

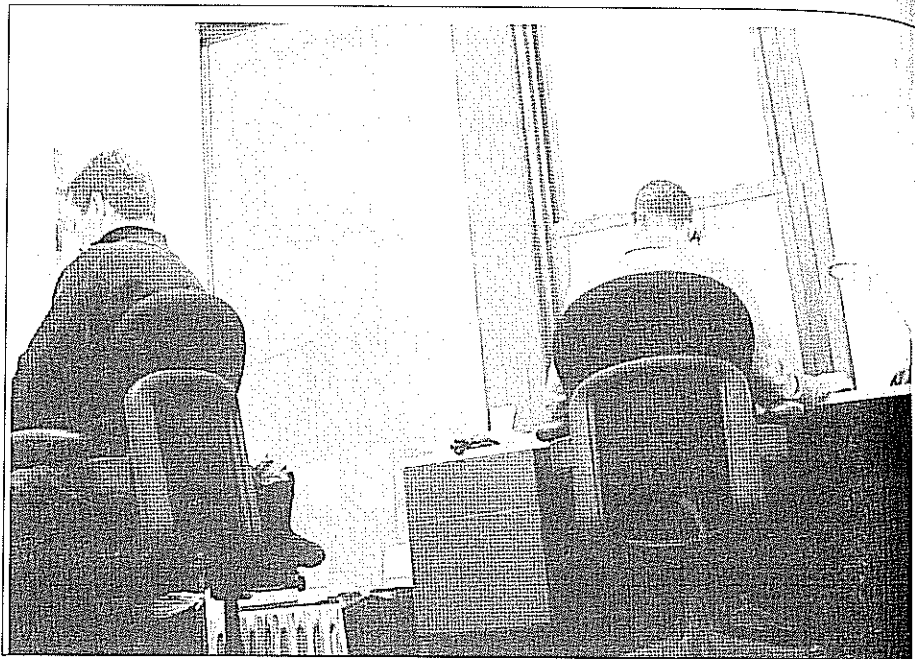
A temporary solution

Summertime, and the living is not quite as easy as it should be, given the levels of absenteeism through sunny days or legitimate holidays. This is in addition to the fact that many industries experience a surge in demand during these months. So the question remains – how do companies align diminished staff resources with increased demand?

In a modern economy, you can't simply fire your holiday-making staff and replace them with other, less leisure-oriented staff members. But Brightwater Recruitment Specialists has some tips on how to avoid the gap which is exposed when a member of staff takes annual leave.

"Temporary and contract workers, particularly for SME's, are the easiest and most effective way of ensuring that productivity does not plummet or that remaining staff are not lumbered with an excessive workload or overtime," explained Mairead Fleming Operations Manager of Brightwater. An example of this, according to Brightwater, can be seen in a situation whereby accounting professionals who are temping by career have often chosen contract work by design in response to the buoyant and robust contract accountancy market which has presented itself in Ireland over the number of years.

"These people are adept at filling positions for special projects or deadlines at short notice," said Fleming. "Interim workers will often have gained exposure to different sectors, systems and products and often come equipped with a wealth of experience and a diverse skill set which allows them to 'hit the ground running' in a new environment." Accountancy is not the only area where contract and temporary workers are finding a home. Indeed, a particularly busy IT contract division within Brightwater points to the fact that the nature of this sector is proving increasingly attractive to IT professionals



who wish to remain abreast of developments in technology – and who want to maintain their marketability within a highly dynamic marketplace. While, traditionally, areas such as web development and systems implementation have been considered as predominantly contract areas, employers are now availing of the flexibility afforded to them by contract workers across a range of processes and projects. "Employers should be thinking about employing a temp for a shadow week in the event of annual leave," suggested Hugh McCarthy, Brightwater's IT team leader. "This is in order to allow the contract workers to familiarise themselves with the company's IT topology, networking infrastructure, phone system and any other bespoke systems they may need to assume responsibility for over the required period of time." Overall, most IT contract requirements are as a result of project needs, workload issues, maternity cover or headcount factors. There was a significant increase in the demand for IT contractors in 2006, and this growth has continued into 2007.

"Companies have been focusing on sourcing candidates

with evident business acumen; who understand the role of technologies in supporting business and make the company more efficient, effective and profitable," said McCarthy. "Permanent headcount incurs a number of expenses that contractors do not, including holiday cover, making contributions on behalf of employees etc. When taking on a contractor, employers also enjoy more flexibility for specific short-term projects; capitalising on the contractor's specialist knowledge and enjoying greater efficiencies with regard to hiring and letting go."

While many companies will turn to part-qualified students for summer cover, the advantages of hiring professional holiday cover are evident.

"Sourcing quality candidates at short notice is no easy task for any company, and the speed with which Brightwater can place a suitably qualified candidate can vary from a couple of hours to a couple of days," said Jean O'Donovan, accountancy temporary and contract division manager with Brightwater. "Employers in need of specialised skills on a temporary basis will avail of an existing shortlist of candidates who are guaranteed

to have been interviewed, vetted and have references which have been verified by professional consultants in their specified field. The Brightwater consultants, who will have met each and every client; will ensure that candidates are au fait with information, not only regarding the position, but on the company structure, culture, and future plans, providing assurance of maximum organisational fit between employer and employee." In addition, Brightwater operates a temporary staff payroll, so it is directly accountable for paying their contract staff, as well as organising emergency relief should the temp be instated long enough to be entitled to holidays or require sick leave.

"The correct processes for temp induction are vital to the success of the temp within the organization for any given time frame," said O'Donovan. "Professional temporary staff must above all be made to feel a valued and trusted member of the team from the offset; the amount of time invested in training and ensuring that the handover from permanent to contract staff passes with ease will reflect the company's attitude to same."