



Interim service providers survey and guide 2014

July 2014 (5th edition)



Introduction

A key route to market for professional interim managers and executives is the Interim Service Provider (ISP). This guide shares how interim managers and executives may best work with interim service providers to get the best out of that relationship for both parties.

The guide also lists the findings of the UK's most authoritative annual survey of leading interim service providers. The Institute of Interim Management (IIM) has compiled over 15,000 individual votes from around 2,500 interim managers and executives in this year's interim management survey to create this list of the 80 finest interim service providers as voted for by the interim managers and executives themselves.



**Ad van der Rest MIIM
Chairman IIM**



**'Quality is never an accident.
It is always the result of intelligent effort.'**

John Ruskin

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Understanding interim service providers

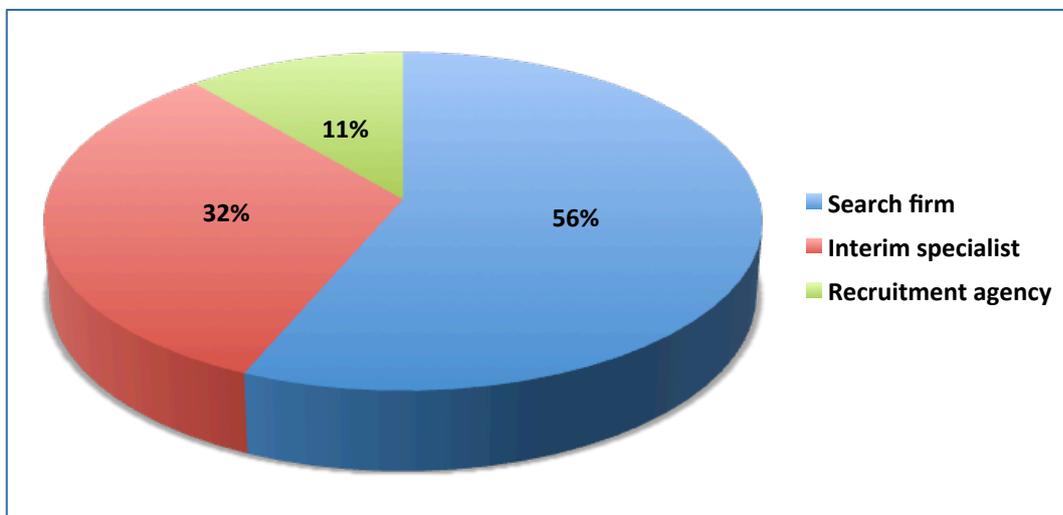
To start by touching on jargon for the uninitiated, an interim service provider (ISP) is an intermediary agency that will help to place interim managers on assignment with a client company, for a fee.

Interim service providers may be specialists who only handle interim assignments. They may also be permanent recruitment agencies or executive search firms also handling interims.

They may be business consultancies who, as part of their suite of offerings, act as intermediaries for interim managers, though by those businesses often labelling the individuals as consultants they are less obviously a go-to destination for interim managers and executives though they are utilised.

Breakdown of provider business type

(ISPs in our survey were asked whether they considered themselves primarily search firms, recruiters or interim specialists)



Given that there is a somewhat fuzzy line between interim service providers who may also conduct permanent recruitment, and recruitment agencies who may handle interim assignments, not forgetting assignment activity carried out by consultancies – the number of professional interim service providers is difficult to define.

The IIM understands there to be several hundred agencies that will try to fill an interim position given half a chance.

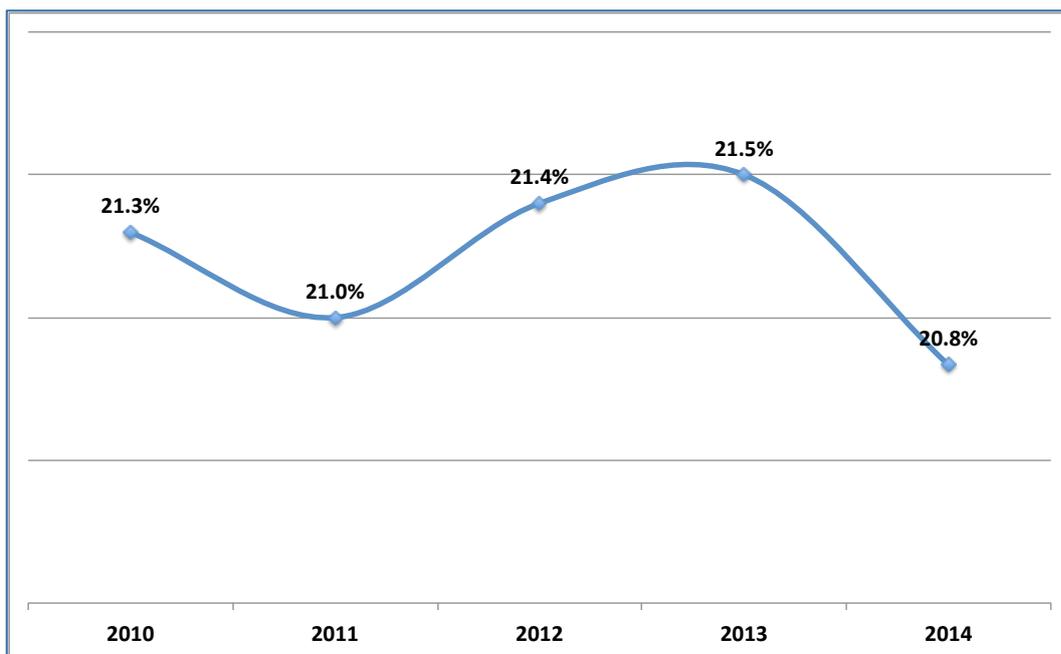
Whether they do so with the professionalism and focus of those who really know what they are doing is an open question, but we suspect the outcome will be highly variable. We are keen to identify those businesses that really understand interim management hence our survey.

Fees and day rates

That provider fee, known as the 'margin' is in most cases the percentage of the day rate that the service provider retains from the fee charged to the end client, though a few providers run their calculations by adding a percentage on top of the interim manager's rate and a few others will charge the client a facilitation fee on top of a direct contract between the interim manager and client.

