

We need the contractor migrants

With all the controversy in the general press about the effect of migrants on the UK economy, one might wonder if migrants have any effect on the contracting industry.

No Threat, Just Promise

There's always a tendency to feel threatened by migration, as if hordes of cheap labour from Eastern Europe were arriving to undercut contractor fee levels. The facts show that this is not only entirely false, but that a quite different situation exists.

Before we even get into the details, we should all remember a particular migrant from Russia named Serge Brin, who, after arriving in the US at the age of 6, went on to found Google. Now, when you're weighing up the relative benefits and problems caused by the migration, how do you work that one out in the balance?

19,000 Migrants Needed Report Shows

Maybe they won't all found empires like Google, but there is no question that the UK contracting industry desperately needs skilled migrants, about 19,000 of them between now and 2012 as demand for software and telecommunications specialists increases. We can't actually do the jobs without them, as a report from [Centre for Economics and Business Research](#) very clearly demonstrates.

Need Critical Mass

Why do we need them? Because there is a critical mass for skilled workers, and when we sink below that critical mass, projects start getting cancelled for lack of them. If one company can't complete a project, then another one can't use the results to start theirs.

In fact, the total number of jobs held and reliant upon other jobs done by highly skilled migrants is forecast to rise to 1.5 million by 2012, according to the report. And the IT, telecoms and transport sector is responsible for employing the largest number of skilled migrant workers in the UK after education, health and government services — a grouping which includes the thousands of migrant healthcare professionals employed in the NHS.

Shows What The Politicians Know

In spite of all this, just a few days ago the House of Lords produces a report saying that there is little economic benefit from migrants. Even worse, the London-based organisation [Migrant Watch](#) supports this estimate. What can they be thinking?

Migrants Benefit Value Is Nearly 50 Billion Pounds

The total financial value of skilled migrant workers to the UK is forecast to be £46 billion by 2012, with IT, telecoms and transport set to comprise 10.4 billion pounds of that — second only to education, health and government services (10.8 billion pounds) according to the report.

If they'd look at the numbers, they'd see that the population of highly skilled migrant software professionals jumped by 26,000 in the UK between 2000 and 2007 as the almost universal rollout of computing and Internet facilities increased the demand for personnel with information technology skills. This millennium skills gap was plugged predominantly by IT professionals from India, the report stated.

A Cap on Immigration? Who Will Do The Work?

By 2012, the IT, telecoms and transport sector is set to have a highly skilled working migrant population of 160,000, rising from 141,000 in 2007. This figure for the education, health and government services sector is set to rise from 223,000 skilled migrant workers in 2007, to 253,000, according to the report.

How will it be possible, as the politicians say, to put a cap on immigration to this country? It would be nice if the politicians would read up a bit before they make speeches.

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