

Is 2017 set to be another candidate driven year?



Almost half of UK employers (48 per cent) expect to face a shortage of suitable candidates to fill permanent jobs in 2017, according to a *JobsOutlook* survey by the Recruitment & Employment Confederation (REC) carried out in December 2016.

For the last six months employers have consistently cited engineering and technical jobs as most likely to come up against a skills shortage. The latest report shows that health & social care and construction employers are also expecting to struggle to find people to fill their vacancies.

With one in three (32 per cent) organisations reporting to have no spare workforce capacity, hiring in these sectors is likely to be under severe pressure in the New Year (2017). A quarter of employers (24 per cent) expect to take on more permanent staff in the first quarter of 2017.

The latest survey of 601 employers also reveals that business confidence is improving:

- 30 per cent feel that economic conditions are improving, up from 27 per cent in the previous rolling quarter.
- 38 per cent expect hiring and investment to improve, up from 33 per cent who said the same last month.

Despite these positive trends, business confidence remains significantly lower than before the EU referendum. In the three months to June almost half (48

per cent) employers surveyed reported that UK economic conditions were improving, 18 points higher than December 2016 score.

REC Chief Executive Kevin Green says:

“Employers are raising red flags about being unable to fill the jobs they have available. We urge the government to take this issue seriously when considering changes to immigration policy. Limiting access to skills and talent from abroad at a time of severe candidate shortages will risk future prosperity for all.

“In 2015 UK businesses invested more than £45 billion in training and skills development. While this long-term commitment to upskilling the domestic workforce is vital, there is an immediate need for people from abroad. Employers need the talent, attitude and skills of those who are keen to work to make British businesses and public services successful.

“Across the economy, in high-skill sectors such as engineering and technology and in non-graduate roles in social care, hospitality and construction, employers are already facing labour shortages. This is not a new problem, but if further restrictions are placed on workers from the EU the situation will only get worse. The UK is at near-full employment, and the idea that the domestic labour force could fill all the opportunities available is a non-starter.”

If you need to recruit in 2017 you need to plan well in advance, time to fill vacancies has significantly increased over recent times, especially for in-house teams, with some roles taking up to 10 weeks to get to offer stage. If the right candidate for your vacancy has a 3 month notice period, you could be looking at around six months to fill the position.

Of course, as recruitment consultants, we represent plenty of passive candidates who have asked us to find them new roles, this could shorten the process considerably. These candidates register with us in strictest confidence and their CV's are not in the public domain.