The average provider is charging around 21% margin. Some premium providers charge a little more, others a little less.

Average interim service provider margin 2010-2014



As the market improves we expect outsourcers who seek to fill any position at say an 8% margin will increasingly struggle to consistently place interim managers and executives. We might also see some upward pressure on margin rates as the confidence of the premium providers grow.

A reasonable margin is an equitable price for the route to market that the agency provides. Interim managers should not imagine that they would normally achieve the same rate if they went direct. The average direct day rate is 8% higher than the average rate the interim manager achieves via a provider.

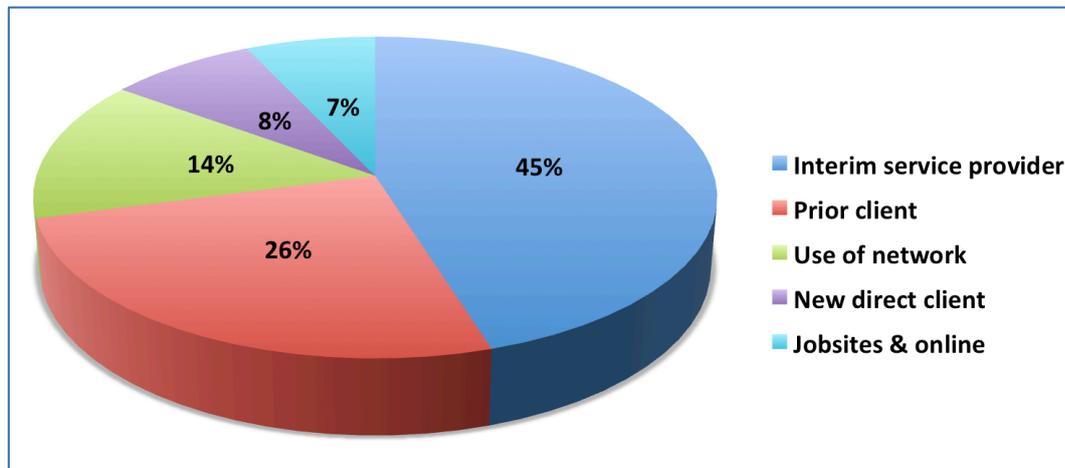
The IIM advocate a transparent attitude to margins between interim and provider. Interim managers are senior people who are perfectly capable of determining at client site what the client is paying, even if opaque confidentiality was sought by the provider.

Expenses are normally invoiced separately aside of the margin.

The case for using interim service providers

45% of all assignments are sourced via providers. 80% of interim managers will use interim service providers at least some of the time. It is a beneficial relationship that works for most.

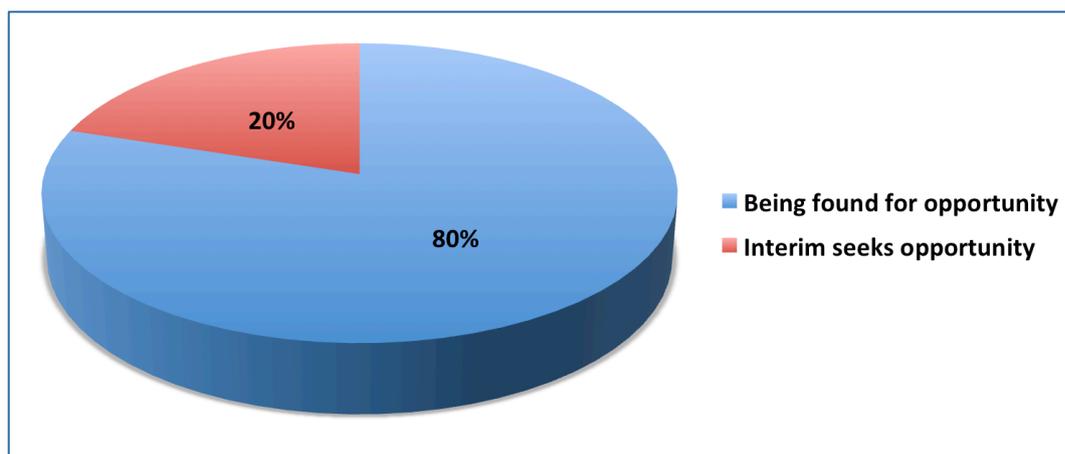
Interim management routes to market



Most assignments are not advertised, a trend which has been strengthened by the growth of social media and sites such as LinkedIn. Being 'easy to find' is now much more important than being good at 'applying' to vacancies. If you are not on an appropriate provider's database, you cannot be selected from it. You can't see a vacancy that is not advertised.

Most assignments (80%) are sourced by **being found** rather than **finding** an assignment. This is not passive because you work hard at building relationships that later bear fruit, whether they be provider based or direct. Either way being visible and memorable is essential.

Being found for assignment vs. searching for one



Being found

Having a strong profile is the 'starting point', but additional techniques will help you get found. 31% of interim managers have their own active website, but LinkedIn is your most visible presence on the internet.

Being found on LinkedIn

There are a number of straightforward steps that will significantly increase your LinkedIn visibility and will significantly help you to be found by service providers.



- **Build a connected network.** If you are not within the extended network of the person searching for you, you will not be found. Professional recruitment subscriptions to LinkedIn will allow providers to drill more deeply but a great network helps your visibility to all. Many commentators advise getting your connections to 500+ as quickly as possible, but achieve this with a steady quality network growth, accepting and inviting quality connections that you develop in your business endeavours, including clients, client employees, service providers, consultants and other industry key players.
- **Be clearly available for assignment (if you are).** If you are currently employed by your Limited Company – make sure it is clear from your profile that you are seeking assignment. You could either create a job: 'Seeking assignment' (you can always delete it again when working) or you make it crystal clear at the top of your own company entry, summary section or in your profile headline that you are seeking assignment.
- **Have flexible contact settings.** Be as easy to contact as you can be (or your sense of privacy allows). Ideally have your contact details clear and visible at the top of your Summary section. If a service provider cannot easily contact you they may instead contact the person who is easily contactable. A further reason for taking the plunge and sharing your business contact details openly is because whilst service providers as recruiters will have access to InMails to contact you, clients or other parties probably won't. Be contactable.

