



Accountancy Recruitment News - 16th July 2021

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Good morning - this is the July edition of Accountancy Recruitment News. It includes our accountancy job market report, salary and freelance rates, suggested interview answers and other articles.

Accountancy Job Market Report - July 2021

Summary of the current state of the accountancy job market:

Permanent Recruitment - Quiet

It has continued to be a very quiet year in June on the permanent side. Very low new vacancy numbers. It is still extremely hard to entice candidates away from secure roles in the current climate.

Freelance Accountant Recruitment - Quiet

Still quiet on the freelance side. We have good availability amongst freelancers at all levels - bookkeeper through to senior accountants.

Accountant Firms for Sale - Very Quiet

Accountancy firm buyers remain numerous - sellers and retiring partners/directors are extremely rare. There is a huge market demand for small accountancy firms looking to sell their client banks, retire or merge. Contact us on 01824 780937 for a confidential discussion.

New Vacancies

VAC-10404 Senior Accountant/Practice Manager Birmingham

VAC-10403 Senior Accountant Redhill

VAC-10402 Senior Tax Manager Hemel Hempstead

VAC-10401 Finance Manager South East London

VAC-10400 Semi-Senior Accountant Stockport

VAC-10399 Tax Assistant Stoke-on-Trent

VAC-10398 Accounts Assistant Stoke-on-Trent

VAC-10397 Audit Manager West London

VAC-10396 R&D Tax Specialist Oldham

VAC-10395 Practice Accountant Reading
VAC-10394 Part-Qualified Accountant Liverpool

New Candidates

CAN-12764 MAAT Semi-Senior Accountant Looking for remote working roles.
CAN-12767 ACCA Accountant/Practice Manager remote working roles.
CAN-12769 ACCA Accountant with 8 years of practice experience looking for roles around London and Essex.
CAN-12770 AAT Accountant & Financial Director with around 3 and a half years in practice at Semi-Senior level as well as another 3 years in the mostly IT/SaaS industry as a Financial Controller/Director. Looking for freelance remote working roles.
CAN-12772 MAAT Semi-Senior Accountant with around 7 and a half years of practice experience. Looking for roles around London.
CAN-12773 FCCA/ACA Accountant with 10 years of practice experience and another 12 years in industry including insurance, distribution and shipping. Looking for remote working roles or roles around Essex.

REC/KPMG UK Job Market Report

(we are members of the panel contributing to this report)

Key Findings

Robust demand for staff drives unprecedented increase in permanent staff appointments
Availability of workers deteriorates at record pace...
...leading to sharper rise in starting pay

KPMG Partner Comment:

"June's data confirms that momentum in the jobs market continues to surge, with improved business confidence leading to record high recruitment activity. As we move towards the final easing of pandemic restrictions, permanent role availability increased at the quickest rate since the survey began in 1997 and temporary roles rose to the greatest extent for 23.5 years. But for the fourth month running we're seeing a decline in the availability of candidates to fill all these new roles and the most severe deterioration for 24 years."

Hourly Rates and Salary Levels

Hourly Rates for Freelancers

Currently tend to be £21.24 per hour for accountants & experienced bookkeepers undertaking standard accounts work (hourly rate includes agency, VAT and service fees). Contact us to use our freelance accountant platform.

Salary Levels July 2021

Assistant Accountant – Outside London. Range £18k – £32k.
Accountant (ACCA/ACA) – Outside London. Range £30k-£45k.
Auditor – Outside London. Range £40k-55k.
Bookkeeper – Outside London. Range £16-23k.
Industry Accountants (CIMA) – Outside London. Range £30-50k.

Assistant Accountant – London. Range £22-32k.
Accountant – London. Range £28k-45k.
Auditor – London. Range £40-60k.

Bookkeeper – London. Range £20-26k.

Industry Accountants (CIMA) – London. Range £45-75k.

Tailoring Job Applications

NB: this article was written for the legal profession but has just as much relevance to accountancy.

A recent query in to us has been from a contract manager working in-house for a large multinational, and wanting to apply for jobs where the job title is legal counsel or in-house lawyer. He was wondering how to frame his job title when the work he was doing was exactly the same as in-house legal counsel dealing with commercial contracts, but that recruiters may overlook him because the word lawyer is not in his job title.

You Say 'In House Counsel' and I Say 'Contracts Manager'

Our advice to this contracts manager was to be a little bit flexible with his job title. The same advice applies to anybody applying for work, in that when you make a job application you should always try to assimilate to the role and the company you are applying to. If the business is looking for a contracts manager then wherever possible you should try and use this term on your application and CV. If the company is looking for an in-house legal counsel to deal with commercial contracts then you should, whenever possible, include those words on your CV and in your application.

Specific Sector Experience Can Be a Negative Factor

The same applies of course to all job applications - and it is particularly an issue amongst company commercial lawyers, who may have done a wide variety of types of law in lots of different sectors, but struggle to convey specifics for a particular role. Quite often someone with a high level of experience in a specific sector not related to the role they are going for will have a CV completely overlooked for a post. This is because even though the solicitor is more than capable of covering the work, the company have simply read the copious realms of information about the sector experience and decided that the candidate is a non-starter.

Job Titles Matter

Of course it's easier said than done if your job title is contracts manager and the job is for an in-house legal counsel, because when the company you have applied to asks for a reference from the firm you have been working for, then chances are it'll come back to say that you have been a contracts manager. However, the risks of this are outweighed by the fact that the job descriptions are really quite interchangeable in most settings and if you do not use the same terminology then it's possible that you may not even get to the stage where anyone is asking for your references.

