

# Heads up on PageUp

Having developed a recruitment management software program, PageUp People is winning friends among its growing corporate clientele.

**SUCCESS DOES NOT** always come early in a company's history. Some can take years to establish themselves, and PageUp People was no exception. During its first six years, cash flow was just a trickle but once they developed a web-based recruitment management program, the revenues started pouring through the door.

Within months the numbers of staff at PageUp People had to be substantially increased to cope with the growth of the business. The program itself had been developed originally for PageUp People's own use in handling the hundreds of job applications they received for web developers.

Marketed as providing 'integrated talent management solutions' to some of the world's largest organisations, PageUp People provides 'software as a service' tools and consulting services. "Our web-based systems handle the entire talent acquisition process from requisition to hire to performance management... finding and retaining the right people and our consulting solutions boost our client's processes and strategies to best practice," says company co-founder and co-director Karen Cariss.

As an Application Service Provider, PageUp products are delivered to clients over the internet, with clients integrating the software with their websites, intranet and HR systems.

"Clients using our recruitment management solution can automatically post jobs to Seek and other job boards and print media agencies. The solution screens and ranks candidates and can circulate bulk or individual personalised SMS or email messages to candidates who in turn can book in for testing or an interview," Cariss explained.

An example of automatic screening is a software engineer ticking boxes such as

'Java script knowledge' and '5+ years experience' which automatically selects them as good fit candidates and consequently sends them through to 'interview status'. The applicant then receives an SMS or email prompting them to book in for an interview.

"Applicants can then log onto our clients' career webpage and book themselves in for an interview," said Cariss, adding "Automated applications prove particularly efficient for companies recruiting large volumes of staff, for example retail industries. All job applicant details are automatically recorded, there's no need to duplicate data entry so there's less chance of error."

PageUp People staff create a tailored tool to replicate the process and needs of each individual client. Clients tend to save "substantially" by avoiding costs associated with recruitment agencies and print advertising and the flow on benefits of talent management.

"Our web-based tools provide an empowering solution; we provide the technology platform and associated consulting services to help an organisation, this reduces advertising costs and paperwork, reduces time spent dealing with unsolicited resumes, reduces reliance on external recruitment agencies, speeds up recruitment, removes the administrative headache, increases productivity and aids corporate growth.

To cover all angles, PageUp People has forged strategic partnerships with recruitment agencies and other companies specialising in online testing, e-learning, advertising and brand awareness, corporate psychology and contractor management.

Established in 1997 by then new graduates Karen and Simon (who later married), PageUp People was treading water for a while with their few staff doing

"ad hoc work developing customised database applications".

The year 2003 marked the turning point, with the recruitment product attracting corporate customers such as ANZ, Coles Myer, Flight Centre and BHP Billiton. "Since then we have picked up more of the top 100 companies, including Coles Group, Leighton Holdings, Optus, Macquarie Group and National Australia Bank. We look after some of the world's largest recruiters that recruit in droves."

Business over the past few years has been strong for PageUp People, with revenue growing by 30-50 per cent annually. Turnover reached \$5.5 million in 2005/06 and Cariss anticipates further expansion to the current staff numbers of 55.

As a response to the tight market, PageUp People actively approaches prospective clients, via direct calls or invitations to educational breakfast events, VIP lunches or dinners and networking functions. "This is not so much a sales effort, these events are designed as more of an educational and networking session," Cariss said.

To maintain a strong market position, the PageUp People solutions are upgraded quarterly, a costly but necessary exercise. Cariss revealed that the talent management suite is a constant work in progress. "When there are lower levels of employment you can almost be less prudent and more reactive, but not so in a tight labour market, with its continual short supply of quality candidates," she said. "Employers need to source good people, prospective employees, for their talent pool and continually keep them 'warm' and in touch with the company for varying future opportunities."

"We call them passive candidates and yes, it's a bit like head hunting where ▶

people are not actively looking for work but may receive offers." Best practice recruitment today sees clients creating a reservoir of rare skill types, commonly called 'talent pools' in which future roles are filled. This process is essential in today's tight labour market and assists clients in minimising advertising expenditure and reducing recruitment time to fill. "As the benefits become more evident, talent pools or candidate database systems are becoming more prevalent," she said.

Last year PageUp People notched up three milestones: it acquired HR consulting company Talent Edge; established offices in London and secured a major partnership agreement with ClarkMorgan to break into the Chinese market. "Progress in China is much slower than London, which was expected. We are still learning about and understanding challenges, it's important to understand the culture of the company and the country we are dealing with, for example the invoices are processed involving government receipts.

"But with this year's Olympics in Beijing, lots of companies are growing fast in China and there's an increasing western influence, so things are changing rapidly."

At last count, PageUp was ranked the fifth largest employment website by Hitwise. And Cariss, who is still in her early 30s, came in at number 28 on a list of Top 50 Female Entrepreneurs. She was invited to be one of the judges for the 2006 Telstra Business Awards and the previous year's AIMIA iAwards. ●



Co-founder and co-director of PageUp Karen Cariss

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