IIM offers a free vanilla profile to all interim managers at iim.org.uk

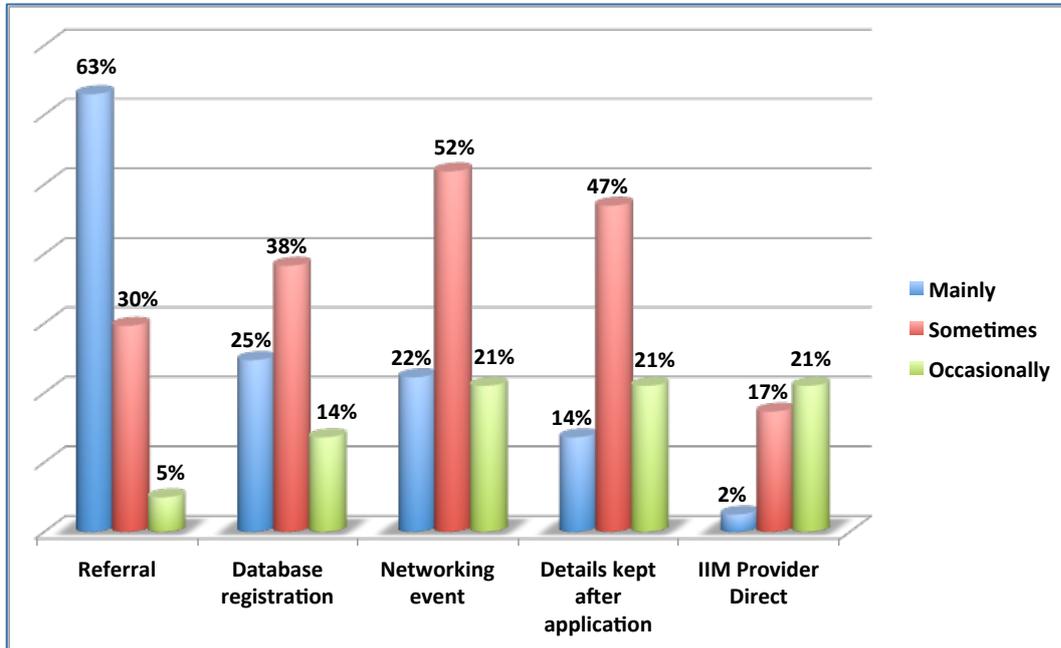
The IIM now offers all interim managers an executives a free vanilla profile with a permalink, photo, searchable fields and contact link so that providers and clients to reach you. Add the permalink to you LinkedIn profile so you can always be contacted.

IIM accredited members get additional features with CV, case study and CPD downloads.

Where do providers look when they have an opportunity?

When providers are looking for an interim manager that they don't already know, they most trust referred interim managers, in preference to their own database, so get networking.

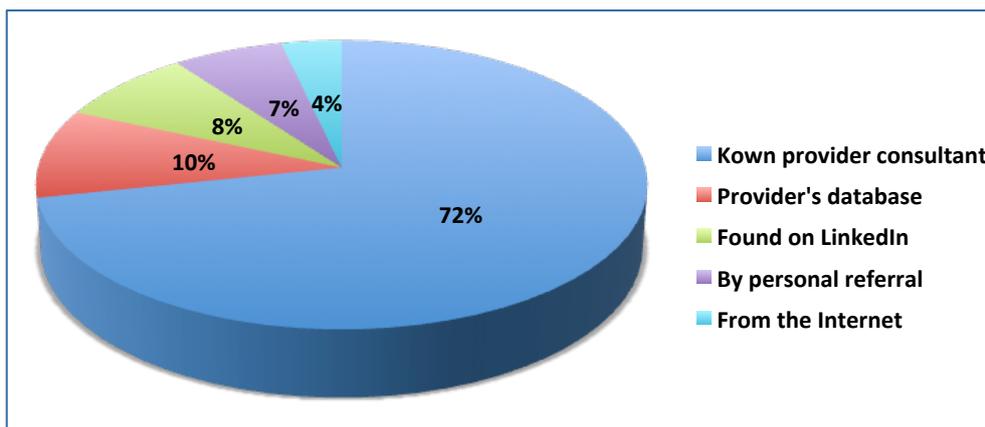
Preferred provider methods to identify suitable interim managers



Given the clear provider preference for referred interims, if approached by a provider and the brief does not suit you, then referring fitting interim managers of your acquaintance will be highly appreciated by the provider consultant.

Being known by the provider consultant matters

You are 7 times more likely to be placed on assignment through an interim service provider consultant that you already know than to be selected and placed from the provider's candidate database. Build that relationship steadily and professionally, without being a pest.



The number of interim service providers to contact

Be appropriately selective!

It makes much more sense to build a great relationship with a smaller number of service providers that operate in your sector and functional discipline than to fire your CV indiscriminately to a long list of providers in order for you to lie ignored in the database (or be filed in another 'database' beginning with 'B'...).

So do your research. Depending on your sector and function, being in touch with more than a dozen providers diminishes your effectiveness; the average number of active interim relationships (from 2014 data) is actually only 5, with most interims having between 3 and 8 relationships.

