

Hiring strategies under increasing pressure as employee confidence and contract demand grows

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Following reports that London-based SMEs are increasingly relying on temporary workers, specialist recruitment firm, Robert Half, has warned employers that worker confidence in securing a role remains high, putting greater pressure on hiring – and key resource retention - strategies.

Recent data from business finance leader, Sonovate, revealed that 78% of small and medium sized businesses in the capital have increased their reliance on contract or freelance workers, while 56% also reported an increase in permanent staff requesting a move to temp or contract positions.

According to Robert Half's own Jobs Confidence Index (JCI) – produced in association with the Centre for Economics and Business Research (Cebr) – employees and job seekers remain optimistic about both their job security and pay prospects which is likely influencing this move into flexible roles. The firm's data indicates that the job security confidence pillar of the Index is substantially up by 159.4 points when compared to the final quarter of the great recession in Q4 2009.

Robert Half's JCI also revealed that pay confidence in the market was up over the last quarter in Q4, rising 28.4 points. With job seeker confidence on an upward trajectory and influencing moves into the flexible labour market as a result, Robert Half has warned that businesses will face an uphill battle for talent – and those that cut back on staff now will struggle to replace them when needed.

Matt Weston, Senior Managing Director UK & Ireland, at Robert Half, commented:

“We are increasingly finding ourselves operating in an economic climate that is – for want of a better word – unmapped for us all. To see job confidence growing during a period of uncertainty really highlights the significant pressure facing hiring teams today. The battle for top talent continues to ramp up and with more staff actively seeking contract and temporary positions, businesses are going to continue to face challenges in their recruitment.

“While every firm's hiring strategy will be different, what I will say is this: those that fail to invest in skills now, will face a real struggle in the medium to long term when markets eventually settle into the new normal.”

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About Robert Half

Founded in 1948, Robert Half is the world's first and largest specialised talent solutions consultancy,

working to fill professional services roles at all levels within the finance and accounting, banking, technology, HR, marketing and legal sectors. The company has more than 300 staffing locations worldwide and offers hiring and job search services at www.roberthalf.co.uk

Robert Half understands that it takes time and effort to evaluate the best talent strategy for different businesses. For further independent advice to assist with your recruitment and workforce planning efforts, visit www.roberthalf.co.uk/advice.