



Word-of-mouth warning: Ginny Ryder of Retailworld Resourcing Wellington says retailers should protect their brand by ensuring a positive experience for jobseekers. Photo: STEPHEN WILSON

Make recruiting positive for the applicants

Retailers wanting to protect their brand should do so from the point at which they advertise a vacant position.

RETAILERS should protect their employment brand or they will struggle to attract quality staff in future, a retail recruitment specialist says.

Retailworld Resourcing Wellington manager Ginny Ryder says retailers should try to make sure their recruitment process is a positive experience for job candidates.

"A candidate might not have heard anything – no communication, no expectations set, no rejection after the interview. The power of word of mouth means one bad experience tells 10 people, one good one tells two.

"People have a preconceived notion about a brand because something happened to someone's mother 10 years ago. Retail is a close industry, everybody talks, so protecting the employment brand is vital," she says.

"Retailers really need to make sure they are managing candidates' expectations during the process so when they come out the other side they still smell like roses."

Ms Ryder gives an example of her company's electronic email to job candidates, which informs them that they will only be contacted if they are successful in obtaining an interview.

"It just lets candidates know that they may not hear from us, but continue to look for something that suits their skill bracket and continue to apply for roles.

"If they don't know where they stand from the word go it can be quite disheartening for them."

While the company aims to make further contact with the candidate any additional contact is going beyond the expectations set.

She says some of the ways that retailers can protect their employment brand include:

- Being specific in any advertising about the skills required, making it easier for job seekers to decide whether it would be appropriate to apply.

- Setting the expectation up front in regards to contact. Either on the actual advertisement or ideally in the electronic response say: "Thank you, we have received your application. You will hear from us if you are successful".

- Putting candidates at ease in the interview, don't drill them for information, make sure it's a two-way street. Job seekers



need to walk away feeling positive regardless of whether they are right or wrong for the role (remember these people may be customers for you too).

- Following through, delivering on what you say you're going to do. If you say you're going to call at 5pm on Friday, call at 5pm on Friday.

- Be open and honest throughout the whole process. It's all about making candidates feel comfortable and good about the experience.

"By doing these things it shows a company is a good company to work for. You may interview a candidate who wasn't right but if they had a good experience, they might tell their best friend who is perfect for the job," Ms Ryder says.

As for candidates, in this competitive market retailers receive hundreds of applications for roles, junior positions in particular. Many applicants are applying for practically anything that's going.

But she says employers aren't interested in people who apply for jobs outside their skill sets because there is no stickability or loyalty.

"Employers are being very careful and they're trying to weed out those people. Employing someone at the moment has a big impact on their bottom line so when things are tight every decision is taken very seriously."

Ms Ryder offers candidates the following advice:

- Evaluate your skill level and apply for roles that are appropriate. If you have no matching criteria as requested in the advertisement, don't apply.

- Make sure your CV is concise, clear and to the point. Always list key achievements. The reality is, anyone will say anything to make their CV look good, but if your key achievements are rock solid there is no grey area.

- If you get an interview be on time and well-presented. You can't afford to be five minutes late, because 10 other candidates won't be. Dress appropriately and remember, you can never be over-dressed.

- Prepare for your interview, prepare examples that illustrate your skills and do your research on the company. It shows initiative and genuine interest.

- There is plenty of advice online for job seekers ranging from resume preparation to interview tips.

"It's an incredibly competitive market right now, so take the whole recruitment process very seriously. You have to do everything you can and cover all your bases, you can't afford to have even a small slip-up."

■ For more advice go to: www.rwr.co.nz