

“Top sales staff back in demand”

By Will Waters - IFW - 9th November 2009

European recruitment specialists report vacancies in forwarding and logistics are soaring.

Demand for good sales staff in forwarding and logistics has seen a strong increase in recent months, according to recruitment specialists in Europe.

Several members of recruitment network Experts for Experts (e4e) said customers had continued to seek top sales executives throughout the recession, but demand had grown strongly since the end of the summer. These individuals had become "as rare as diamonds now", Urs Hug, e4e chairman and managing partner at recruitment agency Meneghin & Partner, told IFW. He said Meneghin & Partner now had more than twice the number of vacancies on its books than six months ago.

"Many sales executives do not want to change jobs, despite very attractive offers," said Hug. "In the continuing uncertain economic climate, they are afraid that in a new restructuring round they could quickly lose their job, based on the principle of last in, first out." In addition, far-sighted employers look after their top performers well and try to keep them under any circumstances." E4e founder Fritz Schultze, responsible for Portugal and Germany, said demand varied according to seniority and skills.

"At high level, it has been difficult [to fill vacant positions] because people do not want to move, but at a lower level, there are a lot of people out there," he said. "But clients always say to us, 'if you have any good sales people, we will take them'. I have never heard this so many times as in 2009." Dick Binckhorst, CEO of Plimsoll and e4e's Netherlands representative, said: "In recent weeks, clients that had stopped recruiting have come back into the market. But all the positions are related to business development or sales."

But Larry Woelk, business development director for UK representative BiS Henderson, said availability of good people varied from country to country. "In the UK, there are quite a few high level people available," he said. "I have had former employers phone me and say: "This person is really good, but I just had no choice but to let them go." Santiago Tarin, of Spanish representative Master Consulting, said: "In Spain, certain kinds of candidate are difficult to find, because once they reach a certain level of seniority, they do not want to risk being the last one in [to a new company]." Dirk Holstein, from Italian representative Management & Partners, said: "When the level of business increases again, we will have as big a lack of decent people as ever, because so many people have stepped out [of the market] or been deselected."