



©1998 ICON Recruitment Limited

# CONTENTS

<b>CONTENTS</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>WELCOME</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>WHAT IS CONTRACTING?</b>	<b>7</b>
WHAT IS CONTRACTING?	7
WHY ARE CONTRACTORS ENGAGED?	8
WHO GOES CONTRACTING?	9
WHO ENGAGES CONTRACTORS?	9
<b>WHY GO CONTRACTING?</b>	<b>10</b>
FINANCIAL	10
LIFESTYLE	11
CAREER DEVELOPMENT	12
WHAT ARE THE RISKS?	12

<b>WHY DO I NEED AN AGENCY?</b>	<b>15</b>
AGENCIES KNOW WHERE THE JOBS ARE.	15
AGENCIES KNOW WHAT'S HOT.	15
AGENCIES HAVE ESTABLISHED RELATIONSHIPS WITH CLIENTS.	16
AGENCIES GET PAID, AND PAY YOU PROMPTLY.	16
AGENCIES PROVIDE CONTINUITY.	16
<b>WHY REGISTER WITH ICON?</b>	<b>17</b>
DYNAMIC COMPANY	17
MARKET PRESENCE	17
INTERNATIONAL LEADER	17
PREFERRED SUPPLIER	18
BEST COMPANIES, BEST JOBS	18
GUARANTEED PAYMENT	19
QUALITY ASSURED	19

<b>ICON SERVICES TO CONTRACTORS</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>RESPONSE TO ENQUIRIES</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>RESUME ASSISTANCE</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>INTERVIEW COACHING</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>CODE OF CONDUCT</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>PERSONAL MENTORS</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>REGULAR FOLLOW UP</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>MANAGING THE CLIENT RELATIONSHIP</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>EFFICIENT ADMINISTRATION</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>BUSINESS ADVICE</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>TECHNICAL DEVELOPMENT SEMINARS</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT SEMINARS</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>DISCOUNT TRAINING SCHEMES</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>CAREER PLANNING REVIEWS</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>INTERNET UPDATES</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>HOW TO REGISTER</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>NEW ZEALAND APPLICANTS</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>OVERSEAS APPLICANTS</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>TIPS FOR CONTRACTORS</b>	<b>28</b>

## WELCOME

Welcome to the world of contracting via ICON Recruitment.

As an integral part of the world's number one recruitment and contracting agency, Adecco, ICON Recruitment offers you the opportunity to build an exciting and rewarding career as an Information Technology (IT) contractor.

This handbook sets out to tell you what contracting is all about, and demonstrates how ICON can be your partner in developing a long term, managed career as a contractor.

At ICON, we are proud of the level of service we offer to our clients and our contractors. Our main aim is to forge long term relationships based on trust and mutual benefit.

To this end our Code of Ethics includes these promises to our contractors:

***We promise to obtain your permission before disclosing any identifying details to a client***

***We promise to keep you informed of the status of your application.  
We promise not to withhold any information which might influence your decision to accept an assignment.***

***We promise to respect the confidentiality of your application.***

ICON has grown rapidly over the past few years. ICON has a terrific base of skilled professionals who are committed to developing and supporting the Information Technology of many of New Zealand's top companies. We are pleased you are considering joining them.

These are exciting times for ICON, and for all who work with us. We look forward to being your “partner” as you progress your career as an IT professional — and to seeing you prosper as a successful and respected contractor.

Sincerely  
Robert Collins  
Chief Executive Officer

## WHAT IS CONTRACTING?

### What is Contracting?

Contracting has been a well established feature of the computer industry for more than 30 years, long before buzzwords like 'outsourcing' and 'downsizing' entered the corporate vocabulary.

In simple terms, contracting means that instead of having a position in an organisation, the contractor is engaged to work on a certain project, usually for a specified period. When the project is completed, the contract lapses or is renegotiated.

