

# Database matches up all the details

*New system ties in with firm's focus on building relationships.*

**A** NEW candidate database system stands McLaren Associates in good stead for the year ahead.

The long-standing Wellington-based management consultancy firm installed a comprehensive database system last year and months down the track, owner and managing director Peter McLaren says it is proving very successful.

"It's a very sophisticated system which now has us strategically placed in the market, which strengthens our position for the year ahead – new business is already coming through the door."

The database comprises 3000-plus client and candidate details and it provides real time summaries and reports that cover all aspects of the recruitment process.

"It means we can keep in touch with anyone who has ever registered with us and though some candidates prefer to be 'retired' with no further communication, more than 90 per cent of people we are dealing with are happy for us to keep in touch with them on a regular basis."

Whenever McLaren's receives an assignment from a client their first port of call is the database to search for potential candidates.

"It makes our job so much easier – we might have someone who is the perfect fit sitting right in front of us rather than conducting in-depth searches," says Mr McLaren.

"Of the roles we have placed since the implementation of the database, 30 per cent of the successful candidates were as a result of a thorough search of the database."

The new system is in keeping with McLaren's focus on relationship building and candidate and client care.

"We are a privately owned business and are all about the two big Cs – client care and candidates."

And that, Mr McLaren says, has been the secret to his firm's success

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PETER MCLAREN

to date.

"We have a strong reputation for candidate care and constantly receive positive feedback for our prompt, efficient and friendly service.

"Over the past two decades we have built up a good reputation – we take pride in our professional approach to work," he says.

"Our size allows us to really get to know our clients and candidates and offer a more personal touch, in fact our personal service is what separates us from the rest of the pack."

Mr McLaren and his wife, Sue, set up the business 22 years ago, offering a full range of recruitment, selection, assessment and HR consulting services.

Today Mrs McLaren remains a director and daughter Kirsty joined the five-strong firm 12 months ago as a consultant.

Ms McLaren handles graduate roles up to middle management while Mr McLaren looks after middle management to chief executive level positions.

The company specialises in multi-tasked HR activities including recruitment, organisational consulting, job evaluation and remuneration planning.

In his work Mr McLaren often calls on his extensive business network of contacts and associates, gained from his numerous board appointments and membership of Wellington Rotary.

Then there's his own work experience – before setting up his business he had been a senior consultant with Coopers and Lybrand – now Pricewaterhouse-Coopers, human resources



manager at Data General, deputy national director for IHC, corporate personnel manager with Lion Corporation and senior personnel manager with International Computers.

Nowadays Mr McLaren finds the recruitment industry much different from two decades ago.

"It was much more manually driven then, and we have seen a huge shift from dealing with just the finance, banking and insurance

sectors.

"We are also dealing with more government departments, the not-for-profit sector and publicly listed companies than we used to," he says.

"Many Wellington-based organisations have been taken over, amalgamated or migrated to Auckland, Australia and Asia."

Over the past five years organisations themselves have become more vigilant about referee

checks, probity checks and psychometric testing.

"These days we undertake police, educational, ACC and credit checks as in the past there was a degree of naivety on the part of clients, but with more online recruitment activity these checks have become even more vital," says Mr McLaren.

Over the years he has also noticed changes with candidates – they are far better positioned with

regard to presentation of their CVs and attuned to interview techniques.

"We used to rewrite a lot of CVs for people, they didn't provide sufficient content, structure and overall presentation, but now most CVs are pretty good."

His message to candidates is to present a succinct CV – half a dozen pages rather than a "Bible" and he recommends a tailored cover letter focusing on experience

**Priorities:** "We are a privately owned business and are all about the two big Cs – client care and candidates," McLaren Associates managing director Peter McLaren says.

Photo: JOHN NICHOLSON

gained in relation to the required key competencies when applying for a particular position.

Another tip is to go into an interview well prepared – undertake background research on the organisation, go on to their website for additional information such as organisational structure, strategic business/marketing plans and financial performance.

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