



Short-Term Wins vs. Long-Term Grins.

It is the ultimate conundrum for any business leader.

There is only so much energy that can go into their business on a daily basis. The recurring question for a leader is what their team should spend that all important energy on. They need to ensure short-term cash flow meets the everyday financial commitments of the business, but they equally need to secure the long-term future by partnering with their clients and anticipating the needs of their customers.

These two approaches are not always possible to combine.

Recruitment has the reputation of being the classic short-term industry, but not always in a good way. In contingency based recruitment for example, it is tempting for some to take on any role, find a few candidates good enough to pass the interviews and then move on to the next role. A candidate may or may not get hired. If they do, it's a bonus. If they don't, the hope is one of the multiple opportunities that they are currently juggling is bound to come off. The month-by-month, hand-to-mouth, first-past-the-post mentality is what gives the recruitment industry a bad name.

However, as with many other service industries, there is always another way.



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A client does not become worthless just because you currently don't have a suitable candidate or project to put their way. They understand that you aren't magicians – if you can't help them this time, they won't hold it against you. What they will appreciate, however, is a little honest advice here and there – if you make an effort to assist, it will strengthen your relationship for the future. There is no documented proof to show that this works in the recruitment industry as such, but as a business owner who had to navigate effectively through the Global Financial Crisis (GFC); I can safely say that this value-added long-term approach was certainly a key contributor to our success in those lean years.

The short-term guys were exhausting themselves chasing their tails on any role they could get their hands on, while we were selectively filling a few choice roles here and there with people who trusted us.

You see, when times are good, both approaches work equally well. You could even argue that the short-term guys can Hoover up that little bit more immediate revenue as they are so "efficient" at what they do. However, when times get tough, the long-term relationships are the only ones to survive.

Business is cyclical.

Short-term orientated businesses will multiply as soon as conditions begin to improve (i.e. now). They will offer competitive rates and practice the hard sell. Sometimes their terms are difficult to refuse from the short-term perspective of a client.

However, if you want a partner to work with you through the good times and the bad, it is well worth getting to know the quality players in your market. They won't be the cheapest, they won't necessarily be the quickest, but they will have a track record of successfully working with long-term clients that is a testament to their relationship building skills, experience, expertise and quality of service delivery. They will stick with you through thick and thin and not abandon you for easier pickings the moment the going gets tough.

Short-term wins versus long-term grins? Regardless of industry, overall I think most would want to work with a business that puts a long-term grin on your face.

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