For most contracting positions, an agency acts as intermediary between the contractor and the client organisation, to match the contractor to the job and to simplify administration.

Of course, there is an increasing trend at all levels and in all walks of business to use contracts. This means that contracting is now an accepted way for organisations and individuals to balance their needs and commitments to each other.

***If Chief Executives and senior managers are on contracts, why shouldn't you take advantage of the benefits too?***

## **Why Are Contractors Engaged?**

There is a growing trend for organisations to focus on their 'core competencies' — that is, to concentrate their efforts on the things that create value for their customers. On the other hand, organisations are backing away from direct investment in 'enabling' processes such as transportation, maintenance — and Information Technology. It makes more sense for organisations to engage a third party to provide these services.

Organisations recognise that their needs for IT development and operations skills change rapidly. For all but the largest organisations it is impractical to keep all the skills they need on the payroll permanently.

To provide the skills they need, organisations hire contractors for the duration of a specific project. The contractor will usually have a well defined job description tied to a particular deliverable, which can be anything from a specific program module to an entire project, or the operation of an IT facility for a period of time.

***Organisations are prepared to pay extra money to have the flexibility of only paying for the skills they need to meet their present challenges.***

## **Who Goes Contracting?**

Almost anyone with good IT skills can go contracting. However, you do need a level head, and you must take responsibility for your own career and lifestyle.

Contractors range from computer operators and tape librarians through to senior project managers.

If you are considering moving to a contracting career, read this handbook to learn more about the opportunities and responsibilities of contracting, and see for yourself if you are the type of person who could make a successful and rewarding career in contracting.

If you have any questions, call one of our account managers who will be pleased to discuss your interests and concerns.

## **Who Engages Contractors?**

Almost all organisations engage contractors from time to time.

Large organisations may have hundreds of contractors working for them at any point in time. In New Zealand, the financial institutions and Telecommunications companies

have been the largest hirers of contractors, but organisations in all industries, as well as software houses and service providers, hire contractors for specific projects.

***In 'The Empty Raincoat', management guru Charles Handy writes:***

***"No longer will a career mean climbing the ladder of jobs in an organisation. For one thing, there will not be more than three or four rungs on the ladder. No longer can one expect to sell 100,000 hours of ones life to an organisation. No longer will your job title define you for life, or even for very much of it."***

## WHY GO CONTRACTING?

There are several excellent reasons to go contracting. If you are considering switching from permanent to contract work, consider the following benefits:

### **Financial**

When people think of contracting, the first thing they usually think of is dollars. A successful contractor can earn significantly more than salaried IT staff performing the same tasks in the same organisations, even when holiday pay and other entitlements are taken into account.

Obviously, the rate you can command as a contractor is governed by the law of supply and demand, and demand can change quite rapidly as new technologies appear or as organisations are faced with the same problems as each other at the same time.

At the time of writing, skills in demand include SAP implementation, as many large organisations re-engineer their business processes around information technology. At the same time, 'old' Cobol programmers are also in demand, as organisations rush to ensure that 'legacy' systems are updated to forestall problems with the millennium date bug.

## **Lifestyle**

With the financial benefits come lifestyle benefits.

As well as earning more, contractors gain a degree of freedom about when they work and where they work.

Some contractors use this freedom to take extended breaks from work, to travel overseas, or to work on their own special interests in between contracts.

Other contractors choose to combine travel with work, by seeking positions overseas, whether it be in the USA, Europe or Asia. (Or even just intercity!)

***It is important for you to seek expert advice before working overseas — remember, all that glitters is not gold. There are important issues with cost of living and cultural differences which you need to be aware of before signing on the dotted line.***

## **Career Development**

As well as helping you earn more, contracting lets you learn more.

Contractors are typically exposed to cutting edge technologies and state of the art projects. It is a fact of life that most of the humdrum maintenance programming gets done by an organisation's salaried staff whilst the contractors get the excitement and satisfaction of working on new developments.

