



Finding the perfect candidate: using a new agency for a new role

Case study with the Landscape Institute



Antonella Adamus, Head of Education, Standards and Engagement

When **Antonella Adamus** set out to find her perfect candidate for the new Education Manager role at the Landscape Institute, she decided to see whether FJWilson - recommended by several in her network - could meet the challenge.

In this interview with **Karen Haynes**, Antonella shared her experience of FJWilson's approach to sourcing this highly specialised role.

Karen Haynes: How did the Education Manager vacancy come about?

Antonella Adamus: It's a new role that reflects the crucial importance of education as the Landscape Institute widens its membership base. The Institute used to focus largely on landscape architects, but its recently developed competency framework shows how much it is changing: it covers the breadth of the landscape profession.

This new framework will support professionals from wider and more diverse backgrounds. As more people enter and progress in the landscape profession from different routes, education is even more at the heart of our success.

As Head of Education, Standards and Engagement, I have wide-ranging responsibilities, and with plans afoot in all three areas, the need for a dedicated Education Manager became clear. Approval for a full-time post was granted in the spring.

Karen: What skills and attributes does the post require?



Antonella: It's a pivotal but complex role. The complexity lies in bringing different strands and strategies together. It needs understanding in three different areas - which made it a very specialist role, with a narrow range of suitable candidates.

First the role requires an understanding of working in a membership organisation. Second, it needs knowledge of developing professional examination procedures and education and training programmes.

Finally, the post holder must understand accreditation in higher education and maintain the crucial relationships with our partner universities, delivering high course standards.

I found myself developing a clear idea of the sort of person I wanted - someone who'd get to grips quickly with the different parts of the role and have a real passion for each of them.

Karen: What factors shaped your recruitment strategy?

Antonella: As I refined the job description I recognised that I was looking for a very specific set of skills. And because of the breadth of my responsibilities I needed to appoint someone I could trust to deliver on my strategy.

I realised I'd need help finding that person!

We used our own channels to advertise the role (website and membership), but approached recruiters at an early stage. I've worked with a number of agencies in the past and engaged for this role on a 'no win no fee' (non-exclusive) basis.

Karen: Why did you approach FJWilson?

Antonella: I knew of FJWilson through personal recommendations from former colleagues, including people who'd found their next job through FJWilson.

Those with a candidate perspective commented on how well FJWilson matched them to roles and the excellent interview prepping they delivered. That gave me a lot of confidence in the care FJWilson would take.



And, of course, it was important too that FJWilson specialises in the membership organisation sector.

FJWilson's customer service and responsiveness was great from the outset. I made a general email enquiry and Fiona (Wilson) responded extremely quickly to set up a call, which then led to a video briefing call with Fiona, Lina (Beynar) and Coby (Drage).

Karen: How was the briefing call for the role?

Antonella: I was bowled over by it! FJWilson left no stone unturned.

Their questions went over and above the job description. They explored what kind of person would be a really good match for the organisation and for the way I work as well as for the role itself. A real 360-degree view.

Karen: Were you surprised by the thoroughness of the briefing call?

Antonella: Not surprised - more, it excited me. FJWilson put so much care into understanding me and drilling down into what I was looking for, it really filled me with confidence.

At the end, Fiona and Lina fed back that finding perfectly matched candidates for this specialist role would be challenging. But I'd much rather be presented with just a couple of top-quality candidates than receive dozens of unfocussed CVs - it's not a numbers game!

Karen: And how did the search and recruitment process work out?

Antonella: FJWilson really delivered in terms of matching and candidate preparation. The screening process was so good they found us a person who is the perfect match.

I'd like to make special mention of Coby, who was tasked with working 1:1 with candidates and me through the process. Coby was so energetic and motivated - super efficient - always 'on it'!



All FJWilson staff were so responsive and focused they made me feel as if I was their only client. This mindset of giving clients the utmost attention was especially impressive considering that I hadn't engaged FJWilson on an exclusive basis. Without a doubt, I'd recommend FJWilson 100 per cent.