adecco introduced its Business Management System, certified under the Adecco Group's banner for Quality and Safety, across its global operations. Its integrated Governance, Risk and Compliance program includes mandatory audits, ongoing review and continual improvement. Award sponsored by StaffSure.

**EXCELLENCE IN CLIENT SERVICE AWARD** - M&T Resources: For the second consecutive year, M&T Resources received the RCSA Excellence in Client Service Award. With a motto of "helping people achieve greater success", M&T Resources works hard to manifest a "culture of empowerment" with a focus on quality and building real connections. Award sponsored by IntelliHR.



**TECH INNOVATION OF THE YEAR** - HealthcareLink: HealthcareLink is a cloud-based recruitment platform specialising in sourcing staff for the Australian medical and healthcare sectors. The platform is accessible for businesses of all sizes, giving them the benefit of technology usually reserved for larger businesses. Award sponsored by Bullhorn.



**Life Membership**: Robert van Stokrom, CEO of DFP Recruitment and Nikki Beaumont, the CEO and Founder of Beaumont People.



**EXCELLENCE IN CANDIDATE CARE AWARD** - RECRUIT2retail Australia: RECRUIT2retail Australia has been using the PeoplePulse online survey software to ensure they are delivering the best candidate care possible. For candidates surveyed throughout 2017, RECRUIT2retail achieved an average satisfaction result of 91.28 per cent, against an industry benchmark of 80.52 per cent. Award sponsored by RCSA Insurance.



**RISING STAR 2018** - Kate Taylor, MRCSA, Managing Director of TaylorCare Recruitment: Kate founded specialist health and social care recruitment agency TaylorCare in 2013 and has consistently worked on developing her professional approach from taking part in the RCSA PEARL Mentoring Program to working with a business coach. Award sponsored by WorkPro.

**CSR EXCELLENCE AWARD** - Kate Taylor, MRCSA, Managing Director of TaylorCare Recruitment: When Kate Taylor founded TaylorCare in 2013 she decided five per cent of annual turnover would be donated to charities. This program has seen TaylorCare support four charities. TaylorCare regularly donates to R U OK?, Freedom Hub, Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia and the A21 anti-trafficking campaign. Kate said she hopes to lead by example when it comes CSR. Award sponsored by Prime Super.



**OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE** - Stellar Recruitment: Facing the challenge of sourcing staff to work with partner and mining giant BHP in the Hunter Valley, Stellar Recruitment launched its Hunter Valley Trainee Campaign. The campaign attracted 72 new staff who had no previous experience in the mining sector. Award sponsored by Scottish Pacific.



NEW ZEALAND 2018 WINNERS

The New Zealand RCSA Awards were held at the Hilton Auckland on July 5 with one of the best interviewers New Zealand has to offer performing the duties of MC, newsman Mike McRoberts.



**EXCELLENCE IN CLIENT SERVICE AWARD** - *Artemis Executive Recruitment*: It may be a small team of four, but Artemis Executive Recruitment "actively demonstrate the future of work... we all work flexibly in all regards including location, hours and attitude," Managing Director Kathryn Cross said. She explained that a combination of technology, willingness to learn from the past and striving for continuous improvement had seen them take home this award. Award sponsored by IntelliHR.



**RCSA OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION** - *Ian McPherson FRCSA and CEO at Enterprise Recruitment & People*.



**CSR EXCELLENCE AWARD** - *Enterprise Recruitment*: Enterprise Personnel's motto is "to improve life" so when they came across Foster Hope with the motto "Improve the lives of children in foster care" the synergies were immediately apparent. Foster Hope helps provide each child in foster care a backpack containing toiletries, a pair of pyjamas, some regular clothing, underwear, presents and a teddy bear to cuddle. Enterprise Recruitment donates money to Foster Hope, accepts donations for the organisation at its office and supports their recruitment process. Award sponsored by Abbott Insurance Brokers.



**OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE** - *Hays Specialist Recruitment*: In September 2017, Hays established its International Sourcing centre (ISC) in Auckland to offer on-boarding support for clients. The small team started with four in December 2017 is now a group of 16 offering a toolkit for on-boarding to "ensure best practice and consistency" through the process. Award sponsored by Scottish Pacific.



**RISING STAR 2018** - *Natasha Keith, Information Technology at Robert Walters, Wellington & Wairarapa*: Natasha started her career in recruitment as a teen. Natasha was promoted to Managing Consultant and qualified to attend the Q1 \$100k incentive lunch. She was Rookie of the Year in 2017 and was Robert Walters' second highest biller for 2018 securing \$1,015,417. Award sponsored by Trade Me Jobs.

**EXCELLENCE IN CANDIDATE CARE AWARD** - *Education Personnel*: In its March 2018 candidate engagement survey, 96 per cent of Education Personnel's candidates said they were satisfied with the service they received. Small wonder then that they received the Excellence in Candidate Care Award. Education Personnel specialises in finding teaching staff for school across New Zealand on a permanent and temporary basis. Award sponsored by Trade Me Jobs.



**EXCELLENCE IN SAFETY & RISK MANAGEMENT** - *One Staff*: In the last two years, OneStaff has seen 12 separately owned businesses merge into one company. Each of these companies had their own operating systems and processes so an immediate challenge was to bring this into one simplified, safety-based philosophy and procedure to be used across all 16 branches. "We recognised that if we really wanted people to show up, speak out, and innovate, we must create cultures where people feel safe," OneStaff explained. Award sponsored by StaffSure.



RCSA CEO Charles Cameron presented a Life Membership award to John Harland, the Director/Owner of ERG Workforce & Recruitment.



**RECRUITER OF THE YEAR** - *Tanya Guerin, Team Leader Construction and Engineering at Randstad*. Tanya started in recruitment in Ireland in 2004 and was named a Team Leader with Randstad in 2017. Tanya helps her team with their business and development plans to offer them clear pathways to promotion. Having already enjoyed entry into Randstad's Director's Club for High Billers, Tanya is well on track to duplicate the achievement this year. Award sponsored by SEEK.