As a contractor, you can plan your own career by leveraging your existing skills to help you grow into new areas.

## **What are the Risks?**

Some of the most common questions from would be contractors include:

Q: *“What if I am out of contract for an extended period?”*

A: Our statistics show that for people who have committed to contracting as a career choice, the average length of contract is 12 - 18 months and the average time between contracts is less than 6 weeks.

Q: *“Who will look after my career interests?”*

A: In the modern world where change is the only constant, even permanent employees can no longer entrust their career interests to management or the Human Resources department.

At the end of the day, you are the one who must look after your career interests, as indeed you would no matter where you worked. Later on, we'll show you how we can help with career planning.

Q: *“What about my financial security? Can I get a mortgage?”*

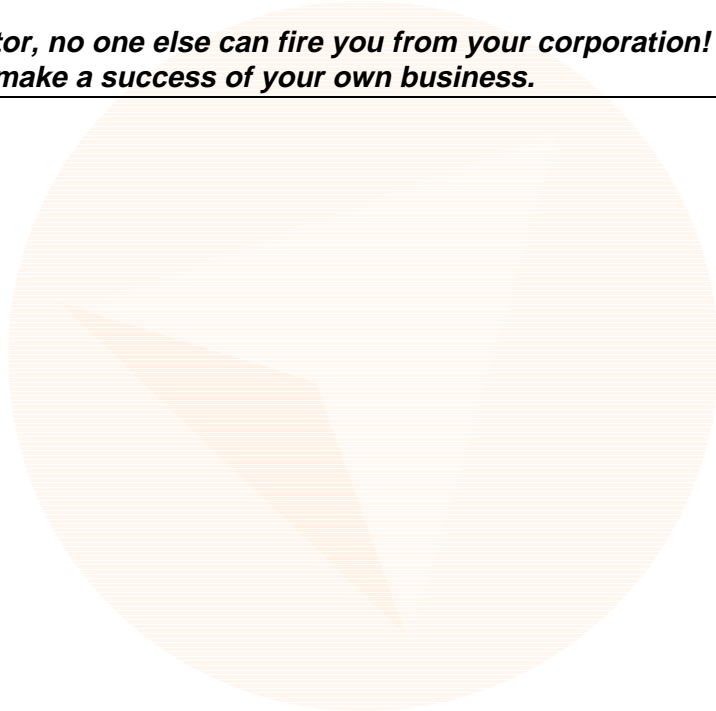
A: When you decide to work as a contractor, you must assume responsibility for financial planning and management. ICON can provide references to help with bank and credit applications.

Q: *“Should I incorporate?”*

A: With ICON, you can be PAYE or an incorporated company. Talk to your financial adviser or accountant before making a decision.

***As a contractor, you are the managing director of your own corporation. You decide how much you want to earn, what skills you need to master, and how you can best present yourself to potential employers.***

***As a contractor, no one else can fire you from your corporation! But it is up to you to make a success of your own business.***



## WHY DO I NEED AN AGENCY?

At one time or another, all contractors ask the same question: “What does my agency do to earn its cut of my pay?” (Sometimes, the question is not put so politely!)

ICON does not take a cut of your pay. ICON pays you, and charges the client a management fee for the services ICON provides. We will be quite open with you about how the dollar is split between you, ICON, and the government.

Here’s why you need an agency:

### **Agencies know where the jobs are.**

They know who is hiring, and what they need.

### **Agencies know what’s hot.**

Agencies know what skills are in demand — now, and in the future. They can match your skills to the smart places and projects.

### **Agencies have established relationships with clients.**

Clients know the agency's account manager. The account manager has an established record of credibility (or they won't get the business). The client may not know you from a bar of soap — but they will consider you if the agency recommends you. Often, the client's policy is to hire through an agency — even if you approach them personally.

