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EDITORIAL



US businesses are throwing away an estimated 38 billion dollars in wasted time due to inefficient and defective research tools. 71 percent of business executives are frustrated with consumer search engines. This, according to a study published last month by FIND/SVP, has resulted in the launch of the new search engine 'Find.com' <<http://www.find.com>>, which combines free content from search engines and business web sites with premium

content on a pay-per-view basis. Issue 8 of VIP puts this new search engine for business professionals through its paces, looking at functionality, sources, strengths and weaknesses. VIP this month also publishes a comparative review of Gale's Virtual Reference Library and xreferplus; vital reading if you are already investing in one of these products or thinking of doing so. You can see samples and find out more about VIP and its sister publication VIP Eye -- the twice-monthly email newsletter that aims to be first to let you know about new product developments in the business information world - - at <<http://www.vivaVIP.com/>>.

Topicality and immediacy is something we also aim for in the FreePint Newsletter, and today we have what is probably the first report from the Perfect Learning Conference, a brand new UK-based conference attended by around 120 senior information professionals. Hazel Hall gives her impressions.

Our other article today sends out the message that among all the jargon of web design and development, there is nothing so important as the plain common sense of usability testing. It's stunning to read just how often this is overlooked in costly IT projects. Sarah Agarwal's article takes a plain talking approach that notes how the Usability Professionals Association (UPA) and well known usability Web gurus like Jakob Nielsen can always use input from information professionals. Nielsen is all over the press: FreePint were ahead of the game, interviewing him back in November 2002 <<http://www.freepint.com/go/n125>>.

I would like to raise a debate on usability at the FreePint Bar. What are the different usability approaches that those with a library science background bring to Web site development? How do these approaches compare to usability professionals with backgrounds in other disciplines such as human/computer interaction, information design or psychology? I wonder how many new roles and job titles there are for IT-savvy librarians in Web site usability? There are some interesting starting points for debate at the UPA web site at <<http://digbig.com/4bkas>>. Please post your thoughts and comments in reply to my posting at <<http://www.freepint.com/go/b29358>>.

I hope today's articles get you thinking.

Thanks for reading.

Annabel Colley Editor
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The FreePint Jobs Update is being circulated widely every two weeks. This free newsletter now has 2,000 direct subscribers and is posted at the Bar and in the Bar Digest (circulation 11,000).

To see the Jobs Update No.76 and read the new 'Jobs Advice' section, visit
<<http://www.freepint.com/go/b29183>>. To subscribe, modify your account at
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Here are some of the latest featured jobs:

Content and Vendor Manager

<<http://www.freepint.com/go/j3344>>
Lead content management strategy and integrate BIS with this bank's overall info strategy, use your CMS and vendor mgt skills.
Recruiter: Sue Hill Recruitment

Business Strategy Market Analyst

<<http://www.freepint.com/go/j3346>>
Market Analyst with 5 years experience to drive forward the business strategy of expanding niche organisation in Financial Services field.
Recruiter: Glen Recruitment

NB: There are 18 other jobs in the current edition of the Jobs Update
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MY FAVOURITE TIPPLES by Peter Kaiser



Peter Kaiser is a writer, editor, and IT consultant who lives in Switzerland and once taught at the Columbia University School of Library Science.

Submit your top five favourite Web sites. See the guidelines at <http://www.freepint.com/author.htm>.

- <http://www.jpl.nasa.gov/mer2004/rover-images/images.html> - An archive of all the images from the Mars exploration rovers. The landscapes are immediate and thrilling, especially in large formats.
- <http://www.npr.org/programs/specials/vote/list100.html> - National Public Radio programs about "the 100 most important American musical works of the 20th century". Excellent on-line listening, history and music.
- <http://www.archive.org/movies/movies.php> - Thousands of films -- ephemera and documentary clips dating back to the late 1800s, from documentaries to television commercials. Free to copy and watch. Wonderful complement to the Smithsonian's collection.
- http://viscog.beckman.uiuc.edu/djs_lab/demos.html - Inattention blindness is pan-human, fascinating and important topic which can't be adequately described in words: you must see the demos. Don't miss the gorilla. You'll be astounded.
- <http://www.exactaudiocopy.de/> - Absolutely the best CD audio ripping software, free for a post card. Convert WAV to MP3 with RazorLame, also free. Your fifteen favorite albums on one CD-R!

