

# FUTURE PROOF

The need for software to be equally tough and as resilient as your business has never been more important.

**W**hether you are a start-up recruitment business or of substantial experience, your software is one of your most important assets.

In times of austerity, however, the need to look at software as an investment to last your business into the foreseeable future is more important than ever.

So what are the creators of your software systems up to in 2011?

## Testing times

Chris Bogh, technical director of eploy believes research and testing is key to having reliable software.

He says: "I think it's fair to say that most of the core features such as compliance, parsing, searching etc are now fairly standard in the top recruitment software packages – the only difference being is how well these features have been developed and implemented.

"At eploy we never just quickly develop features to ensure we can tick a box or grab a headline. We spend a lot of time researching and using our network of trusted Beta testers who cover all areas of recruitment. The feedback they provide is invaluable in ensuring our system is easy to use, robust and fit for purpose."

Mark Lennard, executive director of MyResourcer.

com agrees: "Reliable software is vital to any recruitment company within the industry. An average recruitment database could potentially hold thousands of CVs and reliable software package is a must to enable recruiters to search their data and match candidates with the right position.

"Reliable software is also needed to manage candidate's information and ensure it is consistently kept up to date. The recruitment business moves at such a pace that efficiency and speed can be the difference between securing an interview for a candidate or not. Business development heavily relies on knowing which clients are recruiting and sourcing the right candidates for those roles."

The rigour with which potential recruitment customers will use when finding their perfect software package when the need for tightening-belts is apparent has been outlined by First Choice Software.

When First Choice Software asked a third party organisation to speak to its clients and prospects 75 per cent of them said they rigorously compared products before purchase.

According to First Choice the respondents' top three selection priorities were: a need for the software to be customisable in order to work the way they work,

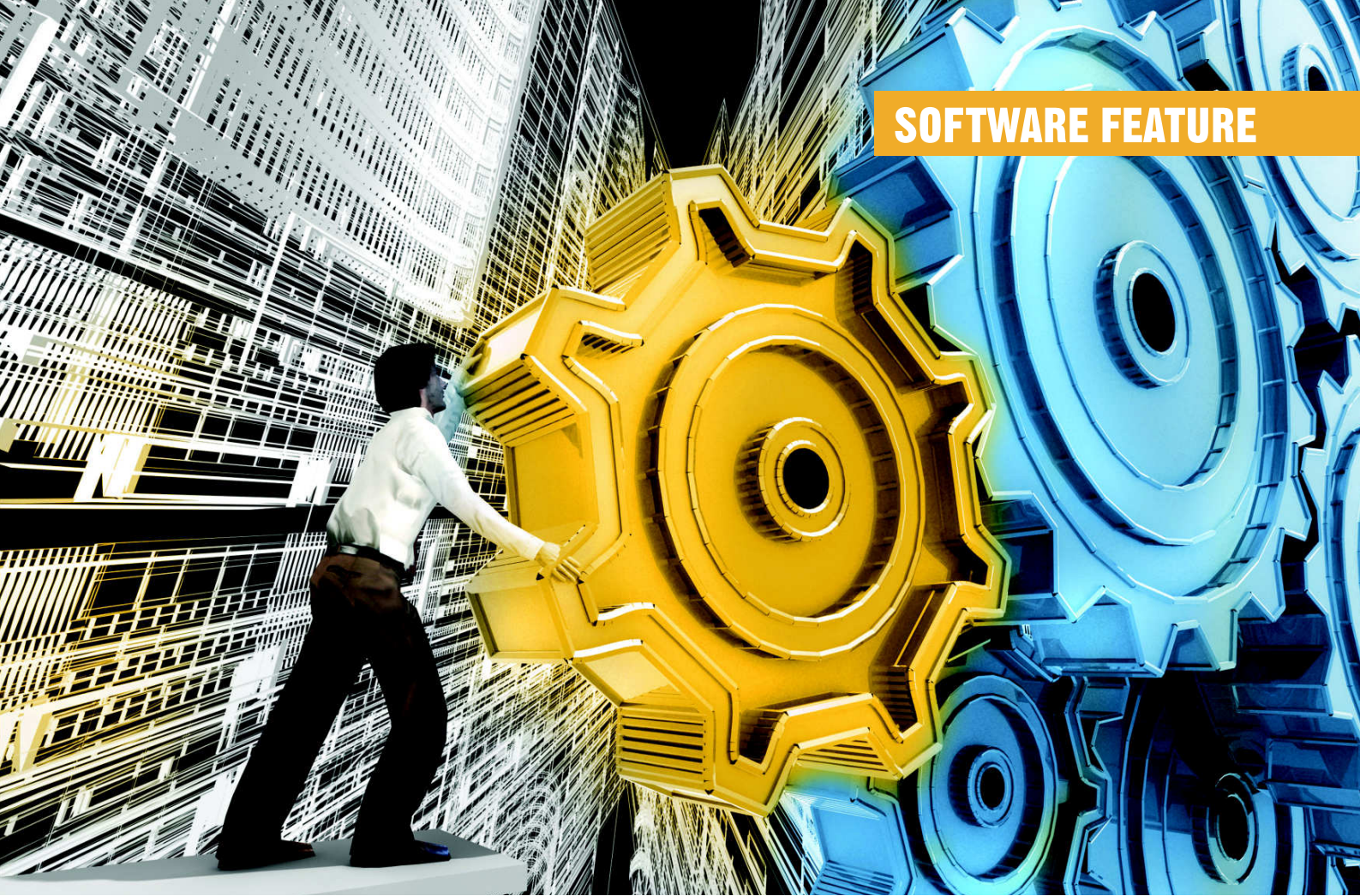
easy user adoption and a demonstrable increase in productivity.