**MARKETING CAMPAIGN OF THE YEAR** - *Robert Walters*: The company sponsored the British and Irish Lions rugby union team as part of a campaign to attract skilled New Zealanders working overseas to return to New Zealand for employment. Robert Walters demonstrated its international presence and reach by holding a global competition where an "ultimate fan" became an ambassador for the company. The Ultimate Fan campaign generated more than a million views on YouTube and contributed to record financial performance in 2017. Award sponsored by YUDU.



**GLITZ AND GLAMOUR**

This year's RCSA Awards were both sell-out events with more than 825 attendees celebrating the industry's best of the best. To view all the photos from both evenings visit [rcsa.com.au](http://rcsa.com.au) or follow RCSA's social pages.



# GENDER QUOTAS IN THE WORKPLACE:

## Do they work and should we have them?

As the voices grow louder demanding equality in the workplace - as women continue to be under-represented in senior positions and a significant wages gap still exists - we look at gender quotas, what they are, whether they work and if we should have them.

**G**ender quotas: it is a contentious topic that elicits some strong opinions. Yet with women continuing to be under-represented on company boards and paid less than men on average, there is clearly more that still needs to be done to redress gender inequality.

Steven Ansicar, Managing Director of Diversity Australia since 2015, said gender diversity in the workplace had been shown to improve the morale and often the bottom line of businesses.

"Quotas are an admission of guilt that your systems and processes haven't worked," Ansicar said, cutting straight to his point. "Ideally, we should focus on the right person for a role not the right gender, race, religion or sexuality."

"I think most Australian businesses are frightened by gender quotas and in a number of recent organisational reviews many people, both male and female, commented that after quotas were announced they lost staff. They felt it was a tokenistic approach that didn't fix the systemic issues, but masked them under a different heading."

"However, business and society benefit from diversity," he said.

"The ability to provide great service to customers is about making sure the employee base has as much in common with the end user. This brings a better understanding of the services

required and better meets the customer's needs."

Journalist Catherine Fox, the Financial Review's former Corporate Woman columnist and author of *Stop Fixing Women*, said quotas in the workplace were a necessary step to addressing gender imbalance.

But she stressed they are simply one step which needs to be consciously built upon.

"I think quotas can be a very effective and temporary tool which

For many Australians, the notion of equal gender representation in the workplace is non-threatening and something which should be an obvious goal. Despite this, the reality is that women are far from equally represented in the workforce and the higher you look up the corporate ladder, the less likely you are to see women.

Data from the Australian Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) shows that in 2017, men

number of women who are running ASX200 companies.

"If you look at the ASX200, I think women are running about 10 of those companies," Fox said. "It has been said before that there are more men named 'John' or 'David' running ASX 200 companies than there are women. I would argue it is not because of a lack of merit, skills or qualifications."

"We have very high levels of women being educated and women account for about 47 per cent of the workforce. This is not a supply issue; this is about demand."

Watermark Search International in its 2018 Board Diversity Index, shows that women hold just 26 per cent of Directorships with ASX200 companies and that the target of the Australian Institute of Company Directors of women having 30 per cent representation on Boards by 2018 would not be realised.

"Only about 22 per cent of equity partnerships in law firms are women and women are graduating in higher numbers than men from our law schools," Fox continued.

"There is no evidence to show that what we have been doing in the past will change anything. Why do we think that doing things the same way will create a different outcome?"

"We are spending millions on diversity training that doesn't seem to be delivering the change we need."

"It is clearly not always the case that people are chosen for jobs



**“Quotas are an admission of guilt that your systems and processes haven't worked”**

Steven Ansicar, Managing Director of Diversity Australia

is a stepping stone to change," she said. "Quotas change the complexion of a cohort and are designed to eventually become redundant. We have tried a lot of ways to improve gender equality in the workplace including targets. It's not that much of a stretch to formalise or legislate for that."

working full-time were still paid an average 22.4 per cent higher than their female peers and this is an improvement of less than one per cent on 2016.

Fox said if there was a need to support the argument for advocating women's rise through the workplace, you need look no further than the



based on merit alone; that argument just fails the logic test," she added. "We all have our own bias which operates all the time in the business world. We need to stop using the word 'merit' which is very subjective and talk instead about skills, qualifications and experience."

Ansicar, who favours targets over quotas referring to the old adage you can't manage what you don't measure, said they should be seen as encouraging conversation around the topic but are not always a practical solution.

"There is no one-shoe-fits-all approach to gender equality, with every industry needing to approach gender diversity based on its workplace culture and strategic needs," he said.

"Nursing and teaching are good examples where a gender quota would be difficult because there is a

disproportionate number of women in those roles."

Dr Cate Borness, an organisational psychologist who consults to large corporations and government on workforce design issues, agreed saying that while gender quotas increase awareness of the need for equal representation in the workplace, they can also ignore the reality faced by some sectors and companies.

"Quotas feel like they have been enforced rather than consulted upon," Dr Borness said.

"Organisations have been mandated to meet certain numbers without a true understanding of the reality of the industry, profession or occupation. The transport and logistics industries are male dominated because women are not attracted to this kind of work in the same numbers."

### FACT BOX

The 2018 Board Diversity Index produced by Watermark Search International shows women continue to be under-represented at the Board level across ASX200 companies, including 11 of those which have no female representation at a Board level.

The Index also revealed women hold:

- 30% of Directorships with ASX50 companies
- 29% of Directorships with ASX100 companies
- 26% of Directorships with ASX200 companies
- 24% of Directorships with ASX300 companies

***"As we have noted for the past two years, the ASX200, let alone the ASX300, are not going to meet the target set by the Australian Institute of Company Directors in 2015 to have a 30 per cent representation of women on Boards by the end of 2018,"*** Watermark said in its report.

“Each industry, profession and occupation needs a tailored approach to developing a realistic target for employment gender quotas. Some organisations are more advanced, but this may be because they offer a broad range of roles that are more suited to younger vs older workers, males vs females, one ethnicity over another.

“Or they use merit-based, transparent selection, development and promotion processes and provide a work environment that allows people to feel engaged, supported and valued. Other organisations who are less sophisticated in their human resources and talent management processes tend to lag behind.”

Dr Borness said she is aware of “many large private organisations” that have no policy, strategy or targets to achieve gender equity because “the business is highly successful so why change the mix?”

