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by CW Guest Columnist

Aug 15, 2009

**Has the perception of an ideal candidate changed since the downturn?**

**Hamed Al Tamami, Future Match Human Resources Consultancy managing director, answers** one of the latest buzzwords that we are hearing from our clients is that they are looking to 'right-size' their companies and, as a result, are looking for employees who have a good match of behavior relative to the requirements of the job.



Hamed Al Tamami, Future Match Human Resources Consultancy managing director.

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**Craig Jordan, business development manager for ESI International, a project management and business training organisation, answers** there are two critical elements of construction project management that have been shown to be lacking in the current climate, these are cost management and risk management. While these would always be desired competencies at anytime, proven experience and capability in these areas is now viewed as critical for any management position.

**Do people need more skills now to stand a chance of getting a job?**  
**Hamed Al Tamami, answers** skills sets are needed in any economic environment but where people and employers now need to pay more attention to is the behavioral aspects, which they tend to neglect when times are good. Some of the questions that should be addressed are; how is a particular candidate going to react in uncertain times? And, can they make changes in their behavior to be successful in different jobs?

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**Craig Jordan, answers** I don't think employers are looking for more skills *per se*, but they are looking for greater proven experience. This was a challenge in the GCC previously; there were so many new mega projects and a lack of genuine experience. Now many of those projects have been completed, cancelled or postponed and some of these experienced candidates are available on the market for the first time in many years.

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**What is your opinion of the current state of the construction jobs market?**

**Hamed Al Tamami, answers** current studies conducted by EMA Partners International has shown that construction companies are still hiring. And, as a result of the downturn, employers have the advantages of hiring from a larger talent pool. Companies now have the luxury of being able to choose their staff from this much larger group of qualified people but tend to be more stringent in their hiring strategies.

**Craig Jordan, answers** it is obviously a very difficult time at every level but there are still hot spots such as Abu Dhabi and Doha where there are opportunities for the right candidates. The consolidation that has occurred is not necessarily a bad thing in that it will shake many of the under qualified people out of the overheated job market and we will end up with an enhanced resource pool.

**What can people do to make them stand out from others hoping to be employed?**

**Hamed Al Tamami, answers** in a nutshell, people need to first of all, research the market and target those that they feel they would like to work for. Floating CV haphazardly, will not fit the situation. Calm and focused thinking is needed. Secondly, they must bridge the gaps between what skills or behaviour they possess and what the potential employers or market requires, either by browsing the net, reading a book.

**Craig Jordan, answers** qualifications and experience are the by words to success at the moment. Getting the experience in the current market is obviously more difficult than a year ago, so anyone thinking of making a career in the construction industry should be seriously considering the various education options.

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