

Will your mobile phone get you your next contract?

Contractors looking for that next great project could have the key in their pockets and handbags. Because, it seems, mobile phones are going to become increasingly used by agencies and recruiters.

With 46.5 million mobile telephony subscribers in the UK, who on average make three calls and send six texts a day using their handset, the mobile phone is a channel that can't be ignored.

The results of a recent survey conducted by recruitment advertising consultancy TMP Worldwide and graduate recruiter TARGETjobs.co.uk, demonstrate that recruitment via mobile is increasingly the way forward. Over a third of respondents would not have a problem using their mobile to find work, and 13% were keen to do so.

So, how does it work? ContractorCalculator asked Henry Keenan, Head of Digital Products at TMP UK and Ireland, to explain: "Mobile phones generally, and texting specifically, have become totally embedded in our everyday lives. By applying the latest mobile technology, major elements of the recruitment process can be streamlined, providing a significantly improved experience for the candidate and the client."

Highly Targeted

According to Keenan, advertising can be highly targeted, with specific text 'short-codes' that apply to each individual contract on offer. For example, let's pretend ContractorCalculator needed a SAP developer. In the advert for the contract, the short-code could include SAP, and CONCALC to identify us as the recruiter.

If you were on the train reading a trade magazine and saw the advert, to express an interest you'd send a text to the recruiter's number given in the advert with the short-code SAP CONCALC in the text message for the specific contract opportunity, together with your name and e-mail address.

Interactive

Now, that does not sound particularly groundbreaking. However, as Keenan explains further, sending the text is just the start: "Using the short-code as the filter, the text with the contractor's personal details goes into a database that captures the number and name and applies this record to the specific contract.

"On a daily basis, the recruiter can export a table with all the names and numbers of contractors who have expressed an interest in the opportunity." The system can also be configured to send an acknowledgement text back to the contractor, and this could contain a link to a website with more information about the contract, and an online application form.

Immediate and elevated responses, 24/7

"The key issue is that the contractor can respond immediately to the advert without having to depend on a call centre or having to remember to make a call at a later time," says Keenan. "This increases the response rate to adverts and captures passive contractors as well as those actively seeking new clients."

Over the last year, TMP has been running a number of mobile-based campaigns for clients ranging from high street banks to local authorities. An average of 15% of overall responses come via texts using short-codes, and through their partners Velti UK., over 20,000 text messages have been sent in the last year. In a recent campaign for a police force, 45% of responses were received outside of working hours, demonstrating that this approach can work 24/7.

Mobile recruitment is the future

"We see the use of this channel for recruitment advertising increasing significantly in the future," continues Keenan, "particularly as handset technology adapts to the needs of internet browsers and the networks offer faster download speeds."

Completing an online registration form, for example, could be challenging using a handset with a small screen and no QWERTY keyboard. However, as Keenan points out: "If a contractor has already registered in the past with the client or agency, the database could recognise their mobile number and pre-populate an enquiry form."

Overall, the experience for the contractor looking for their next contract is considerably enhanced. The enquiry is tightly targeted – much less risk of being sent the wrong contract details – and can be made at any time from any place with mobile reception. And, assuming the contractor opts-in,

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the client or agency can maintain contact, regularly sending updates on new opportunities.

Mobile technology is easy to use and popular with even the least tech-savvy groups, so it's likely that virtually every type of contractor would be comfortable using mobile technology to find new contracts. So far from texting their partner a message of love, the person next to you on the train might have just won their next contract!

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