

Ten Years Is A Long Time In Busin

By Nick Boothroyd, Managing Director, Project IT



Project IT celebrates ten years in business this year and Managing Director Nick Boothroyd along with fellow Directors Sarah Mathias and Natalie Saul look back at what has happened to their recruitment business during the 'noughties', and what they predict might happen in the next ten years.

With a turnover of 2.5million, 22 staff and an active client base spread over the UK, EMEA and North America, Project IT has done pretty well in the last ten years.

But it's not been an easy ride in an industry that has seen immense change and two major downturns.

In fact, it's a whole new world from the one we started out in. Here are just ten of the many things that have changed in the last decade.

- * LinkedIn – now a major tool in recruitment
- * Networking sites
- * The death of paper-based advertising
- * The emergence of RPO
- * Video CVs
- * Facebook and Twitter
- * Increased Red tape (EAA)

- * Increase in mobile phone use and SKYPE – means candidates are easier to get hold of/quicker to respond.
- * Internal Recruitment Teams
- * Availability of online information – better for researching companies

From the list above you will see that technology has become a major feature of recruitment. The advent of internet job boards, social and business networks and the whole web 2.0 landscape means the recruitment solutions we offer have to be more technology driven. There is still scope for traditional, well-informed consultancy based on solid recruitment principles, but results now have to be delivered quicker, better and more cost effectively. We need to understand and be able to deliver the whole range of recruitment techniques from search, contingency, referral programmes and more.

When we set the company up we had a vision to be the foremost provider of project and programme management resource solutions to the IT and Telecoms sector and to deliver and exceptional service with none of the bad press that can be associated with recruitment companies.

On the service side we've done really well, but we haven't yet met all our business objectives – obviously the recession has been a major set back in the last couple of years. However we have realigned our business to suit

the demands in the market we are well placed to deliver exceptional growth over the coming eighteen months to two years.

One of the major areas that we have moved into is providing an RPO service for SMEs. We have developed a modular system that makes RPO viable for much smaller projects and organisations than in the past, and although we have worked successfully on some major contracts, we see the mid-range RPO client as our target.

RPO is a route that is increasingly being used by our clients to complement their HR departments. RPO is a useful tool for HR professionals to call upon, as it means that they can 'switch on' a whole raft of recruitment and management services to meet a short term demand – although some companies use RPO on a long-term basis and scale the service up and down as their requirements change. The benefits of using RPO, as companies are discovering, is that it can save both time and money, and provide a level of flexibility and expertise that is simply not possible to achieve with an in-house team.

RPO, whether it's a fully comprehensive on-site service, or an element of it, can provide organisations with tangible benefits for the client including critical metrics such as reduction in the cost of hire and a reduction in the time to hire. There



Name: Nick Boothroyd, Managing Director, Project IT.

Background: A varied career in recruitment punctuated with a stint in the snowboard industry.

Role: Responsible for strategic direction, new products, services and offerings and major RPO account management. In the past ten years I have been more involved with delivery and hands-on account management, but in the future I will be concentrating on the development of more mature and market sensitive solutions that differentiate us in the market.

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can be many other benefits, some of which can happen very quickly, such as taking the strain of managing the relationships with external agencies and gaining immediate visibility through comprehensive and tailored reporting on the status of the recruitment activity across the business.

In addition, RPO can provide or add richness and intelligence to the entire hiring process as smaller, fast growth companies often don't consider the importance of a well managed approach to talent acquisition.

In addition to providing assistance to HR departments, there is a whole new breed of companies, especially in the new technology area, that simply don't have an HR department and probably never intend to have one! By using an RPO service, they get the double benefit of increasing the efficiency of their recruitment as well as saving on the cost of an in-house HR resource.

Being relatively small we are very agile and are able to respond to changes in the market. We are constantly evolving our service offering to stay ahead of the market and to remain competitive. One of those changes has been our diversification into new markets from our original emphasis on IT and Telecoms. Now as well as tech areas like SEO, Ecommerce, mobile handset technology and CMS, we also work extensively in Sales, Education and

Financial Services.

Our work has become much more international as well which is partly because we have chosen to move it that way, but also because our clients our working in a global market and their recruitment policies have to reflect this.

In terms of the future for Project IT, we want to continue to grow in terms of service portfolio and customer base, to add more RPO clients to our growing list and to develop our international business significantly over the next two years. This may be achieved organically or we may look to partner with other organisations to achieve our vision. The next two years will be very busy in terms of securing market share and growing our business.

For the market as a whole, the next few years look fairly rosy although still against a backdrop of economic uncertainty, but it's such a fast moving and dynamic business that it's hard to predict things year-to-year let alone for the next decade – who could have predicted Twitter in 2000? But if we were pressed, we'd say.....

The next ten years will see a further exponential increase in the use of Social Media, continued breaking down of barriers to trading internationally and the disappearance of some of the less innovative, volume driven traditional old school recruitment firms. To survive

we shall have to innovate and offer better researched, more intelligent solutions. We shall have to grasp the nuances of different cultures and deliver accordingly. The market for recruiters is unlikely to get easier but there will certainly be scope and opportunity for those that develop and evolve their service portfolios to reflect the demand.



Name: Natalie Saul, Director of Operations, Project IT.

Background: Recruitment.

Role: Diverse activities with involvement in Technical set up, refresh and support, contract provision, adherence to Agency and UK legislation, operational support through accounts and administrative areas. The future looks exciting from an operations point of view, with potential for international expansion to support the growing business.

Name: Sarah Mathias, Director, Project IT.

Background: HR and Recruitment.

Role: Strategic role to grow and manage team to develop new business and ensure client satisfaction. Responsible for the set up and ongoing management of Middle Eastern division and delivery of RPO services. My key focus this year is on the growth and success of the business.