“We are a diverse nation that needs to keep as many of its people employed as it can for a sustainable economic future. There is ample research about the benefits that diversity brings to business but I believe that that diversity mix should reflect the people that the organisation exists to serve.”

Theaanna Kiaos, the Founder of Australia’s Diversity First, said some of the onus on redressing gender inequality falls to recruiters who, research shows, may hesitate to put women forward for a role they perceive to be in male-dominated industries such as construction.

“We need to look beyond the

superficial characteristics of candidates and look at the untapped potential instead of putting people in pigeon-holes all the time,” Kiaos explained. “A diverse workforce cultivates diversity of thought, whereby new ideas can be explored ultimately challenging the status quo which is exactly what we need in a 21st Century workplace culture that is lacking in innovation.”

While the aim, as Fox sees it, is to “stop marginalising women from



**“We are a diverse nation that needs to keep as many of its people employed as it can for a sustainable economic future.”**

Dr Cate Borness, organisational psychologist.

power”, she believes this also means “we need to stop trying to fix women and instead fix the structures and thought processes in place.”

For Dr Borness, the road to gender equality starts with inclusive practices in the workplace.

“For example, we need to design talent management systems and processes that do not penalise primary carers, such as offering a job to someone with no primary caring responsibilities over someone

encouraged to pursue STEM.”

“And we also need to work with human resources teams to implement processes that encourage inclusiveness and equal opportunity for employees to reach their full potential, while educating all staff about unconscious biases, tolerance and valuing our differences rather than fearing them.”

Or as Fox put it: “If businesses really want to benefit from being disruptive, treat women equally.” ■

equally qualified but with primary caring responsibilities,” Borness said.

“Or catering to part-time workers by structuring promotional systems that allow them to participate equally in leadership development programs. We really need to look at the broader social lever of access to quality education. All jobs require some sort of training. For example if we are to enhance the number of women in engineering or IT, it starts at school where they need to be

Australia’s Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) reports that in 2017, a gender pay gap of 22.4 per cent still existed in favour of men for full-time employees in Australia. This represented a closing of the pay gap by just 0.7 per cent on the previous year. Notably, the gender gap increased in 2017 for labourers (up by 3.9 per cent year-on-year) and sales (up 0.4 per cent y-o-y). Roles that recorded the most improvement in redressing the gender pay gap in 2017 were key management personnel (down 1.7 per cent y-o-y), community and personal service (down 1.8 per cent) and machinery operators and drivers (down 1.2 per cent). The WGEA also shows an increase in the number of organisations that had a recruitment gender equality strategy in place in 2017, up by 6.2 per cent y-o-y, while employers who had a gender equality strategy in place (not specifically recruitment) increased by 7.6 per cent on-year in 2017. The sectors with the largest gender pay gap favouring men, according to the WGEA, are financial and insurance services (pay gap of 31.9 per cent), real estate services (31.4 per cent), construction (27.4 per cent) and science and technology (25.4 per cent).

# THE DIARY

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July 20	Sydney
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September 14	Sydney
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October 5	Melbourne
October 5	Brisbane
October 19	Sydney



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AUGUST 28 – Cultural Diversity & Anti-racism Awareness

AUGUST 31 – Employee Engagement & its Impact on your Bottom Line

SEPTEMBER 4 – Mastering Labour Hire & Contracting Safety

SEPTEMBER 7 – Navigating Challenging Conversations

SEPTEMBER 12 – How to Create an Engagement Strategy

SEPTEMBER 14 – Negotiation Skills & Advanced Questioning for Consultants

SEPTEMBER 19 – How to Create a Great Story & Connect with your Clients

SEPTEMBER 20 – How to Find Clients & Vacancies for your Recruitment Agency

SEPTEMBER 25 – Unpacking the Gender Pay Gap & How to Avoid It

SEPTEMBER 26 – Million Dollar Words: The Language of Sales for Recruiters

SEPTEMBER 28 – Dispelling the Myths of Performance Management

OCTOBER 2 – Setting Up & Building a Recruitment Business

OCTOBER 17 – Boolean String Basics

OCTOBER 26 – Annual Business Plans that Achieve your Goals

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# NEXT GEN INCENTIVES

## The currency of flex

The push for flexible working conditions is set to grow with a candidate-driven market inspiring employers to change their incentives to attract top talent. We look at recent trials and what employers and employees think.

Engaged employees, less sick leave, higher productivity and a happier workforce are all compelling arguments for the introduction of flexible working conditions within the workplace, and yet it seems many employers continue to resist this push.

The topic received a lot of media attention earlier this year with an eight-week trial of a four-day working week at New Zealand trust company Perpetual Guardian.

All full-time employees out of a workforce of 245, including senior managers, were encouraged to take

part in the four-day-week trial – or iterations thereof – during the period, without a pay cut.

Perpetual Guardian's Head of People & Capability Christine Brotherton explained how company founder Andrew Barnes initiated the trial after reading research that indicated productivity in the workforce can be as low as one-and-a-half hours each day.

"While these findings are not new, they are still shocking, and Andrew wanted to explore the reasons why productivity can be so limited," Brotherton told *The Brief*.

"He started wondering if we can

give staff a more balanced life, without changing client experience or reducing profitability. Essentially, he's giving us the opportunity to think differently about productivity by trying not to associate it with hours worked."

Brotherton explained that the four-day trial – held between March 5 and April 27 – was initially slated as a six-week trial but the company was keen to collect more data so it could be assessed to determine whether the trial was a commercial success.

She said the trial, for some, meant working five shorter work days, for others it was four days each week and others still would organise days off around their work schedules. For those choosing the

four day week, teams were left to work out the logistics, with the only parameters being client service remained high and business hours were unchanged.

"As we made it a staff-led trial, all staff were able to make their own decisions about how to make it work for them," Brotherton said. "Some people and teams have really embraced and flourished with the four-day week, while other teams have decided that coming in later and leaving earlier (to beat traffic) were their preferred flexibility option."

"We wanted staff to feel empowered to design their four-day working week themselves around what works best for them and their teams' workflows."

Brotherton said there had been "real enthusiasm" to make the trial work.

