

A MARRIAGE MADE IN HEAVEN?

Consultant seeks to match up jobless professionals with small companies in need of expertise

A leading business consultant is starting a scheme which would enable unemployed Black professionals to use their skills and at the same time provide a wealth of specialist expertise for small companies.

Ade Sawyer, director of Equinox Associates, one of the country's leading Black business consultancies, views the unemployment among Black professionals and the crisis facing small business as offering the potential for a happy marriage.

Mr Sawyer suggests that the owner of a company would identify an area of their organisation where help is required. Mr Sawyer, in conjunction with the Training Enterprise Council (TEC), would then select from a database an unemployed specialist with the relevant skills necessary to undertake the task. The service is free.

"There are major benefits to be gained at both ends of the spectrum," explained Mr Sawyer. "The company would

By Mike Best

get free advice and the specialist would be able to show prospective employees that he or she has been practising his or her skills.

"A redundant post need not mean a redundant brain for people with excellent business skills. They should be given every encouragement to carry on, even at community level, until suitable employment is found," he continued.

Crying

Dealing with clients at a distance from his London base does not present a problem for Mr Sawyer. He will use a recently acquired database of over 500 specialists to spearhead the scheme.

"We are willing to work almost anywhere on projects of this kind because small businesses are crying out for help. They have become victims of the recession and do not have the necessary resources to function effec-

tively," said Mr Sawyer.

Mr Sawyer denies that he is jumping on Mr Major's 'Workfare' bandwagon and is not suggesting that unemployed specialists should carry out other work in order to qualify for the dole.

"Certainly not...I've been discussing this idea with companies for years - long before the much-publicised statement by the Prime Minister

"Unemployed people have the option of staying at home and doing nothing. What I'm suggesting is that professionals could use those skills in the short term to keep their sanity intact," said Mr Sawyer. Dennis De Codiva, chief executive of business organisation Bristol Black Businesses, said he would support Mr Sawyer's scheme.

"We provide a service that is similar to that of Equinox, but we do not target unemployed Black professionals. But if that's what they're planning to do, then it's undoubtedly a very good thing," added Mr De Codiva.

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