

AUSTRALIA'S TOP RECRUITERS

EXECUTIVE



"We were after responsiveness to rapidly changing market conditions for a hard-to-fill role. Underwood Executive delivered."

So said one satisfied voter for this year's Executive category Gold winner.

Executive positions remain perhaps the trickiest of all to fill successfully – and this will only continue as executive and leadership roles cope with complex, ambiguous times. Those working in this space must display patience,

professionalism and, more than anything, in-depth market knowledge.

Nicole Underwood, founder and managing director of Underwood Executive, says there continues to be extensive competition for talent in the marketplace, and organisations still face the challenge of identifying who their high-performing talent are; how they can continue to grow and develop that talent; and then understanding what future talent are

required to achieve their business objectives.

"Agility, over experience, and resilience continue to be key competencies in demand, as well as innovation and 'change agents' in executive leadership roles," she says.

"We are also seeing organisations continuing to invest in their employee value proposition to assist in enticing high-performing talent, which is always available – the skill is finding it, enticing that talent and then developing talent so people stay."

Underwood has also seen the impact of technology. Overall, clients are more aware and informed of what they are paying for, and the more transactional the recruitment process the more they see that they can do it themselves.

"This means consultants will need to become more strategic, using their skills and the 'human touch' for talent acquisition, whilst using AI and technology to assist with finding talent, screening and background checks," she says. "There is certainly a trend towards more social engagement and recruiting, with proactive sourcing and the creation of talent pools vs transactional candidate generation."

Traditional accounting roles are back in vogue – sought after by employers who are willing to spend on senior professionals whose jobs are unlikely to be affected by automation. In professional practice, qualified and experienced external auditors are in demand, according to the *Hays Recruitment Job Report* for January to June, for reasons including a leakage of candidates to commercial organisations.

That said, Hays still reports that virtual CFOs are in growing demand as more firms seek their services and providers continue to populate the market.

Professionals with both SMSF and tax experience will be "highly valued", as Hays says candidates with significant experience in both areas are a rarity. R&D tax accountants will be in demand due to growing client requirements to get incentives across the line.

Management accountants are currently in high demand in the public sector. Hays expects a spike in temporary or contract-based roles

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES



in management accounting. The public sector will be on the hunt for financial analysts, with strong and high-level Excel and OLAP (online analytical processing) application expertise.

It's the scope of challenges in professional services that brings Gold winner Nicole

Underwood coming back for more.

"We genuinely love consulting with a wide range of businesses and understanding their broader business goals, including their unique challenges, opportunities and culture," she tells HRD.

THANK YOU

for voting us Executive Recruiter of the Year 2018