EVENTS

United Kingdom:

- STN Free workshops 27th - 28th July
<<http://www.freepint.com/go/e337>>

Canada:

- e-Entertainment WorldExpo Hosted by WowGao, 21st - 22nd July
<<http://www.freepint.com/go/e279>>
- Wireless & Mobile WorldExpo, 21st - 22nd July
<<http://www.freepint.com/go/e287>>
- e-Marketing WorldExpo Hosted by WowGao 17th - 18th August <<http://www.freepint.com/go/e278>>
- e-Institutions WorldExpo 8th - 9th September
<<http://www.freepint.com/go/e291>>

South Africa:

- Gartner Symposium/ITxpo Africa 2004, 2nd - 4th August <<http://www.freepint.com/go/e269>>
- Information Led Policing Management Seminar 28th July <<http://www.freepint.com/go/e339>>

Australia:

- KM Australia 2004 23rd - 24th August
<<http://www.freepint.com/go/e329>>
- This is just a selection from the 20 listings in FreePint Events. For your free listing, complete the form at <<http://www.freepint.com/events>>.
- Penny <penny@freepint.com>

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With a name like 'FreePint', it's easy to forget that this is actually a truly international community. We're reminded of this regularly by the global nature of research requests at the Bar. Information researchers generally have much more knowledge about the availability of documents in their own country than in others. For instance, an enquirer in Western Australia is asking about access to court documents here in the UK
<<http://www.freepint.com/go/b29342>>.

I have to admit to finding this 'investigative' side of information very exciting. Like the range of useful advice give to someone trying to find out the aliases a person may be using in Canada
<<http://www.freepint.com/go/b29009>>. Perhaps you know of a service offering international address verification for individuals
<<http://www.freepint.com/go/b29161>>?

Of course, it's the more routine information work which is most common, where the skill is in knowing which sources and publications are available where. Information brokers have stepped in to help locate a database source for the Harvard Business Review online, with general tips on source database identification
<<http://www.freepint.com/go/b29191>>. Those handling reference-type enquires may want to check out the in-depth review in this month's VIP, which compares Gale's Virtual Reference Library with xreferplus, and also reviews Find.com
<<http://www.freepint.com/go/b29338>>.

As usual, the last couple of weeks have seen a mixed bag of other enquiries at the Bar. Has anyone successfully used 'forms' in Acrobat for gathering data? I, like the enquirer, have never managed to use the feature properly, so I hope someone can help <<http://www.freepint.com/go/b29300>>. Do you have a favourite UK search engine that you could recommend <<http://www.freepint.com/go/b29353>>? Perhaps you know of some research to help a business case for a nine-day fortnight
<<http://www.freepint.com/go/b29356>>.

The Student Bar is starting to quieten down for the summer, but perhaps you could point to some research into the affect of blogs and instant messaging on students' reading skills
<<http://www.freepint.com/go/s4155>>? Or maybe you have advice for someone completing a Masters in Information Systems who can't decide what type of roll to go for
<<http://www.freepint.com/go/s4152>>?

Finally, if you have any comments, suggestions or feedback about anything we do, then there is now an anonymous 'Suggestion Box' on all sites across the network. It's on the 'Contact' page, and FreePint's can be found at
<<http://www.freepint.com/contact.htm>>. We've been doing what we do for a while now, and we'd really value your thoughts on what we could be doing better or differently.

William Hann <william.hann@freepint.com>
Managing Editor, FreePint

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TIPS ARTICLE

"In the Groove at the Grove - A review of the Perfect Learning Conference "
By Dr Hazel Hall

Dr Hazel Hall is Senior Lecturer in the School of Computing at Napier University, Edinburgh where she teaches modules on knowledge management and architecture, business information sources, and intelligence and information delivery <<http://www.bim.napier.ac.uk/~hazel/esis/hazel.html>>. Hazel has completed research and consultancy work with a range of organisations including KPMG, Sun Microsystems and Scottish Enterprise. She has published widely in professional journals and books, and at conferences. She is on the Executive Committee of Online 2004 and conducts refereeing duties for a number of academic journals and research bodies. With Steve Borley, she is co-founder of the newly-established Scottish Information Network, a networking group for business information professionals based in and around Edinburgh.

