

HR Directors' Forum

FACULTIES & FORUMS

Logistics Leaders Network

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Interim management solutions in the supply chain can play a key role in helping companies recover from the recession

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

With the UK economy in full recession and more supply chain people in the market place for jobs, there is still a need to have good quality people in short-term assignments to help companies build for the future once the recession is over. At a recent meeting of the People Strategy Group, Andy Kaye, Chief Executive, BiS Henderson, highlighted the importance of effective interim management solutions as part of a recovery strategy.

BiS Henderson sees a clear difference between an interim consultant and an interim manager. Interim managers provide short-term operational and intellectual strength to the businesses, often stepping in to cover roles due to absence or to release line managers to carry out strategic projects. 'Often,' said Andy Kaye, 'they enable organisations to trial and shape new roles and fix specific operational issues.' Interim consultants are there to recommend, advise and develop new strategies by advising the board and sorting out the wood from the trees.

'Good interim managers will always be sensibly overqualified to undertake the role', he continued, 'and have a strong background of consistent achievement in multiple roles and sectors. They will usually have deep technical knowledge of a particular subject and typically be in the second half of their working career. Most importantly, they will have financial security to manage any down time, be a self-starter, assertive but not pushy, and personable, with the ability to fit into a range of cultures.'

Most topical at this time is the issue of companies taking on interim managers when they are laying off full-time staff. Andy Kaye's view of this is simple: 'If strategic or tactical issues threaten the viability of the company, the appointment of an interim with skills to resolve them will reduce redundancies and be respected by the workforce.'

But probably the biggest myth he exploded was a client saying: 'I need to fill the job permanently and quickly.' Filling a permanent job quickly can be successful, but it does have risks. More and more companies are using interims to permanent solutions as a way of assessing the person in situ. Many are also using them in part-time solutions two to three days a week. Often an interim will work for two or three clients at the same time. It is this flexibility that is the key benefit to an interim solution.

Following Andy Kaye's thought-provoking introduction to the topic, the delegates broke into three groups to try and answer three key questions. Group 1 looked at a question for companies where HR managers have used interim managers: what are the benefits that interim managers gave you and why did you use them? What alternative strategies could have been adopted?

Group 2 was asked to agree a priority list of situations where interim managers could be of real, measurable benefit to the business, then to choose the top three.

Group 3 looked at the main obstacles to using interim managers to solve specific strategic and tactical issues. Feeding back through Jim Thomson, of the Potter Group.

How to join

The Logistics Leaders Network People Strategy Group has over 50 active members from HR directors of leading logistics and transport organisations and welcomes other members of the Logistics Leaders Network to attend meetings free of charge. Membership of the Logistics Leaders Network is £115 plus VAT a year. Its interactive web site provides information on all the activities of the network and useful additional material. An annual publication *Logistics Leaders* is also being launched.

Further information, contact Peter Acton, Gyros Communications. Tel: +44 (0)1737 365126. Email: info@paa-pr.co.uk Web site: www.logistics-leaders.co.uk

Diary dates

7th July 2009

TUPE update

Venue to be confirmed

21st October 2009

The practical implications of the Agency Workers Directive

Venue to be confirmed



Andy Kaye, Chief Executive, BiS Henderson, mounted a strong argument in favour of using interim managers



About BiS Henderson

BiS Henderson sources and places experienced, qualified interim managers to provide short to medium-term business solutions.

Further information, tel: +44 (0)1604 876345. Fax: +44 (0)1604 876 355.

Web site: www.bis.co.uk