



Invariably there is a skills gap that follows any buoyant or fast-developing market sector. The low carbon skills shortage will not be resolved overnight and that fact presents competitive organisations with an interesting challenge: How to beat the skills shortage? Mark Vidler explains.

AS IS SO often the case, when faced with a dilemma like this, the answers lie in a combination of taking the right steps, knowing the right people and acting quickly. Some organisations have learned better and quicker than others, so the level of support required will vary. During 2007, Allen & York Search & Selection spoke with a record number of businesses about their low carbon skills needs and, whether the individuals they sought were at director/executive level or at graduate level, the reasons behind the difficulties they had encountered were the same. Their failure to recruit those staff would have meant a loss of competitiveness, loss of ability to win new business, or worse, loss of control over projects execution for key customers.

Recruiting the right individuals is business-critical, but before you rush staff requisitions through sign-off, please spare a thought for the unsuspecting person charged with recruitment in your organisation. Your HR Officer probably holds a wide range of responsibilities integrated with the business strategy and function: staff retention and motivation; succession planning; productivity appraisal; personnel development and review; induction and

training; promotions; disciplinaries; grievances and dismissals; pay and benefits; motivation; styles and relationships; legal compliance with equal opportunities; employment contracts; and health and safety. Any one of those areas is a huge undertaking in itself, in any size of business, and needs continual attention, so HR officers have a lot on their plate. The recruitment and selection for your new staffing requirements must be considered amongst all of the above, plus all other ongoing recruitment and selection activity.

I've lost count of how many times I've heard employers say, 'The future of our business depends on our ability to recruit and retain competent staff', but I rarely come across the sort of joined-up thinking that it takes to succeed at the same. Recruitment and selection is about identifying staffing needs, how to go about meeting them, and then ensuring the job is filled appropriately. Resolving those issues needs strong buy-in from and communication between a range of individuals: strategic (Directors), management (Hiring Managers), operational (relevant workforce), external stakeholders and HR.

That kind of all-inclusive collaboration must result in