

How a talent agency can add value

Case study with the ACCA

Karen Haynes writes: ACCA is the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants. Since they were founded in 1904, ACCA have expanded to over 1500 staff in 50+ countries.

We're proud to have worked as a recruitment partner to ACCA since 2010 and have placed 57 candidates during this time in specialist or senior roles.



Nigel Smith

One of our recent placements is **Nigel Smith**, recruited to the role of Organisation Design Manager, and based in ACCA's Glasgow office.

In this interview, Nigel gives his perspective on the kinds of added value FJWilson Talent Services (FJWTS) brings for employers seeking to recruit at specialist or senior levels – such as broadening the field of candidates and sector expertise.

KH: *Congratulations on your new role. Were you on the lookout for this sort of move?*

NS: Not at all! I was a passive candidate in the extreme. I was in a job with lots of stretch, not looking for a new role. Six or seven recruitment agencies had approached me in the previous year, but I hadn't been interested. Nothing in their approaches sold the jobs to me.

KH: *So why did you take notice when Fiona Wilson got in touch?*

NS: First, it was the way Fiona's email was written. It was very clear and matter-of-fact, with no 'overselling'. Although of course the client's identity was private at that stage, I sensed that Fiona knew the company well and the sort of candidate they were after.

The job itself intrigued me. It involved internationally-based organisational design. I'd not had an international dimension to my career. I wondered if I could do it. The client company worked in a different sector. I've always worked in financial services – were my skills portable?



KH: *How did you decide if your skills were portable, and if you might like the role?*

NS: I arranged to chat with Fiona about the role and the company. We talked through my career in organisational development and recognised that though language may differ across sectors the processes are similar. After all, every employer needs their organisation designing and building effectively.

KH: *That sounds as though together you ‘mapped’ your skills across from one sector to another?*

NS: Yes, but we didn’t just talk about my skills and experience. The discussion also enabled Fiona to explore whether I would fit ACCA’s culture, which she clearly understood. She told me that my collaborative way of working was a good match for ACCA.

I was keen to learn more about ACCA and happy to be put forward for a first interview.

KH: *It sounds like FJWilson’s understanding of the client’s world made a big impression on you?*

NS: It helped me a lot throughout the recruitment process.

Fiona did excellent interview preparation with me that included insight into ACCA strategy, direction and environment. This reinforced my feeling that the culture was likely to be compatible with my values. She also mentioned that ACCA’s hiring manager had come from the Financial Services sector. The belief planted in me that I could move across sectors was definitely growing.

So in the first ACCA interview I was able to be constructively direct: ‘This is how I work. If you want someone who works in a different way I’m not that person. I take time to develop and build relationships. I’m not in it just for the short term.’

Fiona’s client knowledge and open communication also meant I knew the job requirements in good time – for example, the amount of travel and how communications will work, with my line manager in ACCA’s London hub and me in Glasgow.



KH: *You clearly feel that FJWilson stands out amongst recruitment specialists...*

NS: Unlike the rather impersonal agencies I've experienced in the past, Fiona and her team at FJWilson have really invested time in getting to know me, making me feel that they're always there to help with any question or concern, however small.

FJWilson's sector knowledge is a real asset when it comes to identifying, briefing and putting forward suitable candidates to the client.

And as someone who wasn't even considering a job move and certainly not into a new sector until FJWilson approached me, I'd say their abilities and insights in searching and identifying potential, suitable candidates is excellent!