Number of provider relationships held

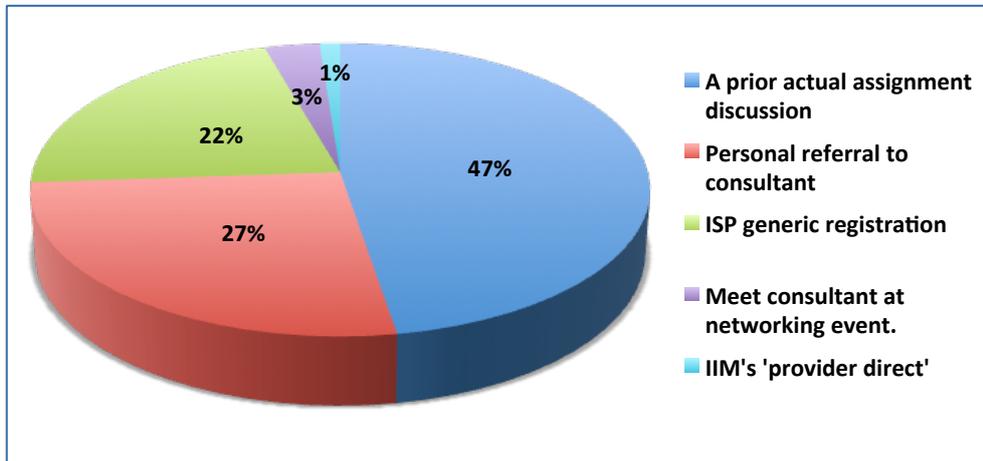


You may start by contacting a few more in the first instance but try to settle down to a number that you can comfortably maintain a meaningful relationship with.

To bring home the importance of developed relationships, 72% of provider-placed assignments are through consultants the interim manager already knows. Being 'cold' on a database is considerably less effective.

How exactly do you get in touch with a provider?

Getting in touch is one thing, building a relationship is another. When interims that are placed on assignment reflect on how the provider relationship was established, half (47%) report that it was due to applying for a *different* assignment for which they were not successful. A further 27% were referred directly to a provider consultant by another interim or other contact. Doing the traditional agency registration is only the third most successful was of locking in a relationship.



The top reasons given by interim managers for why they consider particular service providers to be outstanding (and which are reflected in the list of 'leading providers' that follows) are:

1. Honesty & integrity
2. Understanding the clients' requirements
3. Strong interim to provider to client relationships
4. Understanding the interims' proposition
5. Straight talking

To identify which interim service providers to contact, ask around among interim peers at networking events and online. A 'warm' introduction may be the best form of contact.

Building provider connections takes time, persistence and courtesy. Do what you can to efficiently provide the information that will allow you to be matched to assignments. Build relationships with a core number of providers in your sector or function.

The IIM Interim Service Provider Survey results 2014

The **IIM** is uniquely placed, as an independent organisation, to oversee a comprehensive poll of interim management service providers, while maintaining objectivity.

2,500 interim managers placed over 15,000 unique votes ranking interim service providers from 'Great' to 'Good' to 'OK' to 'Poor' to 'Dismal'. The providers were ranked into four divisions, 'Platinum', 'Gold', 'Silver' and 'Bronze'. There are 20 of each, 80 in total.

Just to be clear, this list is not a commercial endorsement by the **IIM** of *any* service provider, but if so many thousands of interim manager and executive votes rate particular interim service providers highly, then we think that's a pretty sound market assessment.

In top spot this year, their first time in that position, is **Odgers Interim**. A word from them:

IIM leading service provider 2014 – Odgers Interim

Firstly, I would like to thank everyone who took the time to vote. We are humbled to come first as we recognise the talents of our colleagues who operate alongside us within the interim provider community.

We are delighted and the survey is testament to the professionalism and efforts of the whole Odgers Interim team – especially as we pride ourselves on our collaborative approach and the depth of knowledge and passion that exists within the business.

Our focus has always been on adding value to both the interims we work with and to our clients by taking the time to understand their individual drivers and requirements. We feel we achieve this via in-depth market specific knowledge and by building up long-term relationships, consultative partnerships, empathy and trust. Those important factors are at the very core of what we do; day-in, day-out.

The last 18 months have been an exciting period for Odgers Interim as we have welcomed several new members to our team, we have continued to develop and grow our practice areas and we have once again staged a diverse calendar of events right across the UK.

As a business, we know that we still have room for improvement and we do not take anything for granted. It is, of course, very nice to hear positive feedback and to receive accolades such as this. However, I am also always keen to listen to new ideas and to suggestions that could help us perform better, so please do feel free to get in touch.

Moving forward, we will continue to invest in our people and the quality of the services we deliver. Our aim is to ensure that the Odgers Interim brand name continues to grow and retains its profile within the interim marketplace. Thanks again to those who contributed to this fantastic survey and those who continue to support our business.'



Grant Speed
Managing Director
Odgers Interim



IIM Interim Management Survey 2014

Top 10 Platinum Interim Service Providers

Ranking	L.Y.	1-10 Interim Service Providers	
1	(2)	Odgers Interim www.odgersinterim.com	 ODGERS INTERIM
2	(1)	Interim Partners www.interimpartners.com	InterimPartners 
3	(3)	Penna www.penna.com	 Penna
4	(6)	Eton Bridge Partners www.etonbridgepartners.com	EtonBridge ^{Partners}
5	(4)	BIE biegrouppltd.com	 B I E
6	(5)	Veredus www.veredus.co.uk	VEREDUS
7	(9)	Gatenby Sanderson www.gatenbysanderson.com	GatenbySanderson 
8	(8)	Alium Partners www.aliumpartners.com	alium
9	(7)	Practicus www.practicus.com	Practicus
10	(11)	Green Park www.green-park.co.uk	green  park



IIM Interim Management Survey 2014

Top 20 Platinum Interim Service Providers

Ranking	L.Y.	11-20 Interim Service Providers	
11	(14)	Hemming Robeson www.hemmingrobeson.com	
12	(13)	Executives Online www.executivesonline.co.uk	
13	(10)	Boyden Interim Management www.boydeninterim.co.uk	
14	(16)	Impact Executives www.impactexecutives.com	
15	(18)	B2E Resourcing www.b2e-resourcing.co.uk	
16	(15)	Kingsley Search & Interim www.kingsleysearch.com	
17	(20)	Morgan Law www.morgan-law.com	
18	(25)	Blenkin Associates blenkinassociates.co.uk	
19	(24)	SOLACE Enterprises www.solaceenterprises.com	
20	(26)	Greenwell Gleeson www.greenwellgleeson.co.uk	




