

[Prism Executive Recruitment Market Survey 2009](#)

Prism focus on the Management Consultancy and related markets.

Recruitment is often seen as a barometer of the wider economy and this year has seen significant downturn. A Prism survey in May 2009, which revealed 80% of consulting employers were hiring and 70% were encountering skill shortages, suggested a positive picture that in our experience was not borne out by an increase in hiring. The authoritative MCA survey (based on Q4 2008 and Q1 2009 data) was more downbeat, as was a Top Consultant survey in early September.

Prism's experience is that there has however been a significant upturn in interview activity since the beginning of September and in early November we surveyed a prequalified sample of candidates and employers, with responses from 45 employers and 153 candidates.

The headline results show candidates are slightly more confident but, digging deeper into the responses, opinions are somewhat polarised, with some finding the market very buoyant and more active, while many others are commenting that things are very slow. As you might expect of a recruitment agency database, many are actively interviewing but many of these are making negative comments about the market. Common themes relate to slow recruitment processes, salary pressures, window shopping and employers setting very tight specifications and unwilling to compromise. Many candidates find their job search frustrating and fragmented.

On the employer side, the results are quite startling: the overwhelming majority are primed to recruit AND are finding candidates hard to find. While this might seem at odds with the candidate experience it suggests employers are chasing the same population of candidates who have the "best" CVs AND the "in demand" skillsets and sectors. These include: Public Sector (particularly security cleared candidates), Energy/Utilities, Financial Services, Strategic IT, risk, lean and transformation (both consulting and delivery).

Employers seem to find themselves in the perhaps unexpected position of being resource constrained: it will be interesting to see how they respond over the coming months.



Employer Response

- Nearly 80% of Consultancy firms are currently hiring.
(Compared to 82% in May 2009)
- 81% are more likely to hire now compared to 3 months ago. (Compared to 55%)
- 79% believe candidates with the right skills are hard to find. (Compared to 67%)

"High calibre candidates are hard to find and those found are often reluctant or nervous about moving"

"There's plenty of average candidates around but that's not what we're after!"

"The market needs specialist consultants and the special combination of skills is difficult to find"

"We have been surprised at the low levels of high quality applicants. We've been inundated with responses, but finding really high quality individuals has not been easy."

Candidate Response

- 59% believe the job market is as expected or better.
(Compared to 50% in May 2009)
- 75% of active candidates have been attending interviews recently.
(Compared to 84%)
- 52% consider the market to be improving. (Compared to 47%)

"Firms are taking longer to turn good intentions into hiring decisions"

"What opportunities there are seem to be very focussed. We're not returning to the "fight for talent" of recent years."

"There appears to be an increased trend towards very tightly defined job roles and specifications"

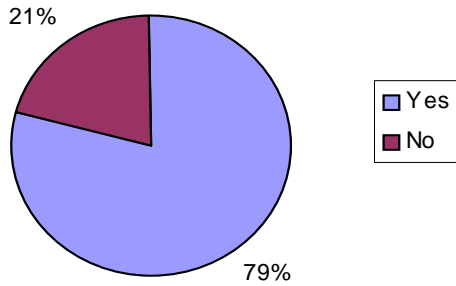
"Recruiters can afford to be more fussy in their selection, as the market is flooded with good people. If they have 10 requirements they will only interview those who meet all ten of the criteria; nine will not do!"

"I am expecting things will bounce up a bit further in January as everyone gets a bit less nervous about the economy and spending money."

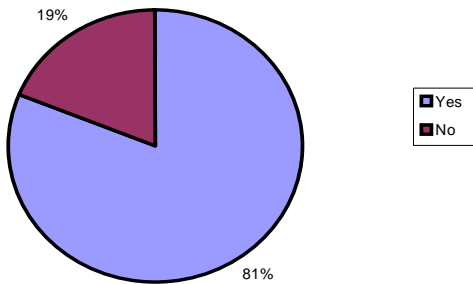
"I'm hoping the market will pick up in Q1 as more companies increase their confidence in the economy."

Employer Response

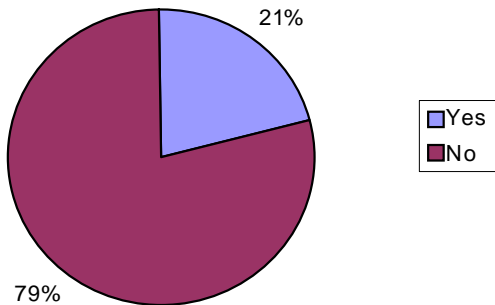
Is your firm currently actively recruiting consultants?



Are you more likely to hire staff now than you were 6 months ago?

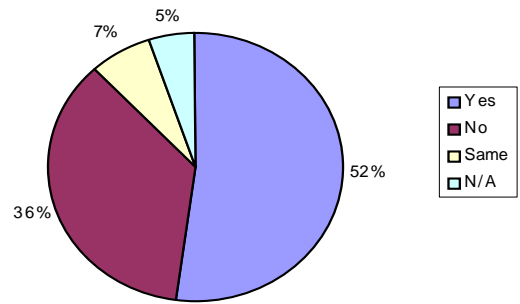


Are high calibre candidates with the right skills easy to find?

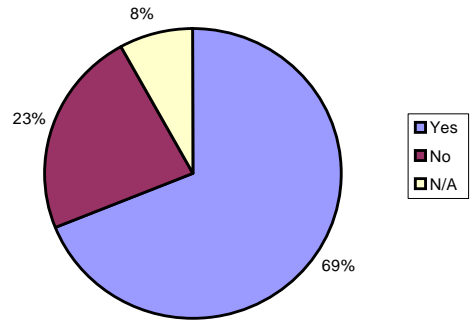


Candidate Response

Is the job market more active than you expected?



Have you recently been attending interviews?



Have you noticed any upturn recently?

