

Case Study: National Express

The Situation

In the spring of 2010, FTSE250 National Express relocated its entire head office finance team from London to Birmingham. The challenge was several-fold: To recruit 12 individuals whilst ensuring continuity of service and to guarantee that all reporting requirements were still completed on time. Another key consideration was factoring in sufficient handover time between incoming and outgoing staff as well as accounting for incoming candidates' typical notice period of three months.

Since there was limited take-up on relocation assistance, this was a sensitive assignment that required tact and speed as the existing London team was to be released at the end of September. Speed also helped maintain a high a level of motivation amongst a workforce looking for new jobs elsewhere.

National Express chose to work with us as we were one of the few companies with established finance teams in both Birmingham and London. The roles were all for qualified accountants but ranged from very senior 'Head of' appointments to a highly technical treasury accounting position.

The Solution

The team was briefed on all roles in one meeting and a priority list was established. We agreed to recruit the more senior staff early in the process enabling them to be involved in sourcing individuals for their new teams. The more technically specialist positions (e.g. treasury and tax) were recruited from day one, as the candidate pool was smaller due to the required specialism. Another challenge was that one of the positions demanded fluent Spanish.

Our strategy was to use a multiple approach including headhunting, networking, database mining and online advertising. This methodology worked very successfully as it allowed us to provide quality candidates within a short timeframe. The recruiting team was comprised of a researcher and two consultants who worked in close collaboration with the Group Financial Controller at National Express. This allowed us to consider both the technical abilities and management styles as the new team structure evolved.

The Outcome

We helped National Express create a new, fully functioning head office finance team in Birmingham to deadline.