

## CareersMultiList

CareersMultiList delivers to our clients the highest quality talent via a franchise network of over **100 specialist recruitment companies** (over 130 offices) throughout Australasia.

We hope you enjoy this edition of our quarterly newsletter, which provides a brief snapshot of topical employment, HR and recruitment issues.

If you have any staffing or HR requirements, please contact your local, specialist CareersMultiList franchise partner, or our head office on 1300 666 177.

### EMPLOYMENT NEWS

#### EMPLOYMENT SURGES IN MARCH

Total employment was up in March, driven by rises in both full-time and part-time employment, according to the latest ABS labour force data.

Seasonally adjusted total employment increased by 44,000 to 11.49 million in March, well ahead of the 5,000 rise predicted by ANZ.

Full-time employment increased by 15,800 to 8.08 million, and part-time employment rose 28,200 to 3.41 million.

The seasonally adjusted participation rate was up 0.2 percentage points to 65.4%, while the jobless rate was steady at 5.2%.

Aggregate monthly hours worked were up 9.5 million to 1.62 billion hours.

These results were off the back of the February, 2012 results, where full-time employment was 'flat' at 8.06 million, but part-time work had dropped significantly.

Commenting on the figures, general manager of CareersMultiList, Matt Webster, said that it was a "patchy" employment market, depending on different industries and regions.

"Most of our clients remain cautiously optimistic on their permanent hiring intentions for 2012, but of course our resources and infrastructure clients are much more bullish, and worried moreso about adequate supply of skilled labour.

"Our temp employee and contractor numbers continue to increase, which continues the trend of large corporate and government employers desiring a more flexible work-force.

"Temp to perm activity has also increased with clients appreciating the opportunity to 'try before they buy' with regard to higher quality candidates," Webster added.

#### MARGINAL RISE IN JOB ADS

Total job advertisements rose 1% in March, according to the latest ANZ Job Ad Series.

Combined online and print job ads were up 2.8% year-on-year, to an average of 200,800 per week.

Internet job ads were up 1% from February, and increased 4.1% year-on-year; however this was offset by ongoing weakness in newspaper job ads, which were down 0.6% sequentially and 22% year-on-year.

ANZ chief economist Warren Hogan said despite the relatively flat March advertising data, total job ads were now at their highest levels since November 2008.

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"The trend in total advertising points toward a modest recovery in employment growth and an unemployment rate remaining below 5.5% through 2012, despite potential divergences between regions and industries," he said.

## GLOBAL BANKING REFORM NEEDED TO RESTART JOBS GROWTH

Governments and taxpayers might be wasting their money in supporting the global banking sector, which is still lending at low levels and failing to support much-needed job creation, says the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

In its recent, annual report on international labour trends, the ILO laid much of the blame for a bleak global employment outlook on the financial sector, arguing that "substantial repair and regulation" was needed to restore its credibility and, more importantly, increase its capacity to lend.

The ILO said some 600 million jobs needed to be added to the global economy over the next 10 years in order to stop unemployment levels from rising.

However, the labour market was being hampered by the fact that businesses were increasingly struggling to access credit.

"Despite much effort – in some cases up to 90% of additional public spending went into bailing out banks – the financial industry remains highly vulnerable, weakening its capacity to lend to the real economy."

Globally coordinated reforms of the banking system, the report said, "would restore credibility and confidence, allowing banks to overcome the credit risk that has dogged this crisis.

"All firms would gain from this, but especially SMEs, which not only need the credit more, but also end up creating more than 70% of jobs."

## AUSTRALIA, GERMANY THE ONLY COUNTRIES TO ACHIEVE PRE-GFC EMPLOYMENT LEVELS

The report noted that Australia and Germany were the only developed economies that had managed to increase employment in 2011 to above pre-GFC figures.

(Total Australian employment in December was 11.421 million, according to ABS data, well above the pre-crash peak of 10.768 million in October 2008.)

However, the ILO report added, employment growth had been decelerating in Australia through the past year.

## HR NEWS

### FOCUS WORKFORCE PLANNING EFFORTS ON CRITICAL ROLES

Organisations that attempt to introduce workforce planning across their entire organisation inevitably fail, according to business strategy specialist, Sean Collins.

Executed well, workforce planning supports an organisation to meet its strategic goals by ensuring the right people, with the right skills, are in the right place at the right time, he told a conference in Sydney recently.

Collins says that when assessing the business case for workforce planning, HR professionals should question whether their organisation can:

- Navigate uncertain economic times and changing workforce dynamics that might force it to change the way it conducts business?
- Achieve strategic goals with its current workforce?
- Sustain or improve its current level of performance over the next three years?
- Increase the size of its workforce by 50 per cent to meet projected business growth demands over the next three years?
- Switch strategic direction in 12 months or less, if required?

