

THE OAKLAND PARTNERSHIP

Oakland a safe bet to beat the recession

The Oakland Partnership, run by Directors Tom White and Denise Lawlor from their City of London offices, is established as a well respected, yet still rapidly expanding recruitment consultancy which provides a comprehensive service to the Leasing and Asset Finance industry. Since its inception three years ago, it has enjoyed substantial growth, and is now a leading player in the sector. Experience always tells, and White's seven years in Leasing and 20-plus years in recruitment dovetail neatly with Lawlor's 20-plus years in leasing, prior to their establishing The Oakland Partnership.

As to the next step, there is no doubt that 2009 promises to be a tough year for most businesses, and recruitment is no exception. Not surprisingly, White and Lawlor are undaunted by this scenario. Experience tells them that the current economic environment will present as many opportunities as it does difficulties for good recruiters, especially those committed for the long term as they are.

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White believes that, as with the last recession, many other recruiters will have to learn to work differently, and for some, that will also mean working harder. "We are now in a market where there will be an increased number of candidates for most vacancies, so I would be very surprised if employers in the Leasing industry did not start demanding much more from their recruitment consultancies, as is already the case with other companies in financial services. The days when some agencies were able to work on the basis of simply finding a CV posted on a job board, ringing the candidate for a quick overview, relaying the CV to the client (but with contact details deleted), and recommending an interview, may well be over very soon. I sincerely hope they will be!"

He continues, "Let's face it, if you are



going to charge a client a substantial placement fee, which often runs into five figures, the very least the client should expect in return is that you have taken the time to meet and interview the candidate on their behalf, unless circumstances really make it impossible. Our City of London base means we can meet over 95 percent of our candidates face to face, and I believe that these meetings are crucial for the candidate, the recruiter, and ultimately the client.

"The recruiter gets an invaluable opportunity to make an informed judgment on the candidate's suitability for the vacancy, and to properly understand their career to date, requirements and motivations. This is essential in order to decide whether to recommend that candidate. The candidate in turn gets to learn about the employer and the vacancy in greater depth. The candidate also has a chance to build a trusting relationship with someone who knows the industry very well, someone who could play a significant role in shaping their future career. It's a Win-Win situation for both parties, and the interview process is vital in ensuring that the best possible service is delivered to both client and candidate. Without it, what is the client really getting

for their money?"

The Oakland Partnership has ambitious, but realistic, plans for expansion in the future. At their core will be the continuing policy of developing close long-term relationships with clients, and the ability to successfully recruit a wide range of positions for these clients, at all levels. The goal is to make The Oakland Partnership undisputed market leader, with an enviable reputation for quality and integrity.

This aim of success against the competition finds an echo in White's other great love, which is horseracing. He told us, "Racing is a great leveller, and I like that because, rather like the recruitment business, it brings together people from a very diverse range of backgrounds, all of whom are prepared to back their judgment in some way. Owning a promising racehorse, watching it grow, develop, mature, and eventually win a race is a great thrill. The process is not dissimilar to starting a new business, and helping that grow into a winner, too."

One thing is for sure, with White and Lawlor holding the reins, The Oakland Partnership's continued success is something you certainly wouldn't bet against!