



In good HANDS



Adrienne Davitt explains why a new contract with ESB is so important to her company Davitt Corporate Partners and how ongoing development and support for business leaders is crucial to all companies today.

In April, Davitt Corporate Partners was appointed as one of ESB's preferred suppliers, renewing a relationship between both parties that stretches back to early 2007.

The tender process this time around was particularly competitive but as Adrienne Davitt, Managing Director and Senior Corporate Psychologist, explains, coming out on top was a big endorsement of the work that her company has been carrying out for more than 20 years. "Winning this contract reaffirms that our approach, our experience, and our processes work," she says. "We had noticed comments in the media indicating that the criteria and benchmarking were making it almost impossible for Irish organisations to compete effectively in tender processes like this. However, our success shows that it can be done but it doesn't hide the fact that almost 85 per cent of tenders are going outside of Ireland at the moment."

Six words on the Davitt Corporate Partners website stand out – 'defining core potential' and 'delivering consistent performance' sum up perfectly a company that has become one of the leading organisational psychology consultancies in Ireland. And so, with that experience, the selection process in ESB is in good hands. "When an opportunity for promotion or when a senior position opens up in ESB, the individuals will be selected



Jonathan Logue, Stewart Beamont, Andrew Harley and David Keane (back row, left to right) and Amber Hanna, Adrienne Davitt and Aoife Harrington (front row, left to right).

using our globally validated processes as part of the overall ESB selection process," Davitt explains.

Davitt's experience in building the company extends far beyond Irish shores – in 23 years of business, clients of Davitt's include global corporations such as Apple, GE and Pepsi. "We decided to include an international focus over 20 years ago," she recalls. "What became clear early on was that areas such as leadership, development, talent management, succession planning and even organisational design were relatively new back then and not really of explicit concern for business. However, we noticed that there was the breadth and the scope of different approaches internationally and different ways of thinking; we needed to adopt all of that back here in Ireland."

The experience of dealing with large international organisations has enabled Davitt Corporate Partners to put their knowledge and skills to good use in the Irish market. "We know what talent looks like," notes Davitt. "We understand what it takes to be a leader and we continue to keep up with the latest thinking and indeed contribute to it. So, on a daily, weekly, monthly and annual basis, we seek out the current and future best practice and embed that into our approach. SMEs typically don't have the time to invest in that type of thinking and development, so that is one of our key offerings to them."

"On the selection side," she continues, "we look at the role in question, consider what that role will be like in five years time and try to find the best fit for our clients. Then, in terms of development, a big part of what we do is help people be successful in the roles they are selected to." The development aspect of Davitt's work is becoming increasingly crucial to the company's clients – often determining whether or not a candidate is a success or not. "Continued development is extremely important for any company now. In Europe and the US, if someone is selected as a business leader, the expectation is that they have a coach. It is not because there is necessarily a problem, it's because the role

they have been selected for is a particularly difficult one, even with a management team to help out. It is always good to have someone at hand that is objective and experienced enough to help make smart and effective decisions."

"At Davitt Corporate Partners we always look at the role, the expectations of the client, and the individual who has been selected to fill the position. We then create a roadmap so that the person in question can develop into the role with ongoing support. This is hugely important because if the wrong person is chosen for a senior managerial position, they can do a lot of damage even in as short a period as six months. That, of course, can be measured financially and in lots of other ways. If it really isn't working out, companies can find themselves starting all over again or trying to repair the damage. However, everybody working around that person is affected because the culture and environment are not conducive to productivity."

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While appointing the wrong candidate can harm a company, not paying attention to key staff and their needs in challenging economic times can be equally damaging. "For all companies, no matter how much pressure they are under, it is imperative that they pay a lot of attention to their people," Davitt says. "Good companies obviously attract good people but the adage that 'people are lucky to have a job right now' isn't enough for us as human beings. People have to believe that their employers care about them and the best way to do that is to communicate openly and build trust, which is something that we need to improve on in Ireland."

