



Questions over job advert data

News: 15-January-09 by Russell Quinn

RECRUITERS in Western Australia say the fall in job advertisements is not an accurate predictor of workplace trends, and businesses should focus on building their employment brand.

ANZ Bank's survey of job ads shows a 22.8 per cent fall in traditional print media job advertisements for WA in December.

Nationally, employment ads in major metropolitan newspapers fell by more than 51 per cent in the year to December.

While a decline in newspaper job ads of this scale, historically speaking, points to a recession, as well as a rise in the unemployment rate over the next year, recruiters say current market data is misleading.

Managing director of specialist recruitment services firm Harrier RP, Bruce McCowan, feels this method of predicting future unemployment is outdated.

"I think there's no doubt that when you see a 23 per cent fall off it's a concern, but I don't think you can rely on that alone to make predictions about the rise in unemployment in the future," Mr McCowan told WA Business News.

This is due to the ever-expanding hidden job market, he said, whereby positions were filled without being advertised in a traditional print medium or on a generic internet job site.

Top People Australia general manager Chris Fairman agrees that this sort of data can be quite generalised with regards to predicting future unemployment figures.

"It's important to look at other sources for a state of the industry itself," Mr Fairman said.

Messrs Fairman and McCowan advocate the use of multiple sourcing channels, with companies increasingly reliant on different means to source staff.

Mr McCowan said some of his clients recruited up to 75 per cent of employees through specific employee referral programs.

And multinationals like KPMG and Chevron deliberately post videos on YouTube or utilise social networking sites, such as Facebook, to build their employment brand, he said.

"If you looked at any major newspaper you would've seen the adverts are more building the employment brand of a company," Mr McCowan said.

"Putting in pics, logos, images and wording that say 'hey, come and work for us, we're a great company, we've got lots of opportunities'.

"Companies need to make decisions that are consistent with their employment brand and values."

Mr Fairman believes a brand needs to be strong in order to attract quality employees.

"Employment branding is critical," he said.

» [Click here to have your say](#)