First Choice managing director, Roy Snart, said: "State-of-the-art software will work the way you tell it to work - so it's important to tell it to work in the way that most efficiently meets your business requirements. Our clients tell us that they want simple efficient processes from the entry of candidate details done through parsing software, ideally built into the Recruitment CRM itself or seamlessly using a third party provider or directly from their website, all the way through to the booking/placement step that produces all the required documentation automatically.

"Obviously the matching needs to be fast and efficient with all compliance requirements taken into account. Synchronisation with outlook diaries, mail and tasks will also make things easier for the consultant. Applications running on mobile devices extend these efficiencies outside the office and will become increasingly more important."

## Market forces

Paul Thompson of Voyage accepts that with hundreds of recruitment solutions on the market you need to do your homework. He adds that fantastic customer →



services and support backed-up with a service level which allows flexible migration from one platform to another is essential. Customers have complex requirements yet demand a simple solution – it's a challenge he is used to. Get the basics right from the

“What might we see over the next five years? Will there be a CV in five years time? With the emergence of online portals, social websites and personal recommendations being so highly valued, will candidates win jobs before they've applied? The digitisation of the candidate also

Chris Clarke, VP Alliances, SHL, believes simply choosing a practical, cost-effective service is not quite the full picture: “There are great new matching engines and parsing techniques in the market at the moment that efficiently put information into searchable databases for

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start is his sage advice.

“Having sold software to the recruitment industry for over 10 years,” says Paul, “we've seen some real changes. Recruiters are no longer fighting for the fax machine or photocopying CVs with bottles of correction fluid at the ready, but the competitive edge is still there, and with Voyager, now are the tools.

“Retaining a customer for the life of their business requires a flexible solution and service from a competent supplier. Trusting a one man band to design your logo is fine, but your entire business processes and workflow? Make sure your chosen software partner offers support and nurturing and they're in it for the long haul - it could be a costly divorce!”

He adds: “Software companies can't afford to stand still. The market is moving at a faster pace than ever before and so ensure your software partner offers a solution which lets you migrate from a traditional database, to the cloud, the web or overseas. Who knows where you'll be in five years time.

removes territorial boundaries and makes it easier for recruiters to operate overseas.”

### Recruitment architects

Paul gets out his crystal ball: “We predict that there will soon be the ability for recruiters to view collaborated profiles on an applicant; pulling together views, opinions, references and legal checks. The process has already started with social networking sites such as Linked-in.

