

Interview with Simon Connington,

Director of HINTONLEA Associates

“SOME BUSINESSES GET THE RECRUITMENT INDUSTRY THEY DESERVE...”

...says Simon Conington, Director of HINTONLEA Associates and of Business Partnership Services (BPS).

HINTONLEA specialises in Engineering and Technology recruitment; BPS outsources client’s recruitment activities using a partner chain of specialist companies.

Simon has strong views on the partnership between the recruitment sector and industry.

“I’ll criticise my sector along with the best and of course there are good client firms. But too many companies say ‘people are our greatest resource’ then treat them with less care than choosing a new car. Recruitment can’t solve employee loyalty problems if businesses think loyalty is, at most, a clever marketing wheeze!”

Simon explains his vision for recruitment.

“It’s simple. Recruiters need to earn their fee, not just grab likely looking C.V.’s and charge high ticket prices. They need to show real customer and client care; set targets for response times and meet them; explain their decisions. Bad recruitment is bad marketing. Candidates are, or will be, your customers.”

In the future Simon believes that the industry will split into two main areas. The first will use clever applications to speed up volume recruitment exercises: “ and give everyone quick, efficient and courteous responses. That’s what we’re trying to do with HINTONLEA”

The second stream will be genuine consultancy: “in-depth services by knowledgeable consultants who pass on their expertise to businesses. That’s what BPS offers.”

So, where does Thomas International’s PPA help? Simon picks up on the question:

“It’s not just PPA. You need to give TST as well, measuring behaviour and aptitudes.”

“Recruitment is part science, part art. We need to display more of both. I wanted a technique that would help us. PPA offers has a wonderful information/cost ratio: basically you get in-depth information for a realistic cost.”

As he’s used PPA more and more, Simon has come across new uses - and new pitfalls. “One of my customers asked ‘How does PPA work in your organisation?’ and I nearly fell over. We weren’t using it internally. Now it’s part of our recruitment processes. We practice what we preach. This enables us to use our own experiences in our consultancy. We even use the Thomas International training as an incentive for our own consultants. Achieve certain targets and you get the training. I can honestly say my training was two of the most fascinating days I’ve ever spent.”

You mentioned some pitfalls. “In the first flush of enthusiasm I’d show profile to clients all the time. I suddenly realised they were over-interpreting them – reading things into them that weren’t there. So now I insist on people being trained before they’re given a profile.”

Sum up for me. “Recruitment has got to professionalise; have a real knowledge and process base. It’s consultants shouldn’t be in transit to their real job: they should want to be there. Up until two years ago there was no recruitment course in UK universities. Yet its a £67 billion industry in Europe. PPA is a way of getting the science into recruitment. A profile should be part of the toolbox for every client. Once its embedded in a company’s culture it affects more than just recruitment. The language becomes a way of communicating about practical issues: disagreement, underperformance.”