

# Succeeding in a changed world of work

Despite the recession, Tricruit adopted the 'no-compromising of standards' attitude

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**T**HE CURRENT economic situation has led to cost-cutting and, as a result, standards have dropped across a wide range of products and services.

So says Sylvia Thomiades, operations director of Tricruit recruitment specialists, who believes there are great opportunities for organisations who refuse to compromise their standards and who are innovative.

"The post-recession reality will see a demand for new products and services tailored to consumers who do not have as much money to spend, and who are more prudent about what they spend it on," she says.

Tricruit recently received the Recruitment Solutions Agency of the Year award at the Avusa recruitment profession awards and she believes it was their "no-compromising of standards" attitude that clinched it for them.

"We decided last year, when it was clear that the economy was going into a recession and we, as a specialist staffing service were going to see a change in our business, that the one thing we would not do



**AWARD-WINNING:** Sylvia Thomiades with the trophy for recruitment solutions agency of the year.

would be to drop our standards," she says.

The Avusa awards are unique in that the clients of an organisation nominate recipients and the other clients are invited to vote for the suppliers they use.

"The recruitment industry is in a phase where, due to downsizing and closures, there are suddenly many well-qualified, experienced candidates looking for work," Thomiades says.

"That has meant we have had to

able information that could be used in planning future strategy.

"What we learnt has certainly been valuable, and winning the award in the process was a pleasant surprise."

Tricruit has been going for 14 years and Thomiades and her husband began the company almost by accident.

She worked in the advertising and marketing industry initially, and when she was retrenched in 1990 she was unable to get another suitable job in the sector, so she ended up in recruitment.

She worked for several of the largest recruitment agencies before deciding to stop working when she was expecting her third child.

"I lost the baby, unfortunately, which was a tremendous blow, but it led to me deciding to start my own recruitment company," she says.

"At that time my husband had a good job in IT sales, but it was keeping him away from home for long periods, so I persuaded him to become the MD of the new company.

"He is still here and we have never looked back. His IT contacts meant that, initially, we were a specialist IT placement company, although we have now branched out into other areas like accounting, financial services, HR and payroll and engineering."

Thomiades is convinced that, as the economy recovers, we are going to see a range of new products, and companies that cannot adjust to the

new reality will battle to survive.

"We found in 2010 that clients are far more demanding.

"This is partly because, in a slow market, they feel they have the right to be choosy and difficult and partly because the rapid changes in technology have made instant responses possible, and so they have begun to expect and even demand instantaneous action."

The industry has become more automated, Thomiades points out, and there are software packages available that make the recruitment process quicker, but at the expense of personal contact.

"We are finding that the initial stages of the process are being automated and clients are conducting telephonic interviews.

"This puts a lot more pressure on the recruitment company as we have to do the face-to-face assessments that go beyond the impersonal review of the CV.

"You miss important clues to the potential of a candidate to fit in when you speak on the telephone. Facial expressions and body language often tell you more than words, and help you get an idea of the candidate's personality."

Thomiades is already seeing the changes. "Road travel is becoming difficult and the advent of the toll roads is going to make it expensive too. So, for example, we are going to candidates to interview them, and trying to set up venues where we can do two or three at the same place."