

A FINAL QUESTION

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At last there are signs that our poor economy is finally turning the corner with news of the fourth consecutive quarterly growth in job numbers. So we spoke with Sigmar Recruitment's Robert Mac Giolla Phadraig to find out about his renewed confidence in the jobs market, how Bill Cullen sets a bad example and why we should stop kicking Sean Fitzpatrick.

So, should we be jumping with joy?

We have reported a 55pc growth in job placements compared to the same period last year, but the figures for 2008 were very, very bad, so we are coming off a very low base. Significantly, there has been an upturn in permanent employment.

Well, when it comes to good news, dude, I'll take anything you've got.

The fact that we can identify a trend is a big improvement over the past few years this was extremely difficult because the recruitment sector was in freefall. But we've had more vacancies in the last quarter than the last two years.

But it seems like everyone is working harder for less money these days.

They definitely are. Many people's capacity to earn has been reduced significantly. But there has been a shift in perception in terms of people's expectations. However, this isn't the case with everyone especially among graduates.

You'd think all that time in university would have taught them something

Graduates here are extremely competent and capable and have great raw talent. What lets them down is that they have a culture of expectation.

What we need is Bill Cullen to kick them into shape!

I think shows like Dragon's Den and The Apprentice have helped create more commercial awareness, but those shows are simply showbiz.

Riddle me this – how has the jobs market changed since our economic bubble burst?

Well, job-seekers need to be a lot more innovative and less dependent. A lot of employment opportunities are now more flexible and short-term, so people need to shift their expectations.

Yup, sadly the days of the job for life are long gone. Sniffle.

But the good news is companies are now hiring to position themselves for growth. I think companies realised they cut too deep in 2009 but then they realised the world wasn't going to end.

But will the jobs market ever return to the glory it witnessed during the wonder years?

It will be a long time. And to be honest I would be surprised if I see it in the next 10 years.

So with the likelihood of Brian Cowen, Edna Kenny and Ivor Callely dusting off their CVs soon, what advice do you have for those looking to change careers?

The most stressful time is when you procrastinate. Once you jump off the cliff and make a decision to change careers things become a lot easier.

I bet banking is not the most popular career choice these days?

Yes. And the press has had a big part to play. There are only so many times you can kick Sean Fitzpatrick for what went on.

Hitler, Stalin and a banker are in a room and you only have two bullets. Who do you shoot? Answer: the banker, twice, just to make sure.

John Costello