

You're hired!

Do you consider your employment glass to be half-full or already spilt half way across the table? In case you hadn't noticed, times are tough in the workplace right now, so Nina Lamparski went to talk to a recruitment expert to get some practical advice for job-seekers

In Ireland the unemployment rate has edged past 10 percent, while in both Britain and France the number of people out of work has risen to two million. Belgium's state of affairs doesn't look too rosy either, with latest Eurostat figures revealing that nearly 7.5 percent of the population are looking for work.

Stop! That's enough. Even though many of us are going through a rocky patch this Spring, now is also the perfect moment to do something finally "that actually makes you happy", says Matthew Kimberley of Target Recruitment. The dynamic entrepreneur launched his Brussels-based firm in January 2008 and specialises in finding placements for freelance IT contractors from here and overseas. He gives a word of warning straight off: don't confound recruiters with career counsellors.

"Many people are confused about what path to choose and they will come to us for answers," he explains. "But recruitment is about sales, not human resources. We help you to find the best way of selling yourself."

Kimberley, whose office resembles a cheeky boys club with its mini-soccer table and comfy couches, admits to feeling the pinch a little too.

"Our phones are ringing off the hook with people looking for work but there are fewer jobs," he says. "It's ironic because I expected our first year to be slow and the second one to explode, and it's actually been the reverse. Because we are a small company, though, there is room for growth."

Competition is steep as hundreds of recruitment agencies vie for companies' attention and cash. Still, Kimberley is quietly confident that his business will survive because "a lot of our rivals don't have legal licences to operate within the Belgian market, whether they're based here or overseas. We provide clients with proof of registration."



CASSANDRE STURBOIS

Although he's gone and done it himself, Kimberley believes that becoming your own boss might not be the best move right now. Apart from having to sift through complicated VAT laws, no one really knows where the economy will be in a year or two from now and investors are reluctant to open their wallets.

Instead, he advises managers to treat their personnel well, especially in a period that fosters anxiety and rash decisions.

For those currently unemployed, Kimberley recommends using your time to acquire new skills.

"Learn to build websites. Become an expert on something obscure. Get a blog. Go to Toastmasters and learn public speaking. Go to networking events. Play sports. One word can be enough to pique an interviewer's interest."

And if you think you've got what it takes to help others find a job, get in touch with Target Recruitment who are, funnily enough, recruiting...

For more details, visit www.targetrecruitment.eu.

The perfect CV

Recruitment expert Matthew Kimberley shares tips on how to create a great résumé.

- Have a clear statement of intent at the top. Don't wait until the end to say what you are looking for.
- Remove all instances of the '-ing' present participle (as in selling, implementing, creating) and replace them with the past participle (sold, implemented, created).
- Remove all instances of "responsible for" and replace them with your actual achievements: instead of "responsible for increasing customer base", say "increased customer base by 60 percent in two months".
- If you've done secretarial work, say "dealt with incoming phone calls" instead of "responsible for answering the phone".
- Call a spade a spade. If you were a barman, say you were a barman, not a "customer beverage distribution agent".
- Your résumé should not be longer than two pages. If you're under thirty, make that one.