



ALL CHANGE!

Interim HR Managers to the rescue

Change! This is one of the key words currently seen on most job advertisements in the HR market. So how is HR going to support this increase in demand by business? Interim HR management is a great solution.

The interim HR market

The interim market in Australia is maturing but is still behind the level of sophistication that has been developed overseas, particularly in the UK. However, it is one that is growing significantly and rapidly. Why? Because interim or contract resources bring either a broad range or a specific set of skills which exactly meet business needs at that time.

Many HR professionals have made the conscious career choice to manage their careers as interims and engage in this project-style work. In The Next Step's recent HR Viewpoint Survey of almost 2,000 HR professionals from all levels and all locations, more than 15% of respondents suggested that career interim management and HR contracting was their preferred employment option.

Not surprisingly, the HR Viewpoint Survey also identified flexibility to be an important driver for HR professionals - which can be hard to achieve in corporate roles. This was underscored by the fact that over 63.9% of HR practitioners said in the survey that they worked over 40 hours a week and only 8% work on a part-time basis.

Change as a skill set

Another clear message from the HR Viewpoint Survey was that HR practitioners at all levels believe that the most valued skill set for success in the current business environment is Change Management and Cultural Change. More than 32% of HR professionals said that this area is the most important for their career development in the post-GFC economy.

Interim management as a solution

Many HR functions operate in a lean structure and it can be challenging to release employees from the day to day in order to focus on the future. Given a clear brief, an interim HR professional can help to quickly define, develop and implement a change program away from the demands of the day to day.

The nature of interim management means measurement is essential to success. Unlike a permanent employee, an interim knows that a contract assignment does not necessarily give an

opportunity to develop their skills. Rather, they are there as an expert.

The clear difference between a professional interim and a temporary resource is the disengagement from a project, ensuring all knowledge is retained by the business.

Top tips to manage interims

1. Be clear about your requirements. It may be simply backfilling a role but if they are undertaking a project, clearly identify what you expect them to achieve.
2. Provide a full written brief for the role. This way you will only see candidates who have the most relevant experience.
3. Define the deliverables.
4. Induct your Interim Manager. If you induct your Interim as you would a permanent employee, the sooner they start making the required impact.
5. Appraise them. By defining the deliverables you can set milestones to appraise them against.
6. Use the full range of your Interim Manager's skills and experience. They have honed their experience in a range of organisations with experienced HR professionals. Their support and advice can be beneficial during a decision making process.
7. Ensure you have a clear 'wind-up' plan and that all information is handed over and documented.

A successful Interim knows their skills and markets themselves on delivery of results. But this career path isn't for everyone! An Interim will often not be around to see the results of their labour, especially during a cultural change assignment. Someone new to this style of working may miss this aspect. They may also miss the collaborative team environment. The interim has to be able to deal with an ambiguous future. With uncertainty at the end of every assignment, an Interim has to manage these peaks and troughs.

The final word

The Interim HR Management and Contracting market in Australia is growing as practitioners and organisations see substantial benefits. For practitioners it can provide challenge, variety, flexibility and substantial rewards. For organisations, they can source very specific skills and knowledge for a set period of time when they need it - a great outcome!

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