



## PARADOXES IN THE JOB MARKET

Jim Roach, Managing Director of ARV Solutions

I'd like to be writing about how as recruiters specialising in the offsite construction sector we are seeing steady recovery, and how that is leading to a steady increase in recruitment as we come out of recession.

What is really happening is far more complicated and paradoxical.

The last quarter of 2009 was our busiest ever with record candidate placements though we still see high numbers of unemployed candidates.

An urgent site management role at Christmas attracted over 500 applications from out of work professionals!

2010 has started well with new clients and many new vacancies, though the future is far from certain yet.

### **Who's doing well?**

Some of our clients in modular building and timber frame manufacturing are experiencing major growth and urgently recruiting new staff. Others are recruiting for strategic technical skills and managers ready for expected growth. At the same time we still get applicants due to redundancy.

Smaller and medium sized companies who have pushed sales effort, and have a well developed or added value offering seem to be doing better than most – often those we recruited sales staff for a couple of years ago, or those met at the major trade shows pushing innovative solutions.

Those focused on public sector projects as well as hotels and student accommodation have fared better than others, exposed to the rapid changes within the private housing sector. Housing has its own paradoxes: whilst new starts collapsed from lack of confidence and finance there has throughout been a huge pent up demand for more housing and I hear on the News today we are close to “double digit” growth in house prices for the last year. Public sector schemes have brought work, whilst private sector confidence and finance collapsed. Are we about to see this reversed? Will the private sector pick up in time to counter public sector cuts? Answers on a postcard.....!

### **Candidate extremes**

We speak with many, many skilled unemployed people desperate to find new work, and until recently few in employment as they have clung to jobs.

With recovery arriving, or around the corner, depending on your point of view, we see significant numbers of employed candidates putting their heads above the parapet. Numerous surveys show that a large percentage of employees feel help back, lacking in opportunity, and underpaid. Until now, they have stayed for security, though this is now changing rapidly.

We see a real danger that many skilled unemployed people could start losing out to these new employed career movers. We see many who are disillusioned and losing motivation, through working with Job Centres providing training to unemployed professionals. There is a real challenge to maintain the motivation to succeed in the job market, which will only get harder when faced with new competition.

### **Job opportunities in 2010**

We see opportunities continuing to increase through economic recovery, though recruitment activity is likely to be significantly higher from a heating up competition for talent. The landscape is changing with new challengers coming through that can bring significant opportunities. We are predicting significant movement and those companies that succeed this year could be the ones who manage to retain and attract the best talent. Candidates are seeing greener grass elsewhere and the talent merry-go-round is starting – as people get on the move.

The significant HR problem for 2010 could rapidly switch from redundancies to staff retention

ARV Solutions is a staffing solutions company specialising in the offsite construction sector.  
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