



# Job Vacancies on the Rise

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**Good news for job seekers - we are currently experiencing the lowest level of unemployment in 22 years. Finally it's a candidates market and they can afford to be fussy.**

ACCORDING TO THE AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF Statistics, the total job vacancies rose 7.9 per cent for the November 2003 quarter (to 108,300), compared to a fall of 7.0 per cent in the previous period (99,900).

Just this month, the Recruitment and Consulting Services Association (RCSA) has said that with these results, the indication is that the market should see continued job creation at least for the first half of 2004.

This movement has been predominantly driven by the private sector and while it is difficult to ascertain statistics specifically relating to the MICE industry, the trend does seem to be reflected.

So, the tables look set to turn. What has been for the past couple of years very much an employers market (with candidates prepared to take pay cuts to secure a position) is now very much in the candidates favour.

What can employers do to ensure they attract the crème of the candidates? In the current environment, employers are really left with two choices. Either lower your expectations or increase salaries, benefits and working conditions. For ideas on how to attract staff and keep them, please see our article titled "Keeping Your People" [www.eventrecruitment.com.au](http://www.eventrecruitment.com.au)

## How To Select Top Performers

So now it's clear competition is tougher. Here is a basic guide to selecting and keeping the best performer.

- Define the job description
- Advertising or using a recruitment consultant
- Interview all potentially suitable applicants by phone first
- Undertake structured interviews with exceptional candidates
- Compile shortlist and match with required skills and experience
- Ask potential candidates to undertake specific work-place performance testing
- Manage the offer effectively - do not delay communication as candidate may interpret this as lack of interest.
- Find out staff key motivations

## Interview Tips for Employers

Before you even think about the interview process, set objectives.

- Professionally plan the interview so you can structure it
- Tell the candidate how the interview will run so that they know what to expect
- Always ask open questions (those that do not require a yes/no answer)
- Ask the candidate to describe a past project to find out more about their experience and approach
- Keep control of the interview and focus on the objectives.
- Advise the candidate of the procedure to follow the interview

## Tips for Successful Reference Checks

Reference checking is absolutely fundamental. Up until this point in the process you are relying on the candidates resume, claims about past achievements and formal qualifications and your interview skills.

- Prepare list of competencies, qualifications and facts to be verified
- Prepare questions, ask for specific examples of work related achievements and incidents
- Take notes and evaluate while fresh in your mind
- Be alert to overly enthusiastic or evasive responses and hesitations
- Use referee information with other knowledge to make an overall assessment of suitability

## Some useful questions include:

- Can you tell me in measurable terms the biggest impact this person made on the organisation?
- On a scale of one to 10, how would you rate this person's performance and what would it have taken for them to become a 10?
- What did this person do above and beyond the basic needs of the job?