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Press release

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JOB SEEKERS STRETCH THE TRUTH TO LAND NEW JOBS

- One in three HR managers and finance managers say candidates exaggerate the real content of their previous job
- Job seekers try to avoid discussing inherent weaknesses during the interview process
- Over half of HR and finance managers say there is no link between hours worked and productivity

The interview process; finding the truth

According to research from the International Workplace Survey released today [29 March 2007] by specialist financial recruitment firm Robert Half, HR and finance managers say candidates are most likely to exaggerate the real content of their previous job to secure a new role. The survey was conducted with over 2,300 HR and finance managers across 13 countries in Europe, Australia and New Zealand, and provides an insight into international workplace trends.

Globally, 29 per cent of HR and finance managers believe candidates exaggerate the role and responsibilities of their former job in an effort to become more employable. This is closely followed by candidates exaggerating management skills (19 per cent), knowledge of languages (12 per cent) and salary (12 per cent). Managers in Ireland (52 per cent) and Italy (43 per cent) are most likely to find candidates that exaggerate their previous experience while in Luxembourg (14 per cent) and Spain (14 per cent) it is less common. And in the UK almost a third (31 per cent) of all managers stated that they believed candidates exaggerated their previous job responsibilities.

David Jones, UK Managing Director, Robert Half International, said:

“Naturally everyone wants to impress when interviewed and employers in the UK are clearly taking on board that in order to achieve this candidates can have a tendency to exaggerate their previous role and responsibilities. It is up to each employer therefore to ensure they brush up on their interview techniques and ask questions that will paint a clear picture of the candidates’ abilities and personality.”



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The survey also reveals various concerns amongst candidates when faced with the prospect of a job interview. When asked which subject candidates most want to avoid when being interviewed, one in three (33 per cent) said inherent weaknesses while 28 per cent say they would prefer not to reveal the reasons for leaving their previous job – these findings were consistent across all 13 countries surveyed.

Ian Graves, Managing Director Continental Europe, Robert Half International, said:

“The interview process remains a grey area. There is an obvious tendency amongst candidates to exaggerate or stretch the truth about previous roles, experience and management skills. Across Europe specifically many candidates also look to exaggerate their grasp of foreign languages.

“Clearly companies need to have selection processes in place that enables managers to cut through the spiel and hire the right people. The recruitment process can be a costly exercise – both in time and money – and it is crucial to manage it effectively.”

Productivity; work and life

The survey, which also looks at the issue of work-life balance and specifically productivity, shows that there is no direct correlation between the number of hours worked and the level of productivity. According to the survey, the majority of HR and finance managers (58 per cent) say the number of hours worked has little impact on productivity at work.

WORKERS REVEAL MOST PRODUCTIVE TIME OF THE DAY

- 1. Between 9am – 12noon (66%)**
- 2. Before 9am (13%)**
- 3. Between 2pm – 5pm (7%)**
- 3. After 5pm (7%)**
- 4. Between 12noon – 2pm (2%)**

Fact: Workers in the Czech Republic are early risers with 34 per cent saying they are most productive before 9am.

David Jones commented:

“Employers in the UK today are increasingly recognising that long working hours does not necessarily correlate with maximum productivity. And, as our research indicates, everyone’s productivity levels differ at various times during the day. We are seeing a clear increase in the number of employers that are acknowledging this and now offering flexible working hours to accommodate each individual’s needs.”



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When asked to reveal the various elements of working life that have the most positive influence over productivity it is the desire to work as part of a team that was the most popular choice (13 per cent). 11 per cent of respondents prefer to have a quiet working environment while one in ten say a good working atmosphere is the best way to boost productivity. In Ireland, 21 per cent of respondents say deadlines are a primary driver of productivity. Interestingly, one in five (20 per cent) respondents say phone calls, emails and meetings have the most negative influences over productivity, more so than being stressed (10 per cent).

Ian Graves, said:

“There has been much talk about work-life balance in recent years. What people need to realise however is that work-life balance does not necessarily mean working fewer hours – it’s about flexibility and managing your time at work more effectively.

“People work in different ways and it’s important for managers to realise this and try to provide a working environment that has a positive influence over productivity.”

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About Robert Half

Robert Half pioneered specialised staffing services and today is the world's leader in the field. Founded in 1948, the company is traded on the New York Stock Exchange (symbol: RHI) and operates four separate divisions in the UK, each serving distinct markets. They include: Robert Half Finance & Accounting and Robert Half Management Resources, for temporary, full-time and project professionals, respectively, in the fields of accounting and finance; OfficeTeam, for highly skilled temporary administrative support and Robert Half Financial Services Group, for high-calibre finance and banking professionals.

There are more than 350 Robert Half locations in North America, Europe and the Asia-Pacific region. For more information about Robert Half please visit www.roberthalf.co.uk