[A review of the Perfect Learning Conference, The Grove, Hertfordshire 29th-30th June, 2004, <<http://www.perfectinfo.com/learningevents.htm>> by Dr Hazel Hall, School of Computing, Napier University, Edinburgh]

At the end of June around 120 information professionals, drawn mainly from the corporate sector, with a strong representation from financial services and law firms, gathered for the Information Professional Learning Conference at The Grove <<http://www.thegrove.co.uk>>, Hertfordshire. The conference was organised by Perfect Learning. The sponsors were LexisNexis <<http://www.lexisnexis.com>>, Alacra <<http://www.alacra.com>>, FT <<http://www.ft.com>>, Euromonitor <<http://www.euromonitor.com/>>, Intelligent Resources <<http://www.intelligentresources.com>>, Standard and Poors <<http://www.standardandpoors.com>>, OneSource <<http://www.onesource.com>>, ISI Emerging Markets <<http://www.securities.com>>, People First and Solutions. City Information Group <<http://www.cityinformation.org.uk>> was the conference partner.

The format, designed in response to market research conducted amongst Perfect Information's customers, comprised a mixture of formal conference papers and breakout sessions, with one panel debate at the end of the second morning. Opportunities to network were provided between sessions at meals times and breaks, at the conference dinner, and around a small product exhibition to which some of the conference sponsors contributed. Here friendships were made and renewed, and much "invisible" work conducted.

Snowden and Pasco

Of the six formal papers, the discussion of "Strategies and techniques for optimising the organisational role of the information management function" by Dave Snowden of the Cynefin Centre <<http://www.cynefin.net>>) generated most interest amongst the delegates. Eva Pascoe of zoom.co.uk <<http://www.zoom.co.uk>> was also a popular speaker on the theme of leadership, and on how to emerge from, as well as direct, change. Given the expectation that the conference would generate ideas that could be transformed into actions, it is not surprising that both speakers were questioned on how to implement the imaginative strategies that they proposed.

Breakout sessions discussed practical solutions

The break-out sessions provided a good opportunity for interaction between delegates, both in the sessions themselves and immediately afterwards. Here the operational difficulties of running corporate information services were

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voiced and practical solutions sought. For example, in a session where the facilitator advocated blue-printing as a framework for content delivery, the debate turned on the complexity of information service provision, where much of the information professional's work activities are unique. In another break-out session, focused on knowledge management, there was much debate of the term's meaning (and whether it mattered that it was misunderstood), reasons to invest in knowledge management, and its key ingredients. Discussion within this group led to some interesting suggestions, for example on how to integrate information staff into project teams so that valuable insight is not lost as soon as their work is completed.

Conference Organisation

Delegates were impressed by a clever ploy on the part of the conference organisers to label the reverse of everyone's badge with stickers indicating their break-out sessions. There were no lost delegates wandering the corridors over the two days - something regularly witnessed at other professional events. Seating at the conference dinner was similarly impressive. It was not evident how names had been matched to tables, but everyone appeared to be delighted with their company for the meal, which included a magician who roved from table to table. These examples are indicative of the skill and thoughtfulness that went into the organisation of the conference.

The mixed format worked well, especially at a venue where all activity - work, socialising and sleeping - could take place in the single wing of a hotel. And what a lovely hotel it was! For many delegates it was also surprisingly conveniently located. For example, those travelling from Scotland found it more accessible than many central London locations due to its proximity to Luton airport. A further advantage of meeting out of town was that delegates felt they could concentrate on full participation at the conference without the fear of being dragged back to the office at any moment. Mobile phones were switched off for much of the time and attention was focused on the proceedings.