"Since the trial started, we have noticed that people seem more energised and have seen more collaboration across teams," she explained. "We've seen more focus while at work and a real sense of pride in trying something innovative and challenging. Families have been very supportive."

"Many of our management staff have also seen a lot of value come from the trial, in getting to know their team better and identify how individuals and teams work better."

The company is now reviewing and analysing the productivity measures that were set at the start of

the trial. Professor Jarrod Haar (AUT), Dr Helen Delaney and Professor James Sun (Auckland University Business School) are conducting their research on the impact of the trial on employee engagement and wellbeing.

The results of this analysis will determine if there is a business case for the introduction of flexible working arrangements for Perpetual Guardian's staff on an ongoing basis. The results were unavailable at the time of publication.

Brotherton, who works flexibly on a part-time basis, said early indicators were that the trial was proving successful in terms of the goodwill and reciprocity created with staff.

"Some early signs that we observed during the trial have been positive, and that a number of our

teams have been able to keep productivity at the same level (or increased) with the trial," she said.

"We've seen great results from teams who have been questioning and challenging existing work practices and trialling new ways of working. We think there will be lots of opportunity for this across our entire business after the trial finishes. Though, we will need to wait until we have analysed the productivity measures, and the researchers can provide the impact of the trial on engagement to really understand how it has worked."

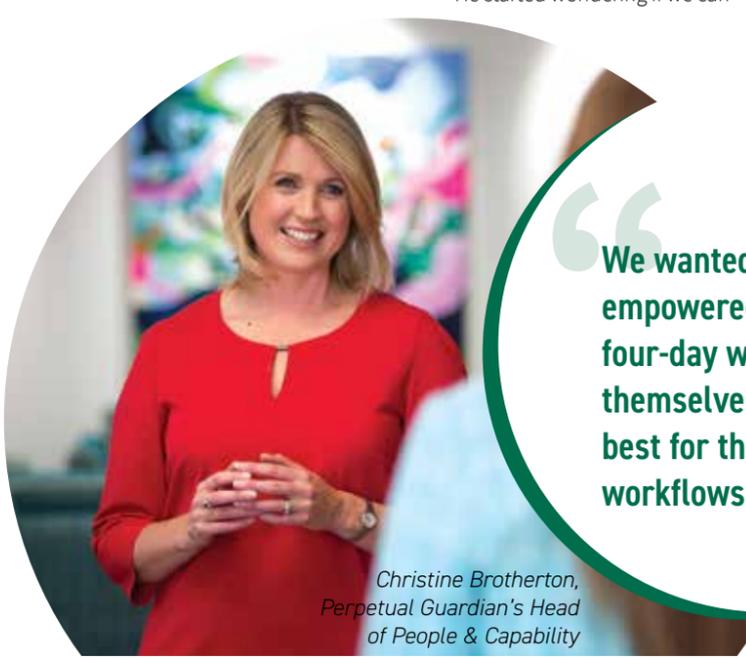
Brotherton said they were surprised at the level of inquiries they received about the trial from across New Zealand and globally.

"It just shows that we are all grappling with how we work and are looking for some form of flexibility

# 5

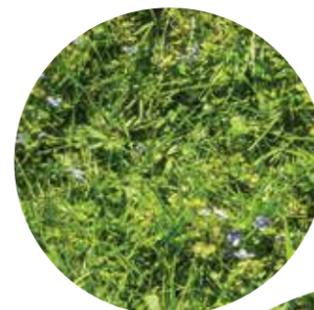
## BENEFITS OF FLEXIBLE WORKING ARRANGEMENTS

1. Productivity is often reported to be higher
2. Staff engagement and morale are demonstrably higher
3. Help to attract and retain staff
4. Reduce staff turnover
5. Healthier, happier staff



Christine Brotherton, Perpetual Guardian's Head of People & Capability

"We wanted staff to feel empowered to design their four-day working week themselves around what works best for them and their teams' workflows."





Andrew Sullivan,  
SULLIVAN  
Consulting

**“We also recognise that people’s needs and desires are very different. Everyone seems to have busier lifestyles and employers need to adapt to that.”**

from the standard 9-5pm and daily commute,” she said.

“We are doing this to generate an empowered, engaged and staff-led discussion with a focus on respective team and individual productivity.

“We want to see if increased working flexibility and the opportunity to spend more quality time with family and pursuing personal interests is valued such that it not only increases overall staff engagement, but specifically also results in increased productivity.”

While there are still many uncertainties about how flexible working arrangements could and should be introduced, one US company conducted its own trial and demonstrated that flexible working arrangements only work for staff when they, themselves, are in fact flexible.

The company trialled a four-day working week where one-third of its staff were required to work a compressed working week of four, 10 hour days. Confusingly, the staff did not have an option to refuse these new “flexible working conditions” and unsurprisingly, 35 per cent of those taking part in the trial reported low satisfaction levels.

RCSA board member Andrew Sullivan has been trialling flexible

working arrangements for staff at his Adelaide-based firm SULLIVAN Consulting.

“Flexible working arrangements were introduced very early on for us,” Sullivan explained. “Part of that is about wanting a better, healthier work/life balance for myself and recognising that my staff want and deserve that as well.

“I have a young family so I leave the office at 4.30pm to pick up the kids and spend plenty of time with them. I didn’t want to miss out on time with my family while they are still so young.”

Sullivan explained that one staff member chooses which days she works on a weekly basis to fit in with her family’s schedule and she is responsible for managing her hours and workload.

Another staff member opted for a four-day week while there are also staff who work from home.

“People need to recognise the workforce has changed in the past 10 to 15 years,” he said. “We have seen our parents’ generation working Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 5.30pm, with no flexibility at all.

“We also recognise that people’s

needs and desires are very different. Everyone seems to have busier lifestyles and employers need to adapt to that.”

Sullivan said there is a discernible shift among candidates who have been clear they are happy to sacrifice a wage increase and in some cases, even promotions, if it means they can enjoy the benefits of flexible working hours.