IIM Interim Management Survey 2014

Top 30 Gold Interim Service Providers

Ranking	L.Y.	21-30 Interim Service Providers	
21	(17)	Langley Search & Selection www.langleysearch.com	
22	(19)	Allen Lane www.allenlane.co.uk	
23	(30)	Digby Morgan www.digby-morgan.com	
24	(12)	Russam GMS www.russam-gms.co.uk	
25	(29)	Page Executive www.pageexecutive.com	
26	(35)	Macallam Interim www.macallaminterim.com	
27	(21)	PILOTpartners pilotpartners.eu	
28	(34)	Michael Page www.michaelpage.co.uk	
29	(22)	Marble Hill Partners www.marblehillpartners.com	
30	(32)	Methods www.methods.co.uk	



IIM Interim Management Survey 2014

Top 40 Gold Interim Service Providers

Ranking	L.Y.	31-40 Interim Service Providers	
31	(28)	FRP Transition www.frptransition.com	
32	(27)	Hoggett Bowers www.hoggett-bowers.com	
33	(33)	Capita Resourcing www.capitaresourcing.co.uk	
34	(31)	Investigo www.investigo.co.uk	
35	(38)	RSA Interim Management www.thersagroup.com	
36	(37)	EIM www.eim.com	
37	(41)	Wilton & Bain www.wilton-bain.com	
38	(42)	Alpine www.alpine.eu.com	
39	(45)	Hays Executive www.hays-executive.com	
40	(49)	Campion Willcox www.campionwillcocks.co.uk	




IIM Interim Management Survey 2014

Top 50 Silver Interim Service Providers

Ranking	L.Y.	41-50 Interim Service Providers	
41	(23)	Stanton House www.stantonhouse.com	
42	(36)	Brightpool www.brightpool.co.uk	
43	(54)	Morgan Hunt www.morganhunt.com	
44	(61)	Williams Bain williamsbain.com	
45	(47)	Robert Half www.roberthalf.co.uk	
46	(56)	Axon Resourcing www.axonresourcing.com	
47	(50)	Rawson Downey www.rawsondowney.com	
48	(46)	PIR Resourcing pir-resourcing.com	
49	(43)	VMA Interim Performers www.vmagroup.com/interim/	
50	(52)	Brooklands Executives www.brooklandsexecutives.com	



IIM Interim Management Survey 2014

Top 60 Silver Interim Service Providers

Ranking	L.Y.	51-60 Interim Service Providers	
51	(57)	Beaumont Select www.beselect.co.uk	
52	(60)	Finegreen www.finegreen.co.uk	
53	(64)	Badenoch & Clark www.badenochandclark.com	
54	(53)	Goodman Masson www.goodmanmasson.com	
55	(63)	Cadence Partners www.cadencepartners.co.uk	
56	(55)	Transformation Leaders www.transformation-leaders.com	
57	(66)	1st Executive www.1st-executive.com	
58	(79)	Macmillan Davies www.mdh.co.uk	
59	(39)	Talentmark www.talentmark.com	
60	(40)	CIG-London Ltd www.ciglondon.co.uk	CIG-London Ltd



IIM Interim Management Survey 2014

Top 70 Bronze Interim Service Providers

Ranking	L.Y.	61-70 Interim Service Providers	
61	(top new)	Hunter Healthcare www.hunter-healthcare.com	 Executive talent for the healthcare sector
62	(new)	Assigned Executives www.assignedexecutives.com	
63	(78)	Robert Walters www.robertwalters.co.uk	
64	(new)	Barracuda Interim www.barracudasearch.com	
65	(new)	Matrix Interim Management www.matrixinterim.com	
66	(80)	Walker Hamill www.walkerhamill.com	
67	(new)	Holdsway www.holdsway.co.uk	
68	(new)	La Fosse www.lafosse.com	
69	(new)	IQ Public Sector www.itgps.com	
70	(new)	Chilworth Partnership www.chilworthpartnership.co.uk	




IIM Interim Management Survey 2014

Top 80 Bronze Interim Service Providers

Ranking	L.Y.	71-80 Interim Service Providers	
71	(44)	Purcon www.purcon.com	
72	(49)	Randstad Interim Executives www.randstadinterimexecutives.co.uk	
73	(69)	Morgan McKinley www.morganmckinley.co.uk	
74	(new)	Finatal www.finatal.com	
75	(new)	Silven Interim silven.co.uk	
76	(new)	AGP www.arcusinterimpartners.com	
77	(74)	Mackenzie Jones www.mackenziejones.co.uk	
78	(59)	Jarvis Johnson www.jarvisjohnson.co.uk	
79	(58)	BIS Henderson www.bis-henderson.com	
80	(71)	International Interim Management www.internationalim.co.uk	

The Interim Provider Consultant Survey results 2014

This year we again surveyed the interim managers about who are their star interim provider consultants. This section was ever more enthusiastically completed than last year.

The first place is a clear standout winner, that being Toni Hall from Penna Interim. There are a further 11 leading consultants making a dozen in total (see the next page).

We asked Toni to share her view of what makes a great interim provider consultant:

IIM provider consultant of the year 2014

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who took the time to nominate me. I am absolutely delighted and would especially like to thank all of the interim managers who have worked with me. I would also like to thank Penna - I am lucky to have so many great colleagues who are equally passionate about what they do.

Recruiters sometimes get a bad press – and I am well aware that in some cases that bad press is warranted! But there are a lot of exceptional recruiters in the market who are genuinely passionate about what they do – to help clients and interims achieve the best.

From interim manager feedback there are definitely key qualities:

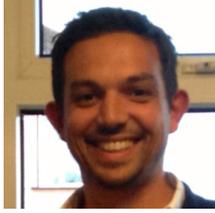
- **Treating everyone as an individual and not just a number in a database** – when speaking with an interim manager, I try to put myself in that person's shoes. It's important to be honest and open about the best way to approach the market and who the key contacts are.
- **Delivering on every promise** - be that to call someone back, help with the CV, or provide feedback. At very busy times it may just take a bit longer!
- **Meeting up with interims on assignment** – a catch-up over coffee or lunch is a lovely way to say thank you for their hard work, in addition to finding out how their assignment is going. My interims often like to help by giving me other leads into a company and recommending me to other interims.
- **Being open, honest, and a professional friend** - At the end of the day we are all trying to make our way through our professional careers and do a good job. Having someone there who can provide professional yet friendly support, be your cheerleader, and be a little bit of fun from time to time can make all the difference. Treat others as you would like to be treated.