The organisers might have taken further advantage of the venue by extending the second day's activities later into the afternoon. There

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- 'Information and Libraries' articles and resources in the FreePint Portal
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was certainly an appetite amongst the delegates to stay longer and capitalise on the relationships that they had begun to build in the earlier sessions. For future events, closer attention could be paid to matching themes and speakers to session format. This is not a comment on the topics covered, but rather how they were handled. For example, the material presented in a couple of the less-engaging papers in the main lecture room would have been better suited to a workshop format. Those with particular training needs could then have elected to attend them. This would also have had the advantage of freeing up the main room for further inspired performances, such as the two mentioned above, or to give the best speakers longer to present. Similarly, it was over-ambitious to run a panel session that lasted over an hour in the main room with the whole cohort of delegates: genuine interactivity is very difficult to achieve with groups of such a size, even when supplied with "Who wants to be a millionaire" style voting pads.

Overall, participants both enjoyed and benefited from their two days at the Grove. At the conference close there was much talk of "next time". Will Perfect Learning be running another event in 2005? A number of informational professionals who were fortunate to attend this time around do hope so.

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Shivaji Shiva is a solicitor in the Charity Team at Russell-Cooke Solicitors. He advises a range of not-for-profit organisations, including national archives and museums, on issues including copyright and data protection.

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"Staying Legal: A Guide to Issues and Practice Affecting the Library, Information and Publishing Sectors" Reviewed by Shivaji Shiva

'Staying Legal' is a no-nonsense, accessible set of essays designed to provide 'individuals now engaged in information work and the knowledge industries' with sufficient legal background and understanding to carry out their professions responsibly and legally.

Starting with a broad overview of how the legal system is constituted, the book goes on to look in greater detail at areas of particular relevance to the information industry. These include copyright and other intellectual property rights; fundamentals of contract law and its applications in information work; agreements including licenses and codes of practice; an overview of data protection law; and a look at criminal law and liability. There is also a useful chapter on legal resources including those available over the Internet.

A particularly useful section for many people will be the final chapter 'Staying Legal: from awareness to action' which details a sobering array of scenarios in which the legal risks highlighted by the book has led to legal action and resulting awards. The chapter goes on to review the main categories of legal risk and to consider means of prioritising and managing those risks.

The book is very clearly laid out, and within the overall structure, each chapter is divided into short, digestible subsections. In this second edition, the editors are able to ensure that the book is brought up to date with changes since it was first published in 1999.

This book is likely to be most useful to individuals who have an interest in the law and are looking for an accessible introduction to a broad range of legal areas. As its editors make clear, it is not a legal handbook. If you are looking for a practical legal guide to the issues that may confront you on a day-to-day basis, this is not the book for you. However, if you are interested in finding out more about the legal principle, which underlie the decisions that you make, this book provides an

excellent introduction. The scope of the book is broad within the constraints of its 272 pages and it will certainly assist librarians and information managers who need to develop their understanding of legal issues in order to negotiate with other professionals in the sector.

In terms of practical guidance, the sections on public access to legal information and on assessing and dealing with legal risks are particularly useful. The emphasis in each case is on engaging actively with the law and developing strategies for ensuring your organisation is protected from key legal risks.

If read in the spirit in which it is intended, this book will provide useful first steps towards understanding what is legal. You will need to contact your lawyer or find a different book if you need guidance on the more practical aspects of staying legal.

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FREE PINT

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FEATURE ARTICLE

"Usability - ignore it at your peril!"

By Sarah Agarwal

Users are not a 'nice to have' item



Sarah is a consultant in Usability and Project Management, working for the Internet Development group <<http://www.ilrt.bris.ac.uk/id>>. Recent projects include a user needs analysis, practical usability testing consultations, project managing the development of journal publishing software for a charity, and a web application to allow courses to be booked online.

Sarah has a degree in Library and Information Studies. She has previously worked in intranets, knowledge management, design, usability and information science. Employers have included the BBC, the Environment Agency and a commercial design agency. She has written and presented on web design, information architecture, usability and change management issues.

I was recently invited to take part in two events. One was to give a user-centred perspective to the national JISC portals programme <<http://www.jisc.ac.uk>>. The other was to do a presentation on usability at the UKOLN Public Library Web Managers Workshop <<http://www.ukoln.ac.uk/events/public-workshop-04/>>.