“A scary thought, but will the best candidates see themselves on a bidding/auction site? eBay for people anyone?”

Chris Bogh continues: “When looking at ROI it used to be about what savings could be made in terms of cost and time. It was all about automation and streamlining day to day recruitment tasks. Of course this is still important and we'll continually develop new features to add to this. Today, however, forward thinking agencies should look for software that can work harder for them and actually help create additional revenue streams.”

recruiters to use, which is a step in the right direction, but only half the story.

“The key flaw in this process is that the data is largely derived from CVs posted onto a job board or portal by candidates, which display the exaggerated highlights of an individual's career – so inferences and decisions being made by recruiters are using distorted data that only provides at best, an historic and at worst, an exaggerated view of a candidate. Investing in objective assessment to measure the underlying competency potential of a candidate gives a fair, potential measure of an individual's likely future workplace behaviour – and it is these behaviours that will dictate whether a candidate is successful or not in a new role, whether it is an external hire or an internal promotion.” Chris goes one step further to say that accurately defining job roles, using the same behavioural criteria against which the person is measured, allows matching technology to get a real purchase on the data and provide accurate decision support advice instantly to →



managers making crucial employment decisions.

"For example," he adds, "SHL's assessments are mapped to a standard universal competency framework and SHL has a database that utilises more than 25 years worth of data and the competency framework to provide accurate behavioural profiles for all roles."

Tim Richards, managing director of Bond International Software UK, is assured that simplifying solutions often boils down to automation. He also believes that in terms of parsing and search-based software, we are going to see shifts in how much human intervention is required for such processes.

"For instance, there will likely be a shift toward automating many administrative tasks, such as sorting CVs, allowing simplification where necessary and

be customised to meet client expectations."

### Web of opportunity

So what about the internet and recruitment tools associated with social networking?

Dillistone managing director Jason Starr says: "In the executive search sector, it's all about Web Research. We've been putting a lot of development money into that; our belief is that when a user opens the record of a candidate in FileFinder, they should see the latest information about that person – be it information held in the internal database, in a social network, or in a press release. The database is a subset of the available information on a person – it is our job, as developers, to provide our users with the full picture. We believe we've

improve our product and our service. That helps us and our clients."

Functionality and reliability is key, and from idibu's Martin Bramall's point of view, it is key: "When we talk about the reliability of Adpost say, one of the major areas we monitor is our integrations to our board network. We ensure that we have a wide array of reporting mechanisms in place that report any fault between ourselves and board and inform the end user in plain English of what to do. It's imperative that these mechanisms are flexible and easy to use.

He adds: "With our Atrack product we take on the serious responsibility of looking after client applicant data - and here we build in multiple layers of redundancy to know that if any layer of service fails, we have a number

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appropriate," Tim predicts.

He adds: "Human intervention is still of course crucial to completing certain tasks successfully, and as such, recruiters still need to maintain involvement in the actual recruiting processes, but let technology take the burden of the administrative side. Recruitment systems need to be accommodating enough to automate as many or as few of the processes as the recruiter requires.

"As such, recruitment software developers must offer more flexible services, delivering products which can cater for a number of different personal preferences and

delivered that."

"Suppliers are constantly having to do things differently. We are lucky enough to work with over 1,000 clients in some 61 countries. Potentially, that gives us a huge number of people to identify new functionality for us. The question is leveraging it; we've run webinars, held events, and so on. Our latest move was to open a LinkedIn Group for our users. We did this in January 2011 (replacing an earlier Google Group) and had over 200 members within a week. People are talking to each other, and to us, and it's giving us ideas on how we can

of backup options to fall back on. We'd advise anyone to check what hardware is used by their suppliers - we use top-end hardware managed by Positive Internet who also hosted the Ricky Gervais Guardian Podcasts (still hold the record for downloads I believe). In conjunction with them we have fully redundant physical systems with off-site backups and logging."

So while there is a lot of choice out there, it is pretty obvious that taking your time to find which software option suits your business model is key. A poor investment is a costly thing, now more than ever. ■