

STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

DOMINIC THATCHER EXPLAINS THATCHERMACKENZIE'S ROLE AS A SPONSOR OF THE STEP 2012 SWISS CONFERENCE TAKING PLACE IN LUZERN ON 23RD AND 24TH MAY.

Once again ThatcherMacKenzie GmbH is a sponsor of the STEP Switzerland Conference in Luzern and, as per last year in Zurich, is the sole recruiter sponsoring the event. Aside from ThatcherMacKenzie some of the other featured sponsors in Luzern will be Jersey Finance, the Hawksford Group and the Luzern business development group. Unlike last year it is intriguing to see a large Jersey sponsor group in Jersey Finance and Hawksford alongside ThatcherMacKenzie, which is both a Jersey and Swiss recruitment company.

As a recruitment company, which is also a sponsor, what can the benefits be? Sometimes the last person anyone wants to be seen talking to is a recruiter due to the potential connotation – that is, is the recruiter actively touting for candidates or is the individual concerned wanting to move from their current role?

However these events are not seen as the ideal hunting ground, far from it. The purpose of sponsoring is to ensure one is marketing in a passive manner through brand recognition to a captive, exclusively relevant audience.

The purpose of speaking to people is to learn about their business as most attendees are decision makers within their bank or trust company. Through sponsoring and attending various presentations (this year the conference will be on the topic of 'Living with wealth – but where?') the recruiter is taking the time to listen and understand the various issues that affect the business for which ThatcherMacKenzie principally serves. Without such market knowledge and understanding it is extremely difficult to comprehend and appreciate the business for which you are recruiting.

I spend the majority of my time in Switzerland and slightly more in the Zurich region than Geneva. As such, a conference in either Zurich or Luzern presents a great opportunity to briefly say hello to existing clients for whom you are recruiting – or have recruited – and puts you into their subconscious should a subsequent recruitment project arise. As recruiters we should be maintaining regular contact throughout the year with clients but the attendance and sponsorship at a conference can only help the recruiter to be the first port of call when a client is seeking to recruit.

Recruitment firms cannot live without candidates – as with client companies they are equally important – but if the purpose of sponsorship and attendance at a conference is to create or enhance business relationships with client companies, how do we hope to gain candidates?

In short, an ethical recruiter is not there to poach or impose upon potential candidates. From my experience, especially from last year in Zurich, potential candidates will make a mental note of the recruiter sponsor and in their own time, and it should only be in their own time, they will make contact. It is hard to measure the benefit of sponsorship upon candidate acquisition but 25% of candidates who approached me last year mentioned they had seen me and ThatcherMacKenzie's marketing information at the Zurich conference last year. In my view this is a credible return.

Ultimately the purpose of conference sponsorship is to benefit the recruiter as well as the client. Not only do I have a captive audience but so do they. For many clients it is the perfect opportunity to discuss with me the current state of the market and to determine recruitment trends including demand and supply. For the client it is the perfect opportunity to determine what level of experience is currently being hired within the trust sector in Switzerland (and beyond) and what key areas of expertise are being sought.

This year's conference is being held at the Palace Luzern Hotel on 23rd and 24th May. Luzern is a 45-minute train journey from Zurich and is a beautiful city in itself, well known because of its famous bridge across the lake.

For all concerned, sponsors, presenters and attendees, the annual STEP Switzerland conference provides an opportunity to discuss issues and ideas as well as business strategies and ThatcherMacKenzie is delighted to be a part of this.

