**Blackfoot UK Limited – A Case Study**

**How HR Influence saved this growing consultancy 75% in recruitment fees in 18 months**

Like many knowledge-based consultancy businesses, Blackfoot’s growth plans relied on attracting additional talent in a candidate-driven market while retaining their experienced team - all within a competitive industry.

This CyberSecurity business, which now employs ca. 20 permanent staff, realised that effective recruitment and retention of experienced talent would be key, especially in a sector limited by skills shortages. Recruitment agencies charged fees of up to 25% of salary for each hire – a high cost for a company with aspirational growth plans.

In addition, Blackfoot found that agencies often sent candidate profiles without getting to know the business and truly understanding its requirements – wasting valuable management time. This cyber consultancy could clearly see that recruitment through agencies would be time-consuming, cost-prohibitive and constrain its expansion plans.

For this reason they made a strategic decision to engage specialist human resourcing partner HR Influence because of their people and resourcing expertise. So what tactics did HR Influence bring, and what were the results?

**The challenge:**

CEO James Walker sets the scene… “Resourcing through agencies was costly and time consuming, and our Company found itself at risk of missing our market’s growth curve. We also knew that retaining our existing highly experienced people was just as important and we didn’t want to lose focus on that. Bringing in HR Influence has had a highly positive effect - and brought us the kind of cost savings in resourcing that made a huge difference to a business of our size.”

The challenge facing Blackfoot looked like this:

* How to attract and recruit experienced and highly sought-after consultants and support staff that would be a good fit for the business in a highly competitive industry
* How to do this and avoid hiring fees between 17.5% and 25% of salary and the associated time involved in screening
* How to protect and retain the existing workforce of highly valued and skilled employees that had been employed and nurtured over the years.

**The solution:**

Gesa Grabis of HR Influence introduced a direct sourcing model that avoided the need for agency recruitment. Gesa got to know the business, services and technical requirements along with its people and culture. Through an attraction strategy based on niche job boards, she was able to attract great talent and personally screen CVs for candidates with relevant experience, skill and cultural fit, saving valuable cost and management time.

In addition, HR Influence provided an outsourced point of expertise, helping Blackfoot to introduce best practice HR that:

* Supported the business as its organisational structure changed
* Developed an HR strategy and improvement plan
* Informed the business on contracts and guided staff reviews and HR policies
* Ensured compliance with employment law.

All of which created a better people function within the business which, in turn, helped retain their highly sought-after team.

**The results:**

The recruitment strategy developed by HR Influence has seen Blackfoot grow over the years. In the 18 months from April 2018, the company took on 15 staff. HR Influence sourced 11 of these employees via direct means into a variety of roles, including Head of Information Security Practice, Information Security Consultants, Penetration Testers and Sales. Four further recruits were referred by existing employees. No staff were hired via recruitment agencies.

The cost of hiring these roles through agencies would have amounted to c.£103k based on 17.5% recruitment fees. In stark contrast, the cost from HR Influence was c.£24,000 including time and cost of job adverts – a net saving of over £75,000 on the bottom line plus productivity gains for senior leaders who no longer needed to sift through large numbers of CVs. These savings allowed Blackfoot to invest in outsourced HR expertise and the reassurance of having experienced best practice HR supporting our people.

Commenting on the process, co-owner Matthew Tyler adds, “With the help of Gesa and HR Influence, we have reduced our hiring costs by over 75% in a competitive hiring market. It’s been a highly effective strategy that has delivered experienced employees who fit with our business culture and has left us with more time to focus on achieving our expansion plans.”

**About HR Influence:**

HR Influence are a strategic partner to leaders who want to achieve their vision by optimising staff performance, maximising efficiencies & reducing cost. Led by MCIPD qualified Gesa Grabis, we get to know our clients’ business and offer guidance for people issues and find

pragmatic solutions to difficult situations. We typically support SME’s with 10 to 150 staff who have aspirations to grow their companies through their talented people.