



# Are you ready to dance?

It seems like the world is searching for export compliance managers. Working with a specialist recruiter can help you get ahead of the pack – whether you're looking for a job or to fill a vacancy.

**I**t is a candidates' market. "Export compliance professionals are the prom queens and kings right now," says Bill Conroy, Executive Director of Tyler Search, the specialist trade recruitment consultants. Indeed, according to Conroy, his team hasn't seen a recruitment market this hot since 2014-2015 – for candidates, that is, as demand is majorly outstripping supply.

Good news then for anyone looking for a new role, but spare a thought for the export compliance chiefs and hiring managers, juggling the fall-out from Covid, the Big Resignation, and ramped-up regulations, who are desperate to fill the gaps. What are they to do in a job market like this? Answer: seek help from a specialist recruitment agent. And there's reasons why that goes for candidates as well.

## "We are hiring"

In a candidates' market, hiring managers usually like to work with specialist external recruiters who already have a good idea of the market and the available candidates in theirs and other sectors. "Companies engage recruiters, or head hunters, to cherry pick export compliance managers from similar industries," says

Conroy. He points out that while his team has more than 10,000 resumes of trade compliance professionals in its applicant-tracking system, a company's internal human resources team is unlikely to maintain a database of such talent. Some company hiring managers will

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"advertise" the post themselves – today, that may mean reaching out over LinkedIn and other social media platforms, often with the team head expounding the virtues of the team and benefits of the role in question. This can work but the odds are not great – there's a lot of competition out there. So it's here that external recruiters have an advantage. They already have existing contacts, which means they can get a bunch of relevant resumes to the company within days rather than weeks or months.

Hong Kong-based Gerard Finlay, a

principal at recruiting firm Carlyle Kingswood Global, agrees: "Specialist recruiters tend to have existing networks and relationships with potential candidates. This is especially useful in the case where markets have limited use of LinkedIn or other tools." He cites Japan as one market where social media tools are used in a very limited way for job searches.

And it's not just a numbers game. "Strategizing is very helpful," says Lucina Lara, Head of Trade Compliance at web infrastructure and website security company, Cloudflare. She hired two candidates last year – one each in Asia and Europe – and is currently looking for a trade compliance specialist for the Americas. "When I work with recruiters to screen candidates, we can get deeper into important areas. With an external recruiter, I can discuss prioritizing what qualifications and skills I really need. With internal recruiters, I need to spend some time to educate them on the position and skills."

## Do you want to dance?

It's one thing to say it's a "candidates' market", but if you haven't been looking for a new position in a while, you might



not know which skill sets are in demand, what are typical salaries and compensation package, or have any insights into a hiring company's culture. Recruiters always have their finger on the pulse of the markets they cover, so here they can be the candidate's best friend.

"A recruiter will be able to advise candidates about the short-term job market and also be able to discuss a long-term view of a sector," says Finlay. He notes that candidates can and should use such information to build up skills and experience that will be "in demand" over the coming years.

With the choice that comes with a candidates' market, would-be employees will want to know more about the company and position to ensure they make the right decision on a move. Here, knowing an external recruiter can help in bundles. They are well placed to know the word on the street about specific companies. Says Conroy: "Our client firms must provide us with all the reasons why the opportunity is a great export compliance opportunity to pursue, why it's a great position, reporting to a great boss, and with a great career path."

### The bottom line

Perhaps the most sensitive area of market awareness is around salaries and compensation packages (see Bill Conroy's article on the following page). Internal HR teams have often banded salary ranges linked to job title and the number of years spent working for the company. Sticking to that formula, however, misses out on the nuances of specialist positions and shifts in the market.

"I often have to go back and push for more clarity on salary ranges as sometimes what the internal team has is not a reflection of the market," says Lara. She notes that it is especially difficult for overseas hires as HR teams at company HQ won't always have global salary and benefits information at their fingertips. This is another area where a specialist external recruiter can help both hiring managers and potential candidates understand the market.

### Remote and/or hybrid?

While corporate culture and work environment have always been important, the pandemic has catapulted certain benefits into the "incredibly important" realm.

"Elements such as working from home policies, annual leave entitlements," are more carefully scrutinized by candidates, says Finlay. "Generally, candidates are

### Tips for candidates

- Send your resume to as many specialist recruiters as you can.
- Make sure your resume doesn't get sent to a company without your permission.
- Never discuss your current salary. When uncomfortably pressed by an HR professional or 3rd Party recruiter simply say, "I'd like to learn more about the position, the company and the team before putting a value on a move. What is the firm's monetary assessment for this role?"
- Put all the acronyms in your resume.
- Share what types of roles and organizations you are genuinely interested in with the external recruiter.
- Build a level of trust with an external recruiter, so that you feel comfortable sharing information such as what roles/companies interest you, benefits information, and other concerns.
- Find out who the hiring manager is and send them a cover letter.

### Tips for hiring managers

- Show the potential candidates the value of the position and joining the company by being able to discuss working from home policies, annual leave entitlements, career growth, team growth, the title, reporting structure, continuing education, and conference attendance, to name a few.
- Consider arranging for potential candidates to meet a wide number of people in the organization, including stakeholders. Ideally some of these meetings should be in a more informal environment (such as lunch with potential team members etc).
- Be transparent with candidates about real stats on overall employee turnover, turnover in the Trade Compliance Department and the growth of the Trade Compliance Team.
- Be frank about the history of the position and why the position is open.
- Open up with candidates about the profile of the Trade Compliance Team and address the company's Culture of Compliance.
- Make sure your compensation and benefits are in the ballpark. Talk to an external recruiter if you are unsure of current salary ranges for specific titles or skill sets, or need help convincing your internal human resource partners about the potential salary range.

starting to examine whether organizations are genuinely places where employees are valued," he adds.

"How often am I required to be in the office?" is a popular question asked by

### Some companies have used their willingness to offer remote working to their advantage.

candidates right now. Some companies have used their willingness to offer remote working to their advantage; it makes the talent pool a larger one.

"Now, when we find the right candidate, we can get the approval to hire remotely," notes Lara. "That opens doors to a lot of potential candidates that we didn't have access to before."

But remote or hybrid work shouldn't be the only work culture question job-seekers are concerned about. The reason a position is open, average turnover, reporting structure, and the critical question of the company's culture of

compliance are all still very relevant.

"Career development" is widely talked about and Conroy advises that candidates should understand what it actually means to the hiring company. He highlights that one way to keep on top of skills and industry knowledge is to ensure the company sponsors development opportunities such as continuing education, trade association memberships, and conference attendance.

### Conclusion

"The need for smart and savvy trade facilitators and strategists that can navigate the complicated domestic and international trade rules and regulations is not going away," says Conroy. Trade compliance professionals need only to look at their latest updates to see that global trade trench warfare and consistent changes to regulatory playbooks are only making their knowledge more valuable, and in some industries critical. For candidates and companies alike, the helping hand of a specialist recruiter can make all the difference in these testing times. ■