

# Pair splash in the talent pool

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Nobody says executives need to work full-time, writes **Fiona Smith**.

If you have ever fancied a "portfolio career", now might be just the time to start looking into it.

Hard times are on their way for many who have felt the cruel edge of job cuts, but a tightening of company budgets means there are also opportunities for people who would like to do a bit of work for a number of employers rather than search for the next big corporate job.

Plenty of organisations would love to have the expertise of a top flight chief financial officer, corporate lawyer or human resources executive — but not all of them can afford the salary. And not all of them have enough work to hold the interest of such highly qualified people.

So finding someone to come in just a couple of days a week, to mentor staff or complete a defined project, would seem to be the answer.

However, one of the major barriers to the development of a portfolio career has been the difficulty of finding those little pieces of work. Sometimes, the effort spent in finding the work is worth more than the payment.

Entering the field with a solution is a new search consultancy for executives, Hattonneale, which has been set up in Sydney specifically to match professionals with part-time, episodic and project work.

"There is a need coming through from small to medium-sized companies and divisions of larger companies," says partner Anne Hatton.

The pool of talent available to Hattonneale includes women who want to balance work with family responsibilities, people who have decided to scale back their careers for lifestyle or pre-retirement reasons, expatriates returning home and people "in between jobs".

Hatton says Australia now has the second-highest rate of part-time work in the developed world, representing 29 per cent of the workforce, and executives account for 32 per cent of those.

One of her clients is Green Building Council of Australia chief Romilly Madew, who recently hired a part-time senior counsel — a



Searching for quality: Jane Neale, left, and Anne Hatton.

Photo: SEAN DAVEY

former senior partner of a large law firm who wanted to balance work with looking after her children.

As well as getting the benefit of a highly qualified lawyer three days a week, the not-for-profit organisation has been able to cut its external legal fees.

Madew says she was approached by Hattonneale just as she was preparing to put an advertisement on an online jobs board. "I really didn't know how to go about finding someone like that," she says.

Those with an interest in recruitment might recognise Hatton's name. She was the former chief executive of recruiter Hudson in Australia and New Zealand, ejected with chief financial officer Richard Pepper from the company in February last year in circumstances that have not been fully explained. Hudson at the time announced the pair had violated the company's code of conduct but arbitration in New York and Australia in July found there was no cause for a dismissal.

The other founding partner of Hattonneale is Jane Neale, the former managing director of advertising agency George Patterson. Part of a management buy-out of the agency six years ago, she sold out in 2005 and spent two years with her family while waiting out a non-compete agreement.

"I'd done the big corporate career and I didn't want to do it again, but I felt there was another opportunity in me — in tune with my lifestyle," Neale says.

She says the agency will provide some marketing nous to executives who haven't written a CV for 20 years. It will provide career coaching and help clients with setting up a company, organising insurance, secretarial services, and an IT help desk for those who flounder without the back-up of the company IT department.

"We can take that marketing pressure off them because we can introduce them to people. We want to help them get back to work and do what they are good at," she says.