



**Ben Falloon**

*Division Manager, Aequalis Consulting*

Although these feel like bleak times, more companies are planning to utilise the skills of temporary contractors/ interim managers as part of their strategic planning for growth and change.

As companies consider the implications of the global financial crisis for the year ahead, the use of temporary contractors/ interim managers may just be the key to their success.

Business leaders who proactively factor this rapidly growing resourcing option into their business plans could leave the competition standing.

Within the recruitment industry in general, there is a painful history of being a supplier into an ever-tightening commercial environment as companies seek to freeze human capital expenditure or even begin to trim it back. At Aequalis Consulting, one thing has changed significantly over the last year and that is the growth of the temporary/contract business.

A recent survey conducted by Aequalis Consulting shows that over the next 12 months, interim managers will be in demand. The survey results – based on 382 responses by senior management professionals in a range of industries throughout Australia – show that 36% of organisations plan to appoint an interim manager in the next 12 months to assist them through. Of these, 27% will bring on board interim management in the next six months.

As businesses become leaner with even greater focus on productivity and value for money, temporary contractors/ interim management will become an increasingly important solution. Organisations should take the opportunity to safeguard their future by proactively examining whether their current structure and ways of working are fit for purpose and are a solid platform from which to grow in the future.

At Aequalis Consulting we are certainly preparing for an upturn in demand for temporary contractors/interim managers over the next 12 months. The effective use of an interim manager could prove to be a business's trump card.

**Ben Falloon** joined Aequalis Consulting in 2007. As one of the initial members of the firm Ben has progressed to Division Manager and now leads the finance and accounting team in Sydney. Aequalis Consulting is a highly respected Sydney and Melbourne based accounting and finance recruitment firm. It provides tailored strategies for small to medium and top tier enterprises across a diverse range of industries to attract retain the most talented professionals in the market, from chief financial officers to operational accounting roles.



**Dale Penny**

*Director of Operations, Cubic Resources*

The question has obviously been asked to establish if the effects of the US and Euro-Zone are having an effect on the labour hire market in Australia.

My answer to the question is, in short, 'no', not really. In fact, I would say the opposite...but I believe it is important to understand why demand for contract resources increase in times of economic uncertainty.

We are only likely to see a significant shift from permanent to contract hire after the market has declined significantly enough for businesses to need to scale back their permanent work force...and I don't think we are close to witnessing that at present.

Only when we see a significant decline in the need for permanent staff, and then witness a significant increase in unemployment, will we see an increase in demand for contract resources – as companies look to temporarily staff their businesses until the outlook is certain enough to re-engage a greater permanent workforce.

Bearing in mind we are still at 5.1% unemployment in Australia, and aside from a few unfortunate examples of business closures (Hastie Group, Reed Construction), we are still in a pretty good place compared to the rest of the world.

There might be a lot of chatter about a slowing in the economy but there is a significant difference between what we are thinking and feeling and what is actually happening.

Another factor that will drive a greater demand for contract resources (should the Australian economy retract significantly) will be as a direct result of government funded project work – initiated to stimulate the domestic economy. This might include major infrastructure related projects with a knock-on effect through many levels of business. An increase in project-based activity will significantly increase the demand for contract labour but are we currently in need of this course of action? No.

Working, predominantly, around areas of niche specialisation and project driven activity we (Cubic Resources) have seen, if anything, a reduction in this project based activity – which in turn has led to a decline in the need for contract or temporary staff.

Within the more niche areas of technology, for which we provide the greatest candidate depth, there has been no noticeable increase in demand for contract resources.

**Dale Penny** has 15 years' recruitment experience. He started his career in London and, after a move to Australia in 1999, has held a variety of roles within sales, training, and management.

In 2005 Dale joined the Cubic Group to open and run Cubic Resources – a technical and sales related recruitment business. Cubic Resources now employs around 20 full-time staff across Sydney and Melbourne, and provides a mature, flexible, enjoyable and rewarding work environment for its team. Dale lives on the Northern Beaches of Sydney with his wife and two young children and is a thoroughly nice chap!

Would you like to participate in the panel?

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