



The voice of freelancing

## Notes

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### **PCG Workshop, Bristol 28<sup>th</sup> June, Exploiting the Agency Model**

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## How to work best with your agency

Delivered by Andrew Backhouse, National Contracts Manager at Timothy James Consulting

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## What are the benefits of using an agency?

Saving you time and money:

- Sales and marketing done for free on your behalf
- Access to the 'invisible jobs market'
- Can help you build your team once appointed
- Strong relationship will ensure you get first priority on new roles
- Take an immediate, proactive approach to find something new if the assignment ends early/doesn't start
- Role as the intermediary means we have the difficult conversations
- The agency shoulder your risk - you will get paid even if we don't!
- Regular cash flow as agencies pay weekly/monthly

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## How do I approach an agency?

Do your research - Make an approach - Get registered - Gain commitment

## How do I manage my relationship with my agency?

- Be proactive - keep in contact with the consultants
- Keep up your own search - you keep control
- Be transparent - say if you are not interested in a role
- Explain any technical jargon - an agent needs to understand what you do
- Give comprehensive feedback - knowledge is power
- Hire from your agency - this builds strong relationships
- Register a problem immediately - give them the opportunity to fix it
- Confidentiality - keep all interviews to yourself, this builds trust

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## What frustrations will I encounter working with agencies?

- Duplication of opportunities - two agencies may have the same role
- The agency isn't getting the right/any opportunities
- Lack of understanding of technical skill sets
- May not disclose who their end client is
- Being overly persuasive or pushy

## What frustrations have you all encountered?

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## How do I get my agency to work well for me?

- Be transparent and realistic in what you expect and want
- Your agency is the intermediary - use them in that way
- Ask if they pay weekly - cashflow will be better
- Work on developing a mutually beneficial relationship
- Use the right consultant for the right role - consultants will work separate vertical markets
- Ask the agency what they are looking for from their candidates/contractors
- Tell them straight away if you have a problem on site or if you are unhappy
- Be confidential with any commercial information the agency trusts you with
- If possible, keep using the same agency - familiarity can breed a close business relationship
- Listen and trust the consultant - they often have inside knowledge

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## What agencies look for in a contractor:

Availability	Flexible daily rates	Flexible travel
Punctual	Good interview skills	Transparency yet confidentiality
Engaging	Strong technical skills	Understands how to 'fit in'
Personable	Understands budgets	Adds value from day one
Recruiter	Networking ability	Able to adapt cultures
Realistic	Proactive	Resilient

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Any questions?  
Any feedback?  
Any discussion points?

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## Using IT Recruitment Agencies

Vernon Gardner  
Gardner Associates Limited

## Aim

- What does a recruitment agency do?
- How have they changed?
- Know the Game
- Playing the Game.

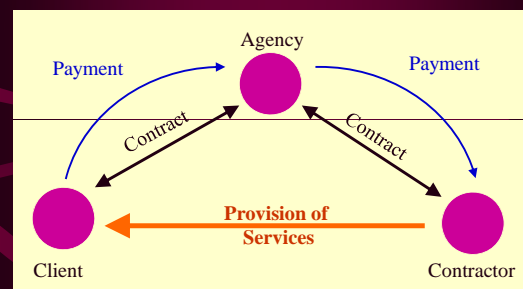
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## What does a Recruitment Agency do?

- For the client – They provide contract resources to fulfil their client's requirements.
- For the contractor – They provide contract opportunities and a regular income stream.

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## Client / Agency / Contractor Relationship



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## How Have They Changed?

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 14 YEARS AGO</li><li>• Sellers market</li><li>• Recruiters understood job specs and CV's.</li><li>• Regularly met clients and contractors to review performance and discuss new opportunities.</li><li>• Attempted to retain and re-place contractors.</li><li>• Highly variable margins.</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• NOW</li><li>• Buyers market.</li><li>• 2 tier agencies with 1<sup>st</sup> level often ignorant of job role and candidate CV's, matching / shortlisting through keyword searches.</li><li>• Little to no review process.</li><li>• More reasonable margins, lower on PSLs.</li></ul> |
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## Know The Game

- Agency may be one of several putting candidates forward and may only be able to submit 2-5 CVs.
- Agency first searches its own database using a keyword search and contacts potential contractors.
- Agency posts role on its website and on one or more public job sites.
- Low-skilled staff match applicants to roles and produce a list of best matches for the recruitment consultant managing the position.
- Dependent on role, a job board posting can generate a 100+ applicant response in 30-60 minutes!!!
- Consultant selects shortlist for client.
- Client selects candidates for interview.
- Some agencies will try selling their prospective candidates into existing and new clients.

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## Play The Game

- Produce one or more generic / role specific CVs full of key words, for registering / updating with agencies and job boards.
- Keep agencies advised of availability and updated with latest CV(s).
- Set-up job searches and email notifications with preferred agencies and job boards.
- Respond to new job posts immediately with tailored CV, highlighting suitability.
- Follow-up application with phone call within 10-30 minutes. SELL!
- Be realistic with your rate.
- Obtain decision timescales and call for updates if no contact is received.
- Try to identify key recruitment consultants (and agencies) for your roles and industry and then try to maintain friendly regular contact – but don't annoy!
- Know who is sending your details where. Be in control.
- Above all else keep on top of the game – the players and rules change.

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## Questions / Discussion

Vernon Gardner  
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