At both of them, the user perspective (a.k.a. "the soft side") was very welcome, well attended, appreciated, etc. etc. There was, as always, a slight sense of excitement as my contributions represented "something a bit different" from the 'real' issues of the events. Yet the evidence is that most people in the not-for-profit sector are producing websites and applications without any real understanding of whether they are actually needed or wanted, or presented to people in a way that they can be used successfully. And this is where I get flummoxed. How can this not be the main issue? If one aims to provide a service to people via the web, surely it's fundamental to make sure it's relevant, useful and usable. Isn't this arguably the most fundamental issue of all?

So why don't web managers do this sort of thing? Why is it seen as 'nice to do'? Firstly, because the people who fund the projects rarely demand that user consultation is a condition of funding. Secondly, because the same people are often more interested in being seen to sponsor sexy, technically exciting projects than ones for which there's a genuine requirement. Thirdly, there seems to be a reluctance to charter the unpredictable territories of user requirements - what happens if your target audience thinks your interface sucks? User consultation is rarely good for the ego.

So, what is usability? There are loads of formal definitions, but it's basically about spending time with the intended users of a website or application to make sure it does what they need it to, in a way they find reasonably easy. Usability and accessibility are closely linked, though accessibility is more of a technical and ethical guidance framework.

General usability guidelines

These are very useful for people who are new to the topic and appreciate a simple checklist to compare their website with. These are some of the easily understandable ones, which are supported by research:

- Sun Microsystems' 'Writing for the Web' guidelines can be used to ensure that users can read content on a site with ease <<http://www.sun.com/980713/webwriting/>>.
- Stanford Web Credibility Research has produced ten guidelines to ensure that websites are seen as credible and trustworthy <<http://www.webcredibility.org/guidelines/>>.
- The National Cancer Institute has lists of design guidelines, where each one is accompanied by an indication of the supporting research <<http://www.usability.gov/guidelines/index.html>>.

- The W3C Web Accessibility Initiative's guidelines are frequently relevant to usability as well as accessibility, and are the standards recommended by UK government. Ironically, however, they can be hard to understand <<http://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG10/full-checklist.html>>.

However, these are not substitutes for actually talking to users.

Finding users

When doing any usability work with users, it may seem obvious to point out that the users should be representative of the target audience. It is essential to communicate with real users, as they are the only people who can reliably contribute data to enable a website to meet their requirements.

By far the easiest way of locating users is to go through communications previously received, such as emails, phone calls and visitors. Alternative sources can include professional and trade organisations, asking complementary organisations, posting to email lists, asking local colleges and schools, etc. It may be necessary to encourage users to take part by paying them a fee or, for surveys, entering them into a draw for a prize.

When it comes to usability testing websites (i.e. getting users to run through a site and give you feedback) the good news is that you only need between 5 and 10 users to identify the majority of usability issues. Most people find this hard to believe until they've done a usability testing session and find the same problems coming up again and again.

GOLD

A look back at FreePint, from this time last year to six years ago:

- FreePint No.140 10th July 2003. "Copyright and the Internet: Myth and Reality" and "The Product Development Cycle" <<http://www.freepint.com/issues/100703.htm>>
- FreePint No.116 11th July 2002. "Content Management" <<http://www.freepint.com/issues/110702.htm>>
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Related FreePint links:

- 'Webmaster' articles in the FreePint Portal <<http://www.freepint.com/go/p183>>
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- Read this article online, with activated hyperlinks <<http://www.freepint.com/issues/150704.htm#feature>>
- Access the entire archive of FreePint content <http://www.freepint.com/portal/content/>

Gathering users' requirements

On many projects, the method of gathering requirements for a system is often limited to a quick email around a few individuals and some high level discussions with managers. Politically, consultation with managers can be important. Yet, these are rarely the end-users of the system, and it is with the real users that a website will succeed or flounder.

At this stage, usability professionals do something called 'task analysis', which gives a picture of what people need a system for and how they are likely to use it. This can be a bit tricky to get right, take a look at <<http://www.adaptivepath.com/services/taskanalysis.php>> for a description of how it's done.

This is probably the most 'technical' of all the critical usability processes, and where you'll benefit most from employing a specialist.