Essentially, he says, the value of workforce planning lies in allowing HR to know the impact of decisions before they have to be made.

### INFORMATION EMPOWERS HR

According to Collins, HR professionals can vastly improve their credibility with CEOs if they base their views and decisions on data, in the same way that CFOs, CIOs and sales executives do.

He says HR should be able to answer the CEO when he or she asks, "What's the optimal mix of skills and jobs we'll need in our workforce in 2017?"

His tips for successful workforce planning include:

#### 1. Workforce planning should be owned by the business, not HR

"It's a business planning process; it's no different in a sense from the task of setting a business strategy. Business unit leaders are responsible for strategy execution, so should look after their own workforce planning, with HR playing a consultative role."

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## 2. Workforce planning should focus on mid-to-long-term horizons

"It is a strategic exercise, not a short-term budgeting endeavour.

Probably a minimum of two-to-three years but looking out to a horizon of maybe five or 10, because that's how long it's going to take them to replace that talent. Three to five years is probably manageable for most."

## 3. Focus initial forecasts on critical job roles

A key tip is to focus on two-to-five critical job roles, as workforce planning is in essence an exercise in prioritisation... companies that try to do workforce planning for the entire organisation first-off, are guaranteed to fail, and may never start.

## 4. Strategy selection and action planning are critical to adoption

Don't let plans become "academic" exercises or let them "sit on a shelf", Collins urges.

Define a business unit owner with accountability to implement the plan, and outline specific strategies, timeframes, budget, check-in dates and metrics for monitoring progress.

## 5. Focus plans on costs and people, not just people

"It's essential for workforce planning to have an appreciation for things like the financial impacts of the decisions you might make. Add a financial dimension to your analysis of your workforce and the recommendations you're making about it," he says.

### RECRUITMENT NEWS

#### 457-VISA INTAKE SURGES IN DECEMBER HALF

The number of approved 457-visas increased by close to 50% (to 33,720) year-on-year in the December, 2011 half, according to the latest data from the Department of Immigration and Citizenship. Applications were up 36.7% over the same period.

The total number of primary 457-visa holders in Australia at the end of December was 68,320, up 14.5%. The report noted, however, that this figure was 18% lower than the total recorded on November 30, due to a large number of visa holders leaving the country over the holiday period.

Professional occupations received the majority (57.3%) of visas approvals in the December half, followed by technicians and tradespeople (22%), and managers (14.3%).

The most sought-after 457 workers included developer/programmers (3.1% of the December half intake), university lecturers (2.3%), marketing specialists (2.2%) GPs (2%), cooks (1.9%) and civil engineers (1.8%).

According to the report, the top four industries sponsoring workers were construction (13.6%), other services (12.7%), health care and social assistance (12.2%), and information, media and telecommunications (10.5%).

Visa-approved workers were most likely to come from the UK (24.8%), India (17.6%) and Ireland (9.2%).

#### CAREERSMULTILIST OFFERS 457-VISA, MIGRATION AND 457 ON-HIRE SERVICES

Commenting on the growing 457 statistics, CareersMultiList managing director, Daniel Riley, said he was delighted that CareersMultiList now had a dedicated 457-visa and sponsorship service for clients and candidates.

"Our recent acquisition of Lester Associates, who are Australia's leading, expert Migration and Contract Management Company, allows us to offer the full spectrum of local and international employment services."

What is not so common is the ability to sponsor overseas workers for 'on-hire' through the 457 program. As the holder of a DIAC/DEEWR authorised Labour Agreement, Lester Associates is one of very few companies in holding government approval to act as an official sponsor and 'on-hire' employer of overseas workers nominated to fill skilled positions in Australia.

"It's a real competitive advantage for our clients in terms of talent acquisition, whilst minimising employment risk and cost," Riley added.

**For more information please contact Lester Associates on 02 9956 8228 or visit [www.lester.com.au](http://www.lester.com.au)**

### ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

#### MOTIVATION ALONE WON'T BOOST PERFORMANCE

High levels of employee motivation don't necessarily translate into better performance, according to engagement experts Mark Royal and Tom Agnew, who say that work-related frustration can compromise engagement even when an employee is enthusiastic about their job.

In their new book *The Enemy of Engagement*, the Hay Group researchers define workplace frustration as, "a highly engaged employee's inability to succeed in a role due to organisational barriers or the inability to bring the bulk of his or her talents, skills and abilities to the job".

Frustrations might include needing to consult with multiple people in order to make a basic decision, or being unable to secure valuable resources because they don't directly improve the organisation's bottom line, for example.

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"Managers are bombarded with messages about how important it is to motivate and inspire their people. Very little attention, however, has been given to how managers can most effectively translate employee motivation into optimal levels of performance," say Royal and Agnew.

