



STARAPEX
RECRUITMENT

The Keys to Our Brand

Welcome!

Who We Are



The Origin of Starapex Recruitment and the Challenges of Recruitment

Michael McQuade, Managing Director, of Starapex Recruitment. Explains why Starapex Recruitment was formed. Unique story from a candidate's perspective.



LinkedIn connections ask me weekly...

“Why did you start a recruitment agency?”

Followed by words to this effect - You worked in the Army doing intelligence as a data analyst, worked in a data centre with Microsoft and Amazon Web Service (AWS). You have done other roles such as cyber, and you are a project manager.

I am struggling to see the link.

My instant reply “that Starapex Recruitment is not an agency, it’s a consultancy.”

This language is often confused for one another. I will explain later in more detail the difference between the two whilst also explaining why I started a recruitment consultancy company.

Connections and Partners will ask me.

“Why Starapex, what’s the meaning behind the name.”

Well, there is an explanation behind the name choice, and I will share with you why Starapex.

The name apex was a stick on because of the meaning. The highest point – I visualised that starting a business would be like climbing Mount Everest. Even in my mind I visualised me climbing Mount Everest. The conditions, the terrain, and the environment.

There will be challenges along the way, however, when climbing a mountain there are two choices; give up or find a solution. Solution is a key part because this is one of Starapex Recruitments core values. You have a mission to get to the top of the apex point of Mount Everest and my mission in recruitment was to deliver solutions.

Did you know as of December 2023 – 6,664 people have completed Mount Everest. And the failure rate is 25%.

In the UK, 20% of businesses fail in their first year and 60% will go bankrupt within their first three years.

Almost similar stats, therefore, the challenge is the same just for varied reasons. With my data analyst background, I am a data geek and adopt data when giving consultations.

Now, why Star – originally the company name was – Apex (GBR). Apex (GBR) incorporated on the 6th of February 2024. I told my family and friends I am now an entrepreneur and what my mission statement was. I got the usual round of applause, good for you, well done.

I called my brother at night, and he said “Well done, Mike. I was trying to search for your company, and I could not find it.”

Oh no, quickly I realised, I have a marketing issue. How can I promote a company that cannot be discovered online. I evaluated this for myself and true to my brother’s testimony, I could not find the company.

I stayed up until 02:00 the following morning thinking of another name. The suggestions I was thinking were names that were after apex. The names I thought of were all taken on Companies House. Then I started thinking about a name before apex. As every

entrepreneur does, they scan for name suggestions. Around 01:00, I am tired, my eyes are going squared, and I am looking around my room. I saw my wife's Starbucks coffee cup on the unit – you can see where this story is going – and wondered where Starbucks discovered their name, the name has no meaning to coffee. So, I researched, why. I am very inquisitive by nature.

Did you know there are 6,495 companies on Companies House with Apex. You can see the marketing issue.

And the name Starbucks originated from a Moby Dick character called Starbuck.

After researching, I thought of Starapex. I went on Companies house begging nothing showed... And there was no company with that name. I googled Starapex, I could only find a container ship in South Korea. The joy of having a unique name that is different and stands out, I slept well that night.

I mentioned earlier the difference between an agency and a consultancy.

There are over 30,000 agencies in the UK, and I was unable to find any data to show how many consultancies. Agencies have a poor reputation and culture. I see daily on LinkedIn how bad agencies are from candidates, this includes staff that work at agencies saying negative comments about other agencies. From my experience as a candidate with agencies, I understand why, my experience is what sparked the mission to deliver solutions and be different. I promise, I will eventually explain the why.

Being different, now, that is a term I often see getting loosely used by recruiters on LinkedIn. I often see buzz words and phrases such as 'expert', 'specialist' and 'doing recruitment the correct way'. However, when I research further, I would argue against these buzz words and phrases. I often see recruiters work for multiple agencies and were specialists for different sectors at each agency.

My experience: agencies place a square into a circle, they use percentages against a salary to bill clients, over promise and under deliver, chase the trends of what roles are popular, hoard CVs and chase a client in that sector and amongst other flaws. Now, I am not saying all are the same, I am sure there are competent agencies, who are enthusiastic and do a fantastic job. And I imagine I will get heat for my opinion.

As an 'outsider' walking into the industry, the recruitment industry is the only industry I can think of that operates this way. Specifically, the genuine hate towards one another. I have worked in the tech industry, worked for arguably two of the biggest companies in

the world. Although they are competing against one another, never did I witness genuine hate towards one another.

Why is Starapex Recruitment different and a consultancy.

