

REC: Diversity agenda still important in Recession

Monday 22nd June 2009

By Sam Collins

Despite the Recession a commitment to the diversity agenda is still important, according to the Recruitment and Employment Confederation (REC's) Diversity and Inclusion Forum.

REC Director of External Relations Tom Hadley said: "Diversity is not just good in itself but is also good for business.

"Issues of fairness are increasingly important, and ignoring them will lead to staff disengagement. Communicating the rationale for change and having fair and transparent processes maintains morale and productivity which is crucial for organisations at a time of recession.

"The diversity agenda will also become more important when from next year there will be legislation to promote equality and diversity in the workplace in the form of the Equality Bill."

The Forum was attended by a senior official from the Government Equalities Office who gave recruiters an update on the progress of the Bill.

Sarah Gordon Associate Director at The Sammons Group and Chair of the Diversity and Inclusion Forum said: "In one sense, the Equality Bill will make life a lot easier for recruiters by combining various different strands of discrimination legislation into one single Act.

"However some of the proposals, such as positive action which would allow employers in certain situations to pick a candidate from an under-represented group at the final interview stage is going to be difficult for the employer community to understand, particularly for SMEs without the HR resources of large organisations.

"This is where the recruitment industry is able to provide a helping hand to educate and inform businesses and organisations."

The Bill also proposes to tackle the gender pay gap through making the private sector publish the differences of pay between men and women. The question of how women are faring during the recession is one of topical debate and the Forum heard how women can command higher pay rates as well as developing different skills and experience through working on an interim basis.

Rachel Youngman, Chair of Interimwomen.com a business network supporting women working as Interim Managers said: "We hope that when the Equality Bill is published, a more diverse and inclusive workplace will be promoted by businesses all across the UK.

"Interim Management is one area where equal pay is not a gender issue, as Interims are hired at a daily rate purely based on their experience and skills.

"In the current climate in particular Interim Management could prove a highly attractive career option for experienced female executives looking to set up their own small businesses and work at a senior level within companies on a flexible basis.

"We hope that the recruitment industry will be promoting it as an alternative career option for

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Posted By Nicholas Lakeland - Silverman Sherliker LLP on Monday 22nd June 2009 02:01:19
in a multi-everything world you have to be insane not to look to diversify workforce as much as possible. It opens up new ideas and markets and gives you an added dimension and an edge over your competitors. It's just good business and in this climate you must be mad to turn down any opportunity or advantage that comes your way.