Toni Hall
IIM Provider Consultant
of the year 2014
Penna Interim

The Leading Interim Provider Consultants 2014

Well done to them. A serious vote of confidence from the interim community.

 <p>Toni Hall Provider Consultant of the year 2014 (Penna Interim) (2nd year in rankings)</p>	 <p>Jamie Butel Leading Provider Consultant 2014 (Practicus)</p>	 <p>Justine Fisher Leading Provider Consultant 2014 (Gatenby Sanderson)</p>	 <p>Ben Hawkins Leading Provider Consultant 2014 (BIE)</p>
 <p>Stephen Hoban Leading Provider Consultant 2014 (Capita Resourcing IM)</p>	 <p>Lisa Hobbs Leading Provider Consultant 2014 (Hemming Robeson)</p>	 <p>Claire Lauder Leading Provider Consultant 2014 (Interim Partners)</p>	 <p>Sarah Lovell Leading Provider Consultant 2014 (Odgers Interim)</p>
 <p>Neil Lupin Leading Provider Consultant 2014 (Green Park) (2nd year in rankings)</p>	 <p>Steve Melber Leading Provider Consultant 2014 (Interim Partners) (2nd year in rankings)</p>	 <p>Sian Williams Leading Provider Consultant 2014 (Practicus)</p>	 <p>Sally Wilson Leading Provider Consultant 2014 (Penna Interim)</p>

Short listed for Leading Provider Consultant 2014

We're also listing the next 16 individuals who were short-listed, well done to them.

Craig Clark
(Gatenby Sanderson)
Steve Deverill
(Eton Bridge Partners)
Rob Hilyer
(Veredus)
**Emma-Claire
Kavanagh** (BIE)

Anthony Lewis
(Penna Interim)
Steve Mackenzie
(Allen Lane)
Jessica Mullinger
(SOLACE Enterprises)
Mark Payne
(Practicus)

Jo Sands
(Interim Partners)
Sarah Shaw
(Odgers Interim)
Zoe Thompson
(Gatenby Sanderson)
Jo Twine
(Capita Resourcing IM)

Andrew Vaux
(Practicus)
Chloe Watts
(Alium Partners)
David Weir
(Penna Interim)
Dan Whitely
(Campion Willcocks)

Market assessment

It's useful at this point to gain a provider market assessment. Tony Evans, IIM Director and Simon Drake, IMA Chairman and Director at Penna plc have kindly obliged with their views:

The predominant message for the first half of 2014 is that the market is more buoyant than in 2013, which in turn was better than 2012.

Functionally, both finance and HR people appear to be experiencing 'above average' demand. This is historically a common feature of a rising market as the functions contain skill sets that are eminently transferable from sector to sector.

At the sector level, in spite of the very public difficulties for public sector interims with the government being keen to respond to the media's apparent outrage at the 'high rates of pay' enjoyed by 'contractors', the number of roles available appears to be rising. The expectation is that this may continue with the increasing pressure on departmental budgets, not least in health and education services.

In the private sector, financial services seems to be becoming more buoyant, international assignments seem to be growing in number, with commercial roles such as procurement, marketing communications and business development gaining traction.



Tony Evans CIIM
IIM Board Director
and Interim CEO

I see a market which is broadening. When it comes to the appointment of an interim, companies are used to the varying pay scales - from £600 per day for an interim manager, right up to £2000 for the right interim executive support.

Of course, quality is key across the spectrum, but I would argue that interim management (in some cases) is being commoditised to an extent. And, where this is happening the hiring process is leaving clients, the interim and the recruiter frustrated.

Whilst the CEO may look to recruit and brief in an interim executive, at the other end of spectrum, the HR or procurement department will have responsibility for the recruitment of a large number of interims (at the same time). I'd argue the needs for consistency across the entire process, and at all levels, which there often isn't today.

I firmly believe that there should be a high level of input from the provider where interim management roles are concerned. Good interim assignments start with a good interactive brief.



Simon Drake
Chairman IMA
and Director Penna plc

Provider first contact

Once you have identified your 'prospect' providers, get in touch. The method a provider will prefer varies. A conversation is a much more immediate form of communication than an e-mail to 'info', though many providers prefer an e-mail with CV attached, available date, recent day rate(s) achieved and a quick pitch – but follow up with a phone call soon after.

When speaking, explain what you do and ask if they deal with such a type of assignment. Confirm that they deal with your sector and validate the range of day-rates they handle. If the provider does not operate in your space, don't waste your time (and theirs) needlessly cultivating that relationship. No provider is responsible for finding you work; that's your job.

Assuming the fit is good, offer to meet with the provider. A face-to-face meeting does wonders to increase your visibility over and above a CV in the database. Try hard to engineer such a meeting because it really helps to get known.

First contact by e-mail

If you are directed to an e-mail address or if there is no immediate mechanism allowing you to call the provider, then diligently share your message by e-mail.

Some will specify their requirements via an online form. If you can establish by networking means a named person to contact, even better, but failing that you can usually use a generic 'info' e-mail as a first point of contact. A named contact does not automatically mean a 'magic route to assignments' because that will only develop with time.

Explain simply and clearly your value proposition / elevator pitch in a few sentences. 'What you do' is more important than 'who you are'; achievements rather than responsibilities. Include your 'interim CV,' and a short case study if you like which sets out your offering.