Developing prototypes

The leap from understanding users' needs and goals to creating a system is a huge and difficult one, due to the complexities that are inherent in predicting new ways of doing things, which is basically what happens when new systems are constructed. However, rather than worrying about how to construct a whole new system that will be usable and useful, it is much easier to construct some quick prototypes (which can be in HTML or on paper) of how the new site may work. These can be tested, iterated and re-tested with users in the same way that 'live' sites are tested.

It is likely that a graphic designer will be employed to create the new prototypes. If so, the designer should be fully versed in the W3C WAI guidelines [2] and should have an understanding of, and empathy for, usable design. The government's Quality Framework for UK Government Website Design [3] gives some good advice on how designers can be evaluated and how the commissioning process should work.

Two examples of paper prototypes can be seen at <<http://www.cs.usm.maine.edu/~welly/cos368/topics/prototypingB.htm>> and <http://www.gdoss.com/images/lmf_paper_prototype.gif>.

User testing

User testing is the most popular usability technique, and you can do it yourself with effective results. The most common way to carry out a test is to ask a group of users to complete a set of tasks on the website, e.g. 'find a newspaper article', 'find a contact phone number'. This raises the issue that the test organiser needs to know what tasks and goals users commonly want to complete on the site, which in turn demonstrates how usability techniques work together - the tasks identified in the requirements gathering phase can be used to test against.

Once the tests are complete, the results can be collated and the problems graded according to the impact they have on users' capacity to complete their tasks. This grading will help to prioritise changes.

MIT libraries have carried out several usability

tests and the documentation is indexed at <<http://www.jkup.net/terms-studies.html>>. A clip of a usability test can be seen at <<http://www.usermetrics.net/index.cfm?page=115>>. Much useful information about how to conduct tests and interpret the results can be found at <<http://www.usability.gov>>.

Some other techniques**Log analysis**

Analysing site statistics can give some useful ideas about what users are looking for and how they are behaving on the site. This can be used to get ideas about user behaviour. They are not a substitute for user consultation. An example of log analysis for New Zealand Digital Library is available at <<http://www.cs.waikato.ac.nz/~stevej/Research/PAPERS/dl98logs.pdf>>.

'Competitive' review

Users can be asked what they think of similar sites, and this can be done by informal chats. If there is an opportunity for collaboration with complementary sites, the results of usability tests and evaluations can be shared (within the limits of the Data Protection Act). However, as each website is different, there are clearly limitations to the usefulness of this technique.

Conclusion

Trying to make sure that websites and applications are useful and usable for their users is not a 'nice thing to do', it's straight up common sense (though it's not common). Particularly in the not-for-profit sector, where the information available can make a real contribution to people's lives, it's disingenuous to ignore them. It's relatively easy and cheap - massively cheaper than making a system that is ineffective. In my experience of doing usability consultation, service teams who are party to such activities are deeply appreciative of what they find out, and become instant devotees of usability exercises.

More information

'The web is bad and it's getting worse' by Jack Schofield. The Guardian, 2002 <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/Archive/Article/0,4273,4378023,00.html>>.

Research into the importance of user involvement in successful projects <http://www.standishgroup.com/sample_research/chaos_1994_2.php>.

A good overview of usability from the French company, Axance <http://www.axance.com/08english/08english_00homepage.htm>.

References

- [1] Why you only need to test with 5 users. Jakob Nielsen. 2000 <<http://www.useit.com/alertbox/20000319.html>>
- [2] Web Accessibility Initiative. W3C <<http://www.w3.org/WAI/>>
- [3] Quality Framework for UK Government Website Design; Usability issues for government websites. July 2003. Office of the E-Envoy, Cabinet Office <<http://www.e-envoy.gov.uk/Resources/WebGuidelines>>

Senior Recruiter "Sales" to the Forefront of Business Development



Alan Phee & Sue Hill

It has been two months since Alan Phee joined the Sue Hill Recruitment team. The results are palpable, with placements in information business-to-business as well as library software management sales. The benefits to both clients and candidates are already obvious!

"For me, personality is king", says Alan, who has over 17 years of very in-depth recruitment practice

experience across corporate businesses, ranging from graduate trainees up to boardroom level; he is also a former partner and founder member of Phee Farrer Jones. "I'm looking for presence and the ability to communicate a strong sales message. Selling is about impact - it's what actually persuades you to buy something!" he adds.