The first difference is we are the only expert consultancy on the market that offers a one-year insurance policy after hire. Which means if our recommended candidate leaves in the opening 12 months, we will find a suitable replacement and the service will be free. We are confident in our due diligence and processes.

We have fixed fee packages that suit our partner's needs. Fixed fee – a finance director or Project Managers dream, imagine knowing the cost to recruitment each year when budgeting.

Tailored services for recruitment requirements. We offer a free consultation where we analyse the strategy being adopted to this current day and the last three years. Analyse solutions for moving forward using data.

We go to market and headhunt the specific candidate you need. Not Just CV matching, talking to the candidates as an expert in their field, and see if they align with your culture and vision.

We specialise in saving costs/time to hire and improving retention. And most importantly experts in the following sectors: Cyber Security, Data Analysis, Data Centres, Defence, AI & Intelligence, Physical Security, Project Management and Security Clearance.

As the company grows, the theme will remain the same, where our team must have done the role themselves and/or worked in that sector.

'Bringing experts together to achieve the unimaginable.'

Why I consider myself an expert.

I have done these roles and operated in these sectors which gives me an invaluable insight.

To be an expert you must have the practical experience as much as the theory. That is

like a driving instructor teaching you how to drive, with only passing the theory test and no lessons or driving experience. Or a General Practitioner performing a knee surgery because they learnt about the theory at university.

There are hundreds of examples I can give, that is one of the key issues for the industry. I often see on LinkedIn profiles of recruiters claiming to be an expert in a field and you check their work history, and that role does not appear. I mentioned earlier about language being misplaced and confused. This happens regularly to me, where people think I am an agency and automatically shut the conversation down. And often an uphill challenge, just like climbing Mount Everest.

The feedback from the partnerships we currently have, all say how refreshing it is to speak to someone who has worked in their industry. Can speak the lingo and understand what they need. They have advised, previously, they speak to a recruiter who is a specialist and an expert at an agency. But, have no idea what they are doing or talking about.

Why did I start a recruitment consultancy company?

October 2023, I got three separate phone calls from three separate recruitment agencies. Who were looking for Enhanced Developed Vetted (eDV) project managers. For those who may not be familiar with security clearances or the niche percentage of holders.

Enhanced Developed Vetting (eDV) is the strictest security clearances available in the UK and is limited to a small number of specific job roles where DV alone is considered by the UK Government as insufficient. Only a small number, of sponsors can request an eDV. You have unsupervised access to Top Secret (TS), and you are regarded as a trusted individual by the UK Government. Stats show that no more than 0.5% of the UK population have eDV, pretty niche.

Two of the agencies that called me were well knowing agencies and one I had never heard of. The first agency tried to convince me that Enhanced Security Check (ESC) clearance was the highest clearance in the UK. Going back and forth arguing that this was not the case. And my expert knowledge was irrelevant to the argument.

The levels go as follows:

Enhanced Developed Vetting (eDV),

Developed Vetting (DV),

Enhanced Security Check (ESC)

Security Check (SC).

You can see the difference in levels. In fact, an SC clearance you have supervised access to Top Secret (TS). These are public sector/civil service security clearance levels. You also have MOD clearance, which is a different measured metric.

Another agency tried to convince me that the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) acronym stood for National Cabinet Security Centre.

The final agency had no idea what the job entailed, their words “I just got given this job spec this morning and needing to fill roles, are you interested.”

Now, is that an agency or a consultancy?

The roles were Government contractor roles and were effectively blank checks, would have been in the excess of a six-figure salary. As the role is niche, less than 0.5% of the population with my skill set and knowledge. I was in the position of commanding the salary. Due to the incompetence of these agencies, I knocked them back and decided I am going to do it myself. Give the market expert solutions that it deserves and hopefully individuals do not go through the same process I went through.

I did not become an entrepreneur to invent the wheel. I wanted to disrupt the market and be different, make a *real* difference. I enjoy helping people, this gives me great satisfaction.

I spent five months studying the recruitment market before incorporating, understanding the market from an owner's perspective. Analysing what were the pain points of recruitment for businesses and candidates. I then launched the company with the goal of delivering expert solutions. I continue to grow and learn more about the industry.

If you genuinely want expert and specialist consultancy solutions – trust the expert not the General Practitioner.

You cannot replace less than 0.5% of the population.

Definition of an agency - a business or organisation providing a particular service on behalf of another business, person, or group.

Definition of a consultancy - a professional practice that gives expert advice within a particular field.

Definition of an expert - a person who is deeply knowledgeable about or skilful in a particular area.

Definition of a specialist - a person who concentrates primarily on a particular subject or activity, a person highly skilled in a specific and restricted field

