

SOUND BITES

How do you alleviate stress among your staff?



"Simple. By creating a positive working environment in which everyone is openly valued and their contribution is acknowledged and rewarded. Stress will always exist, especially in such a dynamic

sector as recruitment. The key is to ensure that it is contained at a healthy level and is channelled positively. Hard work is essential but many recruitment agencies make the mistake of thinking there is a direct link between high levels of stress and success. No amount of team building days and plants around the office will help if the management style and ethos isn't right. Happy, motivated teams are created from the top-down, not the other way around."

ADRIAN HITCHENOR

CHIEF EXECUTIVE, HITCHENOR WAKEFORD



"With all our recruitment managers based on-site at clients, their stress is slightly different to an agency environment. Most stress is generated by the client wanting something immediately. My advice is to

make sure you know your facts at all times — vacancy numbers, cost and time metrics, issues and what's being done about them. With this to hand, most requests can be handled efficiently. On a general basis, we de-stress like everyone else: we take our teams out, drink enough and moan about clients' unreasonable requests."

PHILIP CLARKE

CHIEF EXECUTIVE, INDEPENDENT RPO



"The truth is, we have never had anyone suffering from stress at Alexander Hughes Interim Management. In the unlikely event that someone feels stressed, then we would follow best practice and ask staff to keep a diary

outlining their work for that day and to document how they feel, so that it is easier to identify where the problem might lie. We would also encourage various stress management techniques, such as taking regular exercise, having breaks in the day and we wouldn't rule out bringing in a masseur."

GAVAN BURDEN

MD, ALEXANDER HUGHES INTERIM MANAGEMENT

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TRENDS

What's in a name?

A title can mean one thing in one organisation and something completely different in another. **Ben Jones** reports on the job labelling trend

Some people regard job titles as crucial, and this applies in the status-driven industry of recruitment more than most.

"If you think about job titles, it is the second thing you are asked after somebody meets you," points out Robert Myatt, business psychologist with Kaisen Consulting.

"It's 'What's your name?' followed by 'What do you do?', so it is a very important issue."

Marketing and HR specialist SG Group has just changed some of its company titles after a consultation with staff, explained Claire Owen, the company's leader of vision and values.

The firm, which is based in Richmond, Surrey, carried out a structural review last October to decide how it wanted to take the business forward.

"One of the things which came out of it was that staff wanted to be led rather than managed," Owen told *Recruiter*. So I thought that if people don't want to be managed, why do we have the word 'managing' in our senior titles?"

This prompted a rethink. Team leaders are now 'business heads' and the HR director is now 'leader of internal affairs'.

While the latter may sound like a police department, Owen is adamant that the name changes make a positive difference.

"It's a bit of a personality stamp, really, and some might say it's a bit of a gimmick, but we always say to clients that we provide a 'positively different' experience. If we're going to do that, then we need to reflect that from within our organisation."

Owen said she believed that traditional titles, such as managing director, "did not really mean anything" and that "leader of vision and values" was a far more accurate description of her job, in line with what staff had asked her to do: lead and inspire.

Rightly or wrongly, there will always be the temptation to find an easy way to label others. Having a title that stands out from the rest may or may not facilitate the labelling process.



Burden: plethora of job titles

Norman Burden, managing director of Imprint Search and Selection, which conducted some research into the importance of job titles last September, says that increased competition in the recruitment marketplace has led to a wide choice of titles.

But he warned against recruiters giving titles which appeared to give a false impression of the job. "If firms do that, anyone coming into the industry could feel disenfranchised rather quickly," he told *Recruiter*.

He went on to say that recruitment, being about a client-service relationship, made the issue of status very important. "People also need to feel that they have the potential for career development and they have more choice now than they did, say, 10 years ago."

Despite this, demand is outstripping supply, according to Burden, and so recruiters are forced to come up with sexier job titles to attract the cream.

"It used to be that you were either a 'researcher' or a 'consultant', but now we're seeing far more titles such as 'associate' or 'principal'."

What's more, Burden believes this trend for a plethora of job titles is set to grow and grow. "I think it will continue, because more and more people are now seeing recruitment as an attractive career option. It's no longer the case that everyone just 'falls into it,'" he said.

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