They draw on Hay Group research that shows that nearly one third of employees think their managers fail to effectively communicate goals and objectives to their teams, and about one in three say they lack the authority to carry out their jobs effectively. A further 40 per cent say they don't receive clear and regular feedback on their work from their superiors.

A key to ensuring that improved engagement leads to improved performance is to address the constraints that limit an employee's ability to do a job well, thereby enabling them to perform more effectively, the authors say.

Barriers to enablement include work cultures where employees lack the opportunity or inclination to share concerns and ideas with their managers, and workplaces where managers are unwilling to invest in enabling resources because they allow the costs to detract from the benefits.

These barriers become increasingly significant over time.

"As employees grow in experience in their roles, they begin to focus less on learning the ropes and more on achieving desired results. In the process, they are increasingly confronted with enablement constraints that limit their ability to get their jobs done effectively," the authors say.

## FOCUS ON ENABLEMENT

In order to minimise frustration and improve performance and retention, Royal and Agnew say managers should:

- **Clarify expectations** - regularly discuss expectations with every team member; set specific, measurable objectives; and align performance goals with organisational priorities.
- **Set challenging goals** - talk to employees to establish ways they can use their core strengths to enhance performance, and explain the difference between a high performer and an average performer.
- **Provide ongoing feedback** - hold informal performance discussions with team members between formal reviews, and identify and address issues of poor performance in a timely manner.
- **Give employees adequate authority** - ensure team members understand which decisions they control, and agree with decision-making accountabilities; empower workers to make the decisions necessary to perform their jobs effectively; and address

aspects of the culture that prohibit timely decision-making.

- **Give employees input on work processes** - intentionally seek feedback on work processes and ensure you have formal and informal procedures to solicit suggestions.
- **Provide needed resources** - where there are specific resources employees regularly request to increase efficiency, build a business case, specifying anticipated benefits, for the investment.
- **Provide needed information** - inform employees of changes that will affect their work, and do so before they hear rumours from other sources.
- **Provide opportunities for up-skilling** - define the developmental needs and interests of your employees and ensure they are aware of relevant training programs.

## EMPLOYMENT LAW

### LAWYERS SAY ADVERSE ACTION PROVISIONS MUST CHANGE

The Fair Work Act's adverse action provisions are the biggest cause of headaches for employers and should be modified, according to employment lawyers.

The federal government has appointed a panel to conduct a review of the Act, and recently released a background paper that canvasses the aims of the legislation.

It says those seeking to argue the legislation is failing to meet its objectives should provide evidence to support their views.

The panel - comprising Dr John Edwards, Professor Emeritus Ron McCallum AO and the Hon Michael Moore - is due to report to the Government by the end of May, 2012.

### QUESTIONS FOR THE REVIEW

The Fair Work Act Review Background Paper poses 69 example questions that parties might choose to address in their submissions.

These include:

- Has the Fair Work Act facilitated flexible working arrangements to assist employees to balance their work and family responsibilities?
- What has been the impact, if any, of the Fair Work Act on labour productivity?
- What has been the impact of providing an award system which includes modern awards that cannot be varied (except in limited circumstances) other than during four-yearly reviews by FWA, or in the initial FWA interim review in 2012?
- Did the replacement of the fairness test with the no-disadvantage test and then the better off overall test improve protection of employment conditions in the agreement-making process?

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- How have the good faith bargaining requirements affected enterprise agreement negotiations?
- Does the new broader definition of transfer of business help to clarify when a transfer of business occurs?
- Do the general protections provisions provide adequate protection of employees' workplace rights, including the right to freedom of association and against workplace discrimination?
- Do the unfair dismissal provisions balance the needs of business and employees' right to protection from unfair dismissal?
- Are employees able to resort to protected industrial action more easily or quickly since the passage of the Fair Work Act? If so, which provisions of the Act facilitate this?
- Do the right of entry provisions balance the right of unions to enter workplaces to meet with employees and investigate breaches of legislation and the right of employers to go about their business without undue inconvenience?
- In comparison to the previous arrangements, does the increased educative role for the FWO help employers and employees to better understand their rights and obligations under the Fair Work Act?

## CAREERSMULTILIST BENEFITS FOR LARGE EMPLOYERS

The CareersMultiList **managed supplier** model provides proven, commercial benefits for large employer organisations with diverse work-type (specialist) and geographic recruitment requirements:

- Centralised access to a huge range of experienced, **industry-specialist recruiters**
- Access to a greater volume of quality candidates via our unique **MultiListing** process, and over 100 agency databases
- A **single contact point** to streamline your job ordering, account management, reporting, invoicing & payments etc.
- Performance management of **standardised recruitment processes** and service levels
- A comprehensive range of **Psychometric and HR support services**
- A single, **competitive pricing structure** plus significant reduction of indirect recruitment costs

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