

Has the recent influx of redundant managers damaged the Interim Profession?

The simple answer is yes. However, it has opened up opportunities too.

Undeniably, a flood of public sector managers hitting the market with a back up pool of redundancy money, who can afford to undercut the existing professional Interims, has created a buyer's market, forcing down fees.

With fewer rôles being advertised, the recruiting agencies must compete strongly to ensure their market share. In their need to retain their customer base, are they actually promoting the best candidate, or the candidate whom they believe the customer will pay for? Whilst the new Interim with a redundancy fund is working, are the other Interims using their own reserves to subsidise the industry? Probably. Everyone out of work, whether interim or not, who has to dip into savings, cash in ISAs or reduce the contribution to their pension, is subsidising the current economic policy. Interims do not tend to draw on public funding when not on assignment. They accept the downtime as part of the lifestyle. 2010 was, however, particularly tough on a high proportion and many now have very reduced reserves

So there is damage to individual Interim businesses but what about damage to customers? A Council needing a £15m saving in year, opting for the apparent low cost Interim, should consider the payback period and effort. A less skilled Interim taking one month longer to bring in results leaves the customer is £1,250,000 behind the pace, necessitating more to achieve in a shorter period.

New entrants must hit the ground running or aren't practised in transferring skills, knowledge and competences into organisations, or they will fail as Interims.

Supposing, instead of finding ways to improve his customer's outcomes, he plans to create a permanent rôle for himself? This also damages the Interim Profession. It undermines the code of practice signed up to by the Professional. Lack of transparency leads to lack of trust. Interims should be catalysts for change, not people seeking to create a comfort zone for themselves.

An unsatisfactory result, as a consequence of using less experienced interims can leave customers unsure of the value of the 'Interim' brand. This has a definite effect on the interim profession as a whole because of neutral or negative feedback.

Now is the time for the Interim industry to help customers to understand and request accreditation which separates the manager who is 'between jobs' from the professional interim. As more and more organisations move to Software as a Service to ensure that they optimise their resources in data storage, CRM and ERP management, then the totally elastic, highly qualified and proven delivery model of the Interim manager surely has a strong rôle to play supporting organisations to grow without unmanageable capital debt, or to improve their performance and cut costs imaginatively, without incurring on-going management costs when the resources are no longer required.

In its 10th anniversary year the IIM is working with providers, customers, professional bodies and Interims to strengthen the Interim Professional standing. Contributions from public sector organisations are welcomed. If you would like to take part in a focus group or event, contact the IIM at <http://www.iim.org.uk>

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