Misleading = Bad Idea

We would normally advocate being very careful not to mislead anybody or state an untruth on a CV or job application, but to just be flexible with the way you describe your role. For example, you could include the terms 'commercial contracts' alongside your description of yourself as legal counsel, so for example you could state your job title as legal counsel (commercial contracts manager), or commercial contracts manager (in-house legal counsel).

There are so many different job titles now that essentially describe the same thing, that some employers are quite aware that the work you do as a commercial contracts manager if you are a qualified solicitor is going to be very similar to if you were an in-house legal counsel working on commercial contracts, if not exactly the same.

Advice

Our advice would be not to get too caught up with the job titles, but to try and instead concentrate on your experience and tailoring it to the job you are applying for. We get a lot of job applications from in-house counsel who send us off generic lists of work they have done without actually thinking about the role they're going for. So many are unsuccessful because although they probably have the experience, their CVs don't reflect the experience that the company who are recruiting are looking for, and without this detail then recruiters don't tend to put them forward and HR departments don't tend to recruit.

Final Note

One of the problems with in house legal recruitment is that very often it's done by non-qualified lawyers who don't really understand the work being done by commercial contracts lawyer or in-house legal counsel, so are looking for key words instead of looking at the actual experience in the round. NB I have to confess that sometimes I pick up legal CVs and don't actually have a clue what the person applying for the role does even though I'm a qualified solicitor!

Your role as a job applicant is to make everyone's life easy by stating all the information that a recruiter needs at the top of your CV or in your job application. Always try to provide the recruiter with a paragraph of information about yourself that is specifically relevant to the role you are applying for.

Is Age a Factor on My CV?

NB: this article was written for the legal profession but has the same relevance to accountancy.

This seems to be a recent discussion that has arisen and we are starting to notice an increasing number of applicants for legal jobs in particular where dates of birth have been removed from CVs together with the dates of education. There have been discussions in the media about employers actively discriminating against older job applicants but also evidence of companies looking to recruit and interview blind without viewing dates of birth.

I thought it might be worth writing this article simply to outline our current experience of age discrimination as opposed to previous articles we have written over the years on the same subject, as I think attitudes have changed in the workplace to age over time.

Blatant Discrimination is Rare

The first thing to say is that we don't often come across blatant discrimination when we are recruiting for law firms and in-house legal departments. It is much less rare to get a call from a partner or owner of a law firm looking to recruit who will say to us that they want somebody aged 25 to 40 and no older, or they don't want to recruit any old people who will just sit there and get paid without doing any work, or they don't want a young woman in a job because they're worried she might go off on maternity leave for quite a long time. These examples are all things we've come across over time, but not in recent years. Perhaps employers are a bit more careful in what they say to us these days..

Age Not So Relevant

Over the last 20 years there has been a real change in attitude towards age as a factor when it comes to recruitment and employers seem to be more focused on candidates at particular salary levels, actual experience and whether someone is a good fit for a job, rather than looking at an age to determine whether or not they would be suited.

The discussion has become more about the job and the candidate rather than the age of the candidate and whether or not someone is suited to a role based on their previous experiences, whether this is too much experience or too little experience.

Tailoring Applications

This is a bit of a recurring theme in my writing, but think the key is to tailor your CV and application for the role you are applying for, and do not send in a generic CV for job applications when the CV is not tailored to the job you are going for.

So for example, if you are a senior solicitor looking to get out of the high pressure of a senior job and want to instead look at a junior job with a similar level of responsibility and also salary to boot, it is absolutely no point sending in a CV highlighting your leadership qualities and all the experience you have had to date. This will not work at all and is most likely to end up with an instant rejection, because any employer looking at it will see immediately that you are over-qualified for the role. They want to see a CV from someone who is at the level of experience they are looking to recruit, which means that your CV needs to reflect this.

Similarly a poorly written CV from someone with 40 years' experience is going to get rejected, not because of the person's age but because the employer cannot see the information they need in order to make a decision. We get a lot of senior solicitors who have the most dreadful CVs - poorly written, big gaps and a complete lack of information. Some can get away with it, but others simply get no work.

In summary, I suspect the best way of looking at rejections from roles is to look at whether or not the way you presented your experience actually meant you came across as the right fit for the job you were applying for.

Interview Question 48 – Explain the organisational structure in your last company and how you fitted into it?

Advice

This question requires you to understand the structure of your last company from top to bottom and give a short succinct answer outlining how you fitted within it. Do not try to build yourself into something you are clearly not. This is not what the question requires. The interviewer is simply asking you to outline the structure so he can gain an understanding of the level of your seniority for responsibility.

Examples of Answers

“As regional manager I reported at all levels. There are six directors and one group manager who sits on the board. Below this are five regional managers, each with a team of ten lower level managers responsible for the various departments. Each of the lower managers has ten department heads who each have an assistant working with them. Below that level is the workforce.”

Or:

“I work as a crew member, reporting to a team leader who in turn reports back to a store manager. Above the store manager is a group manager who is responsible for a number of stores, usually four or five. Obviously my role does not require me to have many dealings with anyone beyond this level but I understand the group managers report to regional managers who in turn are responsible to the Board of Directors at Head Office in Middlesex.”

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Kind regards,

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