Clearly articulate:

- Your contact details
- Your availability (immediate or on a specific date)
- Your geographic preferences (if any)
- Links to further information, LinkedIn profile, website, and so on

IIM members may access [inside track provider direct information](#)

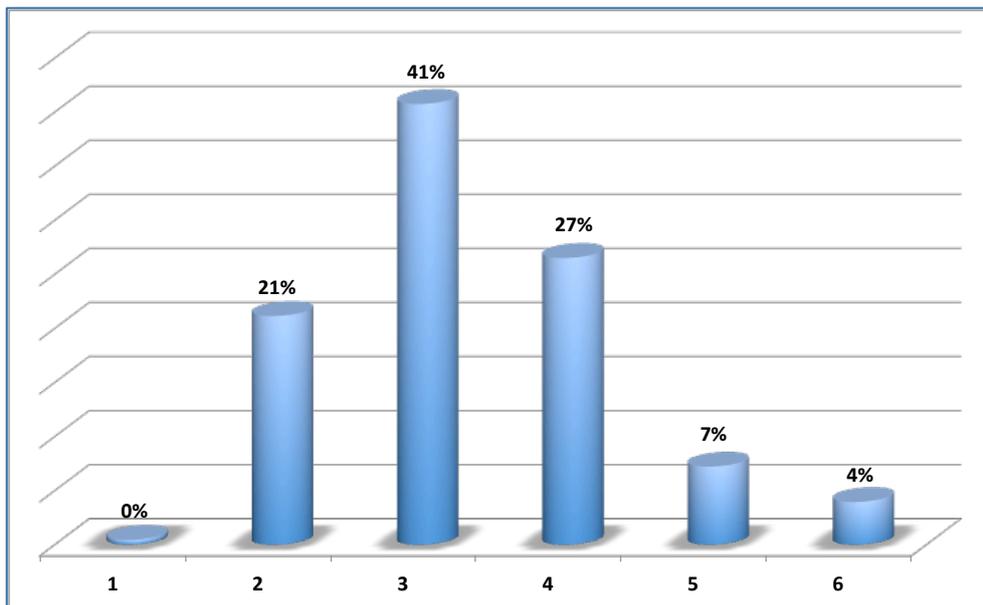
The IIM is steadily building a directory of insider information that allows IIM members to qualify and contact interim service providers more directly.

To date, 24 provider businesses have signed up to IIM Provider Direct

Sending an Interim CV

The matter of writing a suitable interim CV is documented separately by the IIM, but with service providers in mind, the average interim CV is 3 pages in length with 4 and then 2 pages being next in popularity.

Number of pages in an interim CV



As you can see, it is important not to fall into the trap of following the permanent employee CV writer's rule that a CV must be no more than 2 pages.

The internet is riddled with advice about writing no more than 2 pages, often because those websites are dealing with the American resumé standard which is typically shorter than a UK CV.

Furthermore, an interim manager or executive needs a little more breathing room for their expertise, though naturally page one remains the sweet spot for articulating your business proposition.

Interim managers will customise their CV 70% of the time. It is easier (and much safer) to customise by deleting sections from a longer more detailed CV than trying to compile extra information on the fly to add to a shorter and simpler CV.

Approaching the service provider call or meeting

The introductory conversation operates at several levels. It is about validation, it is about assessing behavioural and 'fit' characteristics. It may also allow interims to mentally embed themselves into the provider's consciousness, though particularly with larger providers, assignment matching is database-driven as a first step.

Interim managers will sometimes grumble that providers do not 'think outside the box'. Providers are trying to understand what is in, and what is the extent of, an interim's 'box', not what is 'outside of it', that they 'might do' or 'could do'.

For a first provider conversation, the successful interim should focus on clearly communicating their core 'value proposition'. What they 'do'. What is the thing or things that they wish to be known for. Focus and clarity are everything, even for a generalist, where the extent of a generalist's offering also needs to be clearly understood. When a provider relationship is established, then a more eclectic assessment of an interim's suitability and some 'thinking outside the box' may be applied, but not usually at an early stage.

If meeting face-to-face, have promotional materials, spare CV copies, case studies, and business cards with you. Be able to provide back-up materials by e-mail if on a call.

When meeting, don't think of it as an 'interview' where the 'interviewer' drives the agenda, it is a 'business meeting' which should give you equal opportunity to share ideas. Ask lots of questions, because information should flow both ways; be sure to qualify and better understand the provider's key sectors and functions so that you will be targeting your own efforts appropriately.

Discussing and identifying what you do not do is as important as identifying what you do do. Professional service providers will thank you for quickly qualifying out prospect assignments that are not suitable for you and thereby saving both of you time and energy.

If you pursue half-baked opportunities, then you significantly increase the risk of taking on sub-optimal assignments and delivering sub-optimal results. Your interim career relies on outstanding performance and a growing reputation, so target good and suitable work.

Building the relationship

Provider relationship building is an iterative process. Catch-up phone calls or e-mails need to have a purpose and not simply to 'have a chat', unless the relationship has reached the point where that is mutually welcome.

Unless you have the luck of a lottery winner, the chance of you calling at the exact moment that a provider had just identified a suitable role for you is very slim indeed. If you had been an obvious match, they would have contacted you, so by putting the provider on the spot, with a 'have you got an assignment for me?' enquiry, is likely to be as successful as asking for credit in a corner shop (not very successful at all).

This approach is likely to provoke discomfort and a very probable 'no' response. If this tactic is repeated, the provider may very easily become 'unavailable' when you call.

More regular contact than monthly smacks of a 'stalker' mentality and is unlikely to be well received. Also, 'clingy' candidates are less likely to receive calls from providers for fear that this will only 'encourage them'. So, no more frequent than every 6/8 weeks and always have a genuine reason to get in touch.

Triggers for contact may include a significant CV update (not a new CV every time you tweak a paragraph, that will quickly become very irritating), a change in assignment status (on to off, or off to on), or a referral or recommendation.

Networking is about sharing information without expecting something in return. In the long run such an approach enhances your value, improves your connectivity and eventually fuels an on-going stream of work.

The other consideration is to develop more than one contact at a provider business. If a specific consultant leaves (which happens fairly regularly) then you may be left without a contact, and essentially will have to start again. Don't forget to use the power of LinkedIn to see where the consultant pops up again after a few months and rekindle the relationship there too if the new provider is appropriate to your interim offering.

Update e-mails

Be very diligent in timing of your e-mail communications. There is little point in sending updates through to a provider 2 months before you are available for assignment. If you cannot be put to a client, you are essentially useless to the provider at that point.