"The staff here really do listen to people, and as a result they deliver what's needed, not try to sell them something they don't actually want. The quality speaks for itself"

"I decided that Sue Hill Recruitment was the company for me following talks with Sue when she suggested that the time was right for me to use my skills within the team. Success can be based not just on assertiveness, but also on people's fundamental understanding and knowledge of the market. It's not just 'bells and whistles', but about the people you employ. I can see

that Sue Hill Recruitment is about quality driven recruitment, which works very well within the information sector. The staff here really do listen to people, and as a result they deliver what's needed, not try to sell them something they don't actually want. The quality speaks for itself".

Alan can see that he's able to make a solid impact on the business revenue of the company. "I'm keen to build a department that will lead to effective growth of both people and revenue, and that will stand out from the competitors, as I've done before." He stresses that it's about client satisfaction: "I understand my clients well. Loyalty is evident when customers come back time and time again.

"I see a great future here, building a brand within a brand. It's a wonderful opportunity for a company to lead the way in sales recruitment. We understand the sector in its entirety - not just the people who are selling products, but the people who are using them too. We offer a total solution!"

Midlands Office reports Continued Expansion in Region

The Sue Hill Recruitment Midlands Office is the result of a partnership with Margaret Brittin and Chris Crabtree, two well-known information professionals from the region, who also have their own information consultancy Information Unlimited.

The Midlands area has probably the second highest density of libraries in the UK. Additionally there are many organisations where information managers might be required. The agency had clients in that area almost from day one, but felt it was important not to leave employers wondering why they should come to a London agency to find permanent, temporary or contract candidates.

Extensive market research showed that not just clients, but also candidates would be more likely to use the agency if there was an office in the region and thus the partnership was formed.

Regular candidate interviews are held in central Birmingham and also other regional centres (Warwick and Loughborough being two recent examples) and the feedback from candidates and clients is very positive. The consultants at Sue Hill Recruitment much prefer the opportunity to meet candidates face to face (rather than perhaps a telephone interview) when conducting registration interviews. It fosters an atmosphere where

constructive advice can be given on the many aspects of job hunting. Most importantly news on the local job market can be conveyed, something that candidates always want to know more about



Chris Crabtree, Sue Hill & Margaret Brittin

Claim your Benefits

Temping for Sue Hill Recruitment is not all work - there's some play too! We have a very popular annual Temps' Party, and subsidised hair-dressing at a salon, good value reconditioned PCs, special rates on holiday apartments

in Barcelona and training are all benefits that our temps have enjoyed over the last year. And we pride ourselves on our excellent customer care of all our temps, not least our flexible advance pay system.

Summer 2004



Show us the Money!

A storm of controversy was stirred up by the advertisement of a Librarian for the House of Commons, with a salary of £72,000-117,000. How could a Librarian possibly command such a vast sum was one viewpoint; and why on earth not was the other! As an expert in the field, Sue Hill was approached for her view by Information World Review. "A big job should command an appropriate salary," she reiterates. "We recruit jobs in this salary range and know the level of responsibility is high; often the budgets and staff levels that these senior people manage are greater than those of SMEs. Failure to attract individuals with the right level of ability would be disastrous for the organisation recruiting".

Many of us in the information world can see precisely what such a highly skilled candidate can bring to prestigious role. The job gained instant media notoriety, and yet its startling effect on the world at large is thrown into sharp relief by the adverts immediately surrounding it in the CILIP Gazette, which were as low as £14,000pa. Why should we be so shocked by the one salary and yet take the other for granted. Sue Hill Recruitment is active in benchmarking jobs and salaries for our clients, creating positive awareness leading to best value, and is passionate about ensuring that the value of information is recognised and given its due.



Graduate Traineeships

It's never too early to recruit a Graduate Trainee. We constantly meet new candidates who are interested in developing a career in information and are looking to gain a year's work experience before embarking on a post-graduate course. Some have proved so successful that clients have welcomed them back fully qualified upon completion of the course. The early bird catches the worm, so don't delay in ensuring that you get the best candidate to join your team.