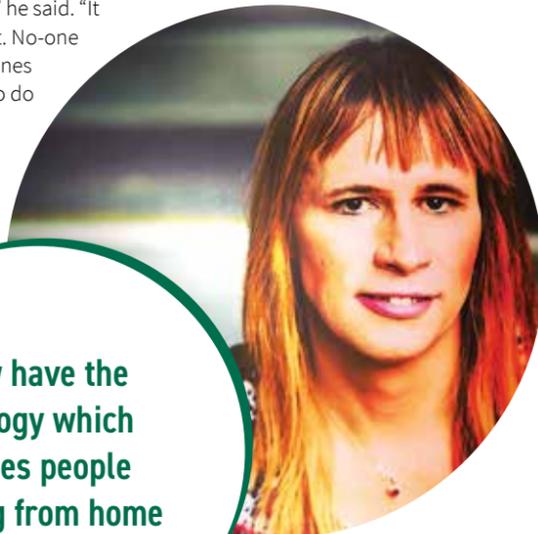
He cited one candidate he worked with recently who was prepared to sacrifice \$20,000 of his pay in a new position if he was given flexible working hours.

“We have found the key to making flexible working arrangements actually work is to make sure there is open communication between the staff about it at all times,” he said. “It comes down to trust. No-one flaunts it or undermines what we are trying to do

“We now have the technology which facilitates people working from home or even overseas. And the introduction of something as simple as optional staggered starting and finishing times for staff often proves very popular, as it allows them to negotiate peak hour traffic by coming in earlier or later.

“When it’s done right, flexible conditions create happier working environments, employees are more productive and it’s more likely the case that when the boss needs someone to stay back to finish a project, staff will be happy to oblige because their welfare has been considered by their employer.”

Griffiths, who enjoys flexible working conditions at her job with



Flexible Working Day’s  
Ambassador Melissa Griffiths

**“We now have the technology which facilitates people working from home or even overseas.”**

and it works really well.”

Flexible Working Day’s Ambassador Melissa Griffiths said flexible working arrangements can mean different things to different people.

“Flexible working arrangements is not a generic term that means just one thing,” she said. “For some people, flexible work may mean a four-day week, for others it’s flexible hours five days a week, others still want additional leave for reduced pay or parental leave.

the Australian Tax Office, said workplaces and individuals who promoted flexible working hours were rewarded for their contribution to tackling “flexism”.

“If you are a minority, you may be too scared to ask for time off for medical appointments, or a single parent may be reluctant to ask for time off to attend a school sporting event,” she explained.

“Flexible working conditions address this and allow people to have the flexibility they need to live a full and productive life while contributing to the economy.” ■

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# REFLECTIONS ON THE RECRUITMENT INDUSTRY

In each edition, we profile pioneers of the recruitment industry and look at how the sector has changed - for the good and bad. In the first of the series, we speak to Joan Page (nee May) who shares her reflections of recruitment in the 1960s and '70s and the battles she took on.



Joan Page in the early 1980s when she was President of the Institute of Personnel Consultants - "From memory the three phones were Premier Staff, Architectural Personnel and the third for outgoing calls."

“It was exactly the kind of job I wanted because no two days were the same, no two hours were the same and there was so much variety in what we did and I really liked meeting a lot of different people.”

If there was any doubt about how much society and the recruitment sector have changed in the past 50 years, you need only look at what was very much an informal and unspoken hiring practice through the 1960s and into the '70s - hiring in your own image.

Joan Page - known to many in recruitment as Joan May - said the practice of employers showing overt bias towards people who went to the same university as they did, who were from the same ethnic and socio-economic background, right down to similar haircuts, was pretty standard back then.

"Hiring people who looked like you, who were like you, was very common in the 1960s and 1970s," she said. "So if you looked like the

recruiter you had a good chance of getting the job.

"My agency was Premier and I remember one of my very first conferences in Melbourne where Geoff Slade pointed to some of my staff and said 'you can always pick a Premier girl' because they all looked like me. They all had the same look, same ethnic background and probably the same education.

"It's just how business was done. You could almost pick who someone's employees were simply by looking at the reflection they were of their boss."

When Page started in the recruitment sector in Australia in 1966, society was different, the sector was different and the ways business was done were different.

Page, who was the founding President of the Institute of Personnel Consultants from 1978 to 1981 and founded and managed Premier Staff Selection in Sydney for almost 30 years from 1968, said fundamental to the job then, as now, was the relationship developed between the consultant and the client.

These were the days before faxes, and even before electric typewriters were common. Computer technology was not even dreamt of outside of organisations such as NASA.

"I started in recruitment when I returned to Australia after travelling in the UK and having been interviewed by some recruitment firms while I was over there doing

temp work," Page who has now retired to Queensland's Sunshine Coast explained.

"It was exactly the kind of job I wanted because no two days were the same; no two hours were the same and there was so much variety in what we did and I really liked meeting a lot of different people."

So different were operational strategies back in the '60s, '70s and '80s, that Joan tells the story of a couple of architects who were clients strolling into her office one day wanting a site architect.

"They asked me if I had anyone in mind and when I said I did, the client said he was a friend of his current employer and would I mind if he handled it himself and would phone the candidate's boss directly

and ask to borrow him for a while. They still paid my fee, because that's how business was done then," she said.

Page, who is clearly one to pick

her battles, also went in to bat for herself when the government in the early 1980s announced an amnesty on companies that hadn't been paying payroll tax for subcontractors.

"I was one of the few who was paying the payroll tax and I felt discriminated against because I had been doing the right thing and paying my taxes only for other companies to be given a break," she said. "It took a while but I ended up getting all the payroll tax I had paid for subcontractors refunded. I remember the amount was \$69,000

and there was such a thrill getting that money back because I knew I had been in the right."

Page said while technology had been a major disruptor for the industry, she said the biggest change she experienced in the industry was the introduction of the Anti-Discrimination Act in 1977.

"There was certainly discrimination both before and after the Act was introduced," she said. "I had one client who would not employ women if they were of menopausal age."

Since leaving the recruitment

sector in 1990, Page and her husband have owned four art galleries and she now describes herself as being "happily retired". She says working with artists is very much akin to working with temp staff; instead of finding them jobs, you are selling their work.

"It is necessary to treat both with respect and pay them on time," she said.

