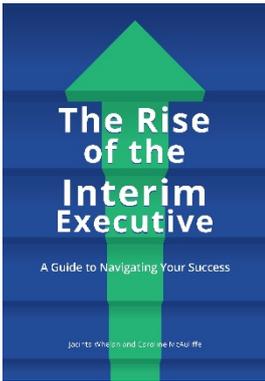


"Exponential growth" in interim executive recruitment

Monday, 24 May 2021 9:50am

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Demand for interim executives has increased five-fold over the past decade and is reshaping the Australian recruitment landscape, specialists say.

Watermark Executive Search partners **Caroline McAuliffe** and **Jacinta Whelan** say the rise in flexible working is driving similar flexibility around how businesses hire executive talent.

"The interim executive model allows businesses to harness the exceptional talent and experience of proven and successful leaders and redirect that energy and growth toward their own growth and transformation," McAuliffe says.

"Interim executives are now needed across all the business cycles – from growth, transformations, cost-cutting environments – and to help manage the changes to regulatory environments," adds Whelan.

"Being a successful interim executive is about remaining contemporary and offering currency. This is talent that is in demand, and here to stay," she says.

Although growth in the Australian interim executive market had been slow compared to the US, UK and Europe, it has been "exponential" since the GFC, McAuliffe and Whelan say in their new book, [The Rise of the Interim Executive](#).

And according to [Watermark Search's latest research](#), there was a five-fold increase in demand for interim executives between 2010–2020.

The shift is being exacerbated by trends toward leaner organisational structures, training that focuses on transferable skills, outsourcing and offshoring, as well as the ageing workforce, and senior level professionals who [no longer want to work in permanent roles](#), McAuliffe and Whelan say.

"There is increased take up from business and a [tidal wave of supply](#). As a result, the interim executive market has moved from an informal environment to a more formal, structured market."

As a result, there are more intermediaries entering the market, including brokers, to place interim executives, who can command day rates of \$1,200–1800, depending on the contract length, levels of complexity and executive experience.



Key traits in demand

Interim execs are engaged primarily for two reasons: to hold the fort, or to solve a problem, McAuliffe and Whelan say.

They say the professionals who have the most successful placements have a number of key traits, including:

- Clarity about their 'currency', and up-to-date value in the market;
- An ego that is "in check", and combines confidence and authority with a strong EQ and self-awareness;
- Proven success in project delivery;
- Analysis and insight;
- Stakeholder and influencing skills;
- Curiosity;
- Resilience; and
- Good listening skills.

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