Different providers will have different windows within which they will accept an interim as being available. In practice, sending your information more than 3 weeks ahead of availability is unhelpful, though this time period may vary depending on assignment lead-times for your sector and function.

Handling an assignment lead

You get a call or message from a provider about a potential role; fantastic. The keys to responding to a contact from a provider about an assignment lead are:

- Speed, and
- Decisiveness

If the provider wishes to build a shortlist – being un-contactable or unavailable just doesn't help, so reply promptly to missed messages.

Decisiveness is important for similar reasons. Qualify the opportunity and then quickly and clearly advise that you are 'interested', 'not interested', or be able to explain what further information would be required for you to decide.

Make a judgement call early. If an assignment would be an unreasonable 'stretch' (interims should be appropriately well-qualified, after all), say so. As we have said, interims have a responsibility to qualify out, when a role is not suitable. To do otherwise wastes everyone's time and damages the relationship. Obvious 'circular' e-mails do not require a response.

Naturally service providers take a margin – that's part of the business model and if that means 'work', as opposed to 'no work', then that's fair enough. Average service provider margins from the 2014 survey were 20.8% Clearly such margins will vary by type of provider, sector, function and your relationship with the provider.

Whilst some providers will seek to keep their margin 'confidential' from you, most interims will quickly have sight of the client invoice, so such confidentiality is often 'short-lived'. It is well worth trying to have an open discussion with the provider about fees and margins.

The deal should be equitable to both parties, so make sure you have thought through your fee expectations, fee range and negotiables **before** you have a meeting or conversation.

It is hard deciding what type of work you are prepared to do and how much you are prepared to be paid for it 'on-the-fly' in a meeting or phone call, so plan that beforehand.

Example:

- **Target work:** what assignment types you *will* do if asked.
- **Fall-back work:** what you *might* do in specific circumstances after consideration.
- **Target day rate:** the rate you *want* for the work.
- **Fall-back day rate:** what you *might* accept after consideration.

It is all too easy to fall into agreeing something you regret later, if you have not set your limits first. You do not have to give an instant answer as long as your reply is timely.

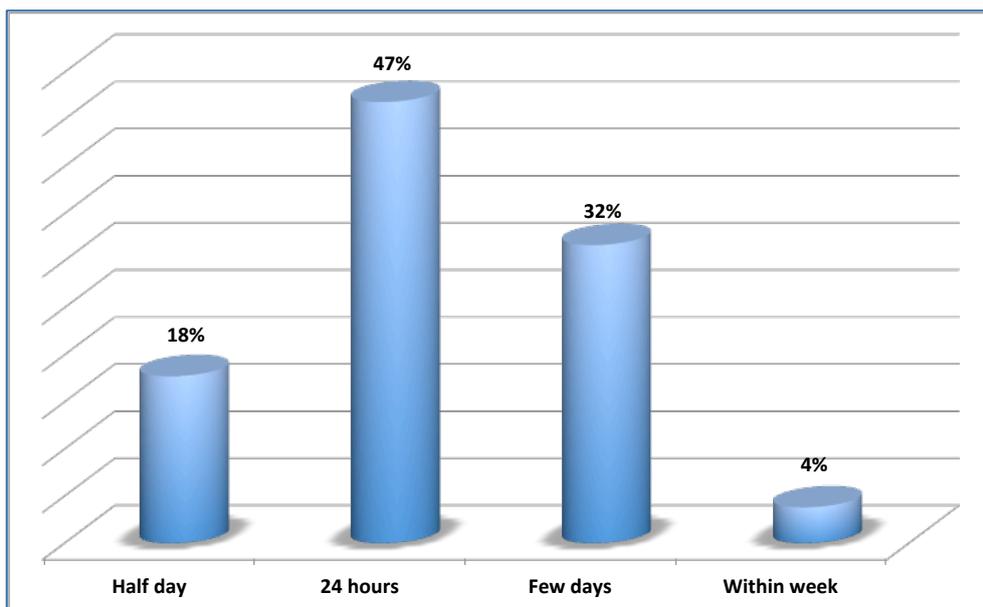
Following up on advertised roles and calls

Occasionally you will see, or have forwarded to you, an assignment specification that looks up your street. Be mindful that 'essential' in an advert usually **means** 'essential' unless you have an utterly compelling alternative rationale.

Serial untargeted applications do little other than annoy the providers and waste your time. Follow-up and return provider calls or e-mails promptly.

Most providers expect a response within 24 hours (and some would prefer it faster).

Speed of response expectation from providers contacting interim managers



Keeping in touch

When taking an assignment, briefly highlighting your 'on assignment' status to your other contacts is courteous so they do not needlessly consider you for assignments you cannot fulfil and can be made 'dormant' on their database.

Continuing to keep a 'light touch' with your core providers is vital. This maintains your relationships and makes it easier to rekindle your communication at the end of your assignment.

Do not go completely silent when you are *on assignment* as it is harder and lacks credibility to try to rekindle an abandoned relationship only when it suits you.

Final comments

The use of service providers is an excellent and popular 'route to market' for many interim managers. The success of this relationship relies on professional and effective practices from both provider and interim manager alike.

Interim managers who send poorly drafted information to providers and then hassle those providers for an assignment should not be surprised when their phone fails to ring. Those interim managers that help providers by making their proposition clear and understandable to them and keep appropriately in touch with the provider, make themselves more easily able to be placed.

Similarly, providers who treat their interim managers as 'inventory', to be used or discarded at whim, do little to enhance their reputation. Providers who courteously nurture and support the competent Interim professionals most aligned to their clients' requirements can build the success of their interim provider businesses for the long term.

With both parties operating effectively, the mutual benefits can be significant.

Ad van der Rest MIIM
Chairman IIM

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About the Institute of Interim Management

Founded in 2001, the **Institute of Interim Management (IIM)** is the pre-eminent professional membership body for practitioners of interim management in the UK.

The **IIM** passionately strives to act as the voice of the interim management community. Since April 2001 the Institute has supported, promoted and represented professional interim managers and executives in good times and bad.

Please visit the **IIM's** website: www.iim.org.uk

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