And perhaps the biggest difference between her recruitment career and gallery career, is that gallery owners certainly don't look to hire artists in their own image! ■



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# ARE WE DOING ENOUGH

## to help those with conditions such as autism and OCD to find work?

The ABC's *Employable Me* series helped raise awareness about the discrimination faced by those with conditions such as autism and OCD who are looking for work. The show was a hit and challenged misconceptions around those living with neuro-diverse conditions.

In April, ABC Television ran a thought-provoking series that challenged Australia's perception of hiring people living with neuro-diverse conditions. The result of the show, *Employable Me*, was ground-breaking and posed a number of questions for those working in recruitment.

Producer Jenni Wilks told *The Brief* the series followed a number of Australians with neuro-diverse conditions such as autism, Tourette Syndrome and Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD).

The series utilised the skills of a number of experts to help identify the hidden talents these jobseekers have to match them with jobs where those skills are needed.

This included harnessing the attention to detail a jobseeker with Obsessive Compulsive Disorder might have, or the deep well of

knowledge jobseekers with autism can develop.

"The premise of the series was to challenge misconceptions and myths about people who are neuro-diverse and the enormous contribution they can make to the workplace," Wilks explained.

"We worked closely with two experts; an academic researcher from the University of Sydney and a psychologist with unique expertise working with people with autism.

"They did a number of psychometric tests and assessments with the participants which focused on identifying their often hidden skills and talents. One participant's test revealed he is in the top two per cent of the population for memory.

"Not only was this a huge boost to the participant's self-esteem, it also indicated very clearly to the audience the often untapped

potential of someone with a neuro-diverse mind."

*Employable Me* was inspired by a BBC docu-series and Wilks explained the same team of producers at Northern Pictures who made the acclaimed *Changing Minds Series 1 and 2* *Demystifying Mental Illness* were called in to help.

Wilks said "casting" for the series was done to ensure the wide spectrum of autism and other neuro-diverse conditions were represented and included both male and female participants, and jobseekers of different age groups.

The director and producers also worked closely with autism support organisations, experts, disability employment organisations and community and social groups.

*Employable Me* series director Cian O'Clery explained that when the search for jobseekers with neuro-

diverse conditions began, they found they were hearing the same story time and again during the 12 months they filmed the series.

"We were looking for people with neuro-diverse conditions who wanted a job but were struggling to find one and the people we spoke to really wanted to work, but weren't being given a chance," O'Clery said.

"They felt that their disability was something employers couldn't see beyond, and they were being rejected over and over again."

O'Clery said that when he himself had been out of work, he experienced feelings of being useless, lost and depressed so he immediately empathised with those "not being given a chance".

"I wondered what it must be like for our participants to deal with not only the lack of a sense of purpose, but that constant rejection," he continued.



Jobseekers who appeared in the *Employable Me* series.



**"The premise of the whole series was to challenge misconceptions and myths about people who are neuro-diverse and the enormous contribution they can make to the workplace."**

Producer, Jenni Wilks

**"It was a brave thing to do, and hopefully by being a part of this series they will help raise awareness and understanding."**



Director, Cian O'Clery

"As we got to know people more we realised that for many of them they have had to deal with rejection most of their lives. Today they are being rejected when trying to get into the workforce, but as children they were rejected by their peers, unable to socialise 'normally'; they were bullied, teased, shamed for being 'different'.

"Most of our participants had very few friends growing up, some had none at all. The impact that can have on people is profound.

"Yet here they are, allowing their struggles to find employment to be filmed and broadcast nationally. It was a brave thing to do, and hopefully by being a part of this series they will help raise awareness and understanding.

"In simple terms, I hope this series gives our subjects a voice and allows the audience to get to know them as people, not as labels.

"Hopefully employers out there will start to realise the value of diversity in the workplace, and see that beyond certain differences there can be great talents and gifts. But more importantly, I hope for a broader understanding and

sensation, reaching above average engagement on Facebook, #EmployableMeAU trending number three on Twitter during the broadcast, and there were 800 #EmployableMeAU tweets from 416 unique contributors reaching 4.4 million people.

"We believed it was an important message; we all deserve a role in society," Wilks continued. "That's what the series was about - striving to belong and play your part. To encourage people and specifically employers to look beyond first impressions to reveal there's always more than meets the eye and hopefully encourage people to give someone a chance.

"The response to the series indicates a groundswell of interest and awareness. We also hope the series has provided encouragement to people to feel more confident in applying for positions." ■

acceptance of people who are 'different' to the norm."

Judging by the very positive responses on social media, O'Clery, Wilks and the team have certainly started an important conversation.

The series proved to be quite the

# REALITY BITES: Fragmentation, diversity and identity

Recruitment professionals today face a world where technology has shifted, allowing for the creation of new identity-based virtual villages which make self-appointed knowledge bloggers, posters on LinkedIn or followers on Instagram the 21st Century's town criers, parish newsletters and truth tellers.

What that means for the recruitment professional today is that the successful selection and placement of staff, particularly millennials, has to be more personalised and individual than ever before.

The reputations of consultants and employers can now be made, or broken, online with a rapidity never before possible. That said, all that's changed is the reality of an organisation's culture and behaviour is more visible and less easy to spin than before.

That means that more than ever before, to attract and retain quality staff, organisations need to 'walk the walk' before they try to 'talk the talk'.

## COMMUNICATION CHANGES THROUGH THE CENTURIES

In terms of communication, the 21st century is shaping up to have more in common with the 19th than the 20th. The confluence of two fundamental cultural forces is creating a new paradigm in Australia and much of the rest of the western world. The decay of old tribes and allegiances and a loss of faith in 'The Establishment' is butting up against the instant, personal access to anybody and anything delivered by the internet and the smart phone.

“It has become all too easy to fall into a myriad of self-reinforcing, echo chambers...”

The result of these changes is a more fragmented and volatile world where information is self-curated and shared with like-minded people at the swipe of a finger.

During the 1800s, people largely gathered their news from other people in their communities by word-of-mouth. Personal recommendations by trusted individuals were the gold standard of communications.

The major institutions of State and commerce barely impinged upon their daily lives and when they did, they were regarded with a healthy scepticism which required local validation before acceptance. Personalised, artisanal and craft products and services were the day-to-day realities of life.

The 1900s were characterised by the conversion of the personal to the mass: mass production, mass media, mass marketing and mass social movements. Governments, businesses and NGOs all exploited the tools of mass communication and brands became the global currency of reputation management.

David Chalke,  
Principal at The Strategy  
Planning Group



This process of industrialised managerialism dehumanised the individual and people became homogenised into consumers, human resources or target audiences. Their lives were transmogrified into 'lifestyles' and their individuality suppressed by force-fitting them into 'Myers-Briggs type indicators' or the 30 subcategories of the IPIP-NEO Personality Test.

Fast forward to the 2000s and we see this pattern reversing. The centralised institutions upon which the foundations of the 20th Century were laid have started to crumble. Politics, politicians, traditional parties and governments are on the nose.

An increasingly sensationalist media, fed by a growing legion of whistle-blowers, has exposed the hypocrisies and misfeasance of the political establishment.

Around the developed world, political outsiders and neophytes are upending the conventional wisdom on a wave of popular disaffection. Trump, Corbyn or Sanders are just different faces of the same generalised public disquiet with the 'Old Order'.

The NGOs, including the religious-based ones, once beyond reproach for their apparent selfless dedication, are showing their flaws. From wasteful self-indulgence to the predatory abuse of the very people they claim to serve and protect, scandal after scandal has engulfed the sector all around the globe.

David Chalke will be a speaker at the RCSA Conference in Noosa. He can also be contacted on [David.Chalke@tspg.com.au](mailto:David.Chalke@tspg.com.au).

And the peak creations of the globalised capitalist model, multinational corporations and the financial institutions that supported them, have shown that they do not deserve the trust that they had asked the public to place in them.

Even the media that were once the ultimate arbiters of fact and were sufficiently powerful to be labelled 'The Fourth Estate' have lost credibility as the old adage "you can't believe everything you read in the papers" seems to be increasingly true. 'Fake news' and 'alternative facts' have always been with us, with the 20th century providing only very limited alternatives to the official or institutional sources of information.

This has all changed with the ubiquity of the internet and the smart phone.

Today, individuals are liberated by instant access to their own sources of news, information and opinion. They can, and do, choose who they rely on, who needs to be taken with a pinch of salt and who should be ignored completely.

However, this process of apparent self-selection is subverted by the algorithms behind the newsfeeds, which dish up items that are most likely to engage the individual based on their prior searches. Consequently, it has become all too easy to fall into a myriad of self-reinforcing, echo chambers populated with "people like me". Have you embraced these changes and adopted appropriately or do you still have work to do?

# INFORMATION YOU CAN BANK ON: How to run a successful recruitment agency

Ross Clennett, FRCSA



How many recruiters in Australia have written a book about recruitment? It's a very, very small number. As far as I can tell it's less than the fingers on two hands.

How many recruiters in Australia and New Zealand have built a recruitment firm from nothing into a highly profitable \$1 billion to \$2 billion-plus turnover public company in less than 15 years, employing more than 2,000 people?

The answer is: two people. Fortunately they have written a book about their experience, *Flourish & Prosper: All We Learned From Our Time At Morgan & Banks - And So Much More* by Geoff Morgan and Andrew Banks, published in 2004.

This is an astonishing book for the simple reason that the authors are very, very specific in detailing the way that they went about creating and building their original recruitment business, Morgan & Banks, by using a specific formula.

"The fact is that success actually does have a formula and a secret ingredient and we were certainly the first to have it in our industry, and probably ahead of many service industries in Australia," they say.

Although the book has been out of print for a number of years (it can be found on Kindle) it's still surprising that a small minority of owners and managers in recruitment have read it as it's a goldmine of information that is still relevant, despite being written 15 years ago.

Highlighting a handful of the, many, quotable gold nuggets that you will find throughout the book from just one chapter (Chapter 5: Harnessing the Power of your People) you find the following:

“The fact is that success actually does have a formula and a secret ingredient and we were certainly the first to have it in our industry, and probably ahead of many service industries in Australia...”

**Training:** 'We were actively involved in the comprehensive training of new recruits, who were given significant support and direction.'

**Specialisation:** 'We strongly believed that specialisation in, and concentration on, particular areas of commerce and industry led to more in-depth and thorough knowledge on behalf of the consultant, which in turn achieved a better result for the client.'

**Optimists:** 'Frankly, we looked for happy, bright people who had good indicators and who were optimistic. We didn't let any chronically negative people near our organisation, because negative thinking is contagious. Be careful who you let near your mind!'

**High Performance Culture:** 'We've made some mistakes but we've rarely had to fire people, because the high-performance culture of the company automatically weeded out those who didn't fit.'

**Systems:** 'Once you were in the company, you very quickly learnt about the management structure, the branding position, the way to do an interview, the way to deal with clients and the reward system on delivery. All these systems allowed

our recruits to feel secure. From the moment they arrived there was a precision, thoroughness and detail, which meant that it was almost like they got onto a moving walkway.'

**Employee - Job Match:** 'We knew exactly what we wanted when we were hiring every type of employee: from recruiters for permanent positions; to salespeople selling temporary services; to researchers who mined the database for candidates. Although we carefully matched the person to the job, we found there needed to be 'stretch' in everybody's role, to provide challenges and raise expectations.'

My summary of these nuggets of gold:

1. Hire people for specific roles, ensure you understand the competencies and motivation required for success in each role and

have a 'stretch' component in every role.

2. Only hire optimistic people.  
3. Company owners and leaders should always lead the training of new recruits.

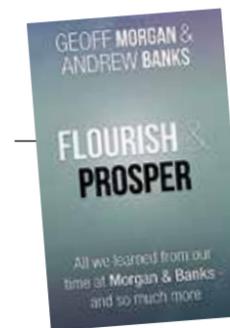
4. Don't leave the success of a new recruit to chance. Have systems and processes to support the initial training.

5. A high-performance culture is self-sustaining.'

And I'll leave you with one of my favourite quotes from the book. It comes from Geoff Morgan: 'We make the dust, we don't eat it.'

It perfectly encapsulates the focus of a company intent on raising the bar on their own standards, rather than worrying about the competitors and other things outside of your control.

Ross Clennett is a recruitment coach and trainer based in Melbourne. For more information about Ross visit [rossclennett.com](http://rossclennett.com).



Special thanks to Morgan & Banks Investment Pty Ltd for permission to reproduce the text quoted above from *Flourish & Prosper: All We Learned From Our Time At Morgan & Banks - And So Much More* (Penguin Books, 2004).



## – paving the way or playing catch up?

If you live in New Zealand you know there are two things for certain: The first, good candidates are worth their weight in gold. The second, CBD traffic is awful.

Why is that relevant? Because we're in the 21st century and things are changing quickly. Not only the markets in which we live and work in, but also the way in which they impact us.

Back in the good old days, it was expected that staff, for the most part, worked 8:30am-5pm, 40 hours a week, for roughly 30 years. Your life was your job, and in many ways, so was your identity.

Attribute it to whatever you want – technology, a younger generation challenging the status quo, maybe even a crusade – but change is coming and it's not AI, machine learning, or casual Fridays.

This change is flexible work options and it's knocking on your front door.

Across New Zealand, agencies and employers are struggling to find candidates and to attract talent. Trust me, I should know. It's my job to help clients try to attract that

talent, and in this market, well, let's just say it's bloody hard.

I recently read a story in Shortlist about Kingfisher Recruitment, addressing how to attract talent. It seems by adopting a range of snazzy changes - including flexible work options and 'dress appropriately for the day' initiative - they have opened a wider talent pool, as well as massively increased their productivity.

I decided to do some research. I reached out to my network and interviewed 20 people, asking two questions:

- If flexible working options were standard across New Zealand, would you change your hours?
  - Would work flexibility hinder your ability to do your job?
- Regardless of their role, or what area of the industry they worked in, the answers were consistent.
- Yes, they would ideally change their hours.
  - No, it would not affect their ability to do their job.

When I pressed them on why, the answers were vastly differently. Some had young families, others

liked the idea of occasionally working from home, many just wanted to avoid peak hour commuting.

I was impressed at the passion though; passion that collaboration was achievable, deliverables wouldn't suffer, and customer care would still be a top priority if flexible working arrangements were available.

It was widely appreciated that flexible work options couldn't be rolled out overnight and that it wouldn't be possible 100 per cent of the time.

Rotating rosters, communication and common sense were listed as some of the best tools available to decide when flexibility was appropriate, along with careful planning, input/feedback from staff, and perhaps adoption of new technologies.

Another noteworthy find was no one wanted to completely leave the office environment, they were just motivated to improve their – and their teammates' – quality of life and lifestyle options. It was refreshing to hear that people wanted to achieve

work goals, but also help each other achieve greater work-life balance.

My impression so far? Flexible work arrangements seem to increase staff morale, make employees more vocal advocates for the organisation and promote happiness.

It brought to mind a story I read in Focus on securing the long-term commitment of your team. The gist of it was, long-term staff look for specific things, but prominent among them was "a fair exchange" and "an environment for success".

Most of us spend more time at work than we do with family or friends, so why shouldn't it be a fair exchange in terms of effort in, revenue generated, and happiness and satisfaction achieved?

Why shouldn't the environment for success include flexible working?



Kyla England,  
Account  
Manager at  
Trade Me Jobs

# Why we need to help SMEs see value in recruitment

There are many small- to medium-sized businesses, that take on the task of recruiting in-house because they believe they are too small to engage a professional recruitment agency and that they will save money by doing it themselves.

At the end of June 2017, there were 2,238,299 actively trading businesses in Australia with the vast majority (98 per cent) of them recording an annual turnover of less than \$2 million, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Small budgets mean many have to find cost-savings at every possible turn. And for many small to medium businesses, an obvious place to start is by keeping recruiting in-house.

However, to call this a false economy in many cases would be a gross understatement.

Recruitment fees based on a percentage of gross remuneration can range anywhere from \$5,000 to \$15,000 and in some cases, can actually exceed this.

A chunk of revenue like that from a SME can be a body-blow, particularly if cash flow is scarce and cumbersome. It also seems completely counter-intuitive for many small- and medium-sized businesses to borrow money to fund recruiting; unless they understand its true value.

### WHY INVEST IN PROFESSIONAL RECRUITERS?

The job of recruiters is pretty simple: place a couple of job ads, run CVs through an algorithm, interview a few people and find a good fit for the client, right?

It's easy to understand why this is the perception of what recruiters do, however the fact is when done well, the job is much more complex than that. Good recruiters take the time to get to know their clients and



their business. They learn not just what technical and formal skills and qualifications a candidate has, but are also able to pick up on small cues that inform a recruiter of how well a candidate would fit with a client's company.

Skilled recruiters can see past what is on the CV and will often give consideration to a candidate from another sector which others may overlook because of a lack of industry-specific experience. Talented recruiters also understand what skills their clients need in a candidate that they themselves may not understand.

And not least of all, the work recruiters do takes a lot of time. Job ads are not worded off-handedly but instead crafted to attract the right clients; professional recruiters have access to a range of software and testing tools, which a small to medium business outside of

recruitment wouldn't even know exists, and finding candidates is their only job.

### WHAT ABOUT THE COST?

Sure, there are many benefits to hiring a recruitment professional, but what about the cost? This is a question I hear regularly from small to medium businesses. It's a fair question because the costs can indeed seem prohibitive.

Fortunately, with the advent of pay later options such as APay, businesses which would otherwise struggle to find the money to pay for a recruiter are now able to spread the cash flow commitment over a period of time.

This allows the client to receive the service and employee they need, the candidate to get the job and the recruitment agency to receive their fee in full without putting undue

financial pressure on the client.

Good recruiters pay for themselves, and often sooner rather than later. Think of the cost that goes into onboarding a new staff member and training them.

Any false starts with the wrong candidates sourced in-house are going to be costly both in terms of time and money and by the time businesses realise their cost saving has become a cash blowout, it is often too late to recoup losses.

This is when the investment in a recruitment agency proves to be a smart move.



Danny Marlow,  
Director of  
APositive  
Workforce  
Finance



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