### **Agencies get paid, and pay you promptly.**

Most clients are honourable and trustworthy business partners. But they don't like to deal with lots of small transactions. So the agency 'bulk bills' for all the contractors working on a job, which means that you don't have to worry about whether your timesheet and invoice will make it through the client's accounts department.

### **Agencies provide continuity.**

An agency is only as good as its contractor base. Therefore it is in our interests to serve you in the long term.

*All agencies strive to provide these services to their contractors. Some do it better than others. At ICON, we aim to be the best — and to provide extra dimensions of service which other agencies can't match.*

## WHY REGISTER WITH ICON?

### **Dynamic Company**

Over the past few years, ICON has established a track record as one of the region's fastest growing service sector organisations, in New Zealand, Australia and Asia— with awards to prove it.

### **Market Presence**

ICON is one of the most prominent advertisers of IT positions. This means that we have an imposing presence in the marketplace.

### **International Leader**

In 1997, ICON became an integral part of Adecco — the world's largest personnel recruitment and placement company. We have over 2400 offices in more than 40 countries.

This means that we are well positioned to be part of the booming trend towards globalisation. Talk to us about your specific interests in working overseas.

### **Preferred Supplier**

Within the New Zealand and Australia region, ICON is on more preferred supplier lists than any other contract placement company. This means that we have more jobs on our books than any other agency, which means that we are more likely to have a good fit for your particular requirements.

### **Best Companies, Best Jobs**

ICON's clients include many of New Zealand's leading companies, including IT users and IT solution providers.

ICON gives you the opportunity to be involved with important projects, using leading edge technologies for critical applications.

Working with ICON means your career will keep progressing.

## **Guaranteed Payment**

ICON guarantees payment to its contracts in the (unlikely) event of a client experiencing financial difficulties.

## **Quality Assured**

ICON's placement and administration systems are accredited to ISO 9002. Which means that we can deliver on our promises.

# **ICON SERVICES TO CONTRACTORS**

## **Response to Enquiries**

All resumes are acknowledged in writing within one working day of receipt.

If your resume is submitted in response to a client paid advertisement, it goes directly to the account manager responsible for that position.

All other resumes are immediately circulated electronically to all of our account managers. This means that your abilities and requirements will be assessed against all of our currently open positions.

Your details will be added to our database for future reference. (Unless you specifically request us not to.)

If your resume matches a current job requirement, an account manager will contact you personally to arrange an interview. We will talk to you about your history, interests, and prospects, and ask you for a couple of referees we can contact for confirmation of your skills and achievements — though we won't contact them until you give your permission.

***Referees need to be recent — within the past two years. Make sure that they are a) willing to give you a reference and b) likely to support your claims.***

## **Resume Assistance**

Many of our major clients require resumes to be presented in a standard format. We will transform your resume into the applicable format, which is designed to present you in the best possible light. Contractors are usually short listed by organisations based

on the quality (and content!) of the resume. Our knowledge of client requirements will help show your skills and achievements in the most effective manner.

## **Interview Coaching**

We recognise that personality plays an important part in the IT world. As ‘people people’, one of our skills is to help you to present yourself in the best possible light to prospective organisations. Often, we know the exact style and requirements of the client organisation. We can show you how to ‘press the right buttons’ to get the assignment — by helping you to match your presentation to the client’s exact needs and preferred style.

## **Code of Conduct**

Once you accept the contract, we will issue you with the ICON Code of Conduct handbook for contractors. This book spells out in clear and simple terms the ground rules for contractors working at client premises. It helps to ensure that you, ICON, and the client understand what is expected, and that we agree on how to deal with any administrative issues that may crop up.

## **Personal Mentors**

Our staff are all experienced IT professionals who understand the ups and downs of a contractor's life. There will always be someone on hand to talk about any problems you may be having with your work situation, and to help you to plan the next steps in your journey.

## **Regular Follow Up**

All contract placements are followed up regularly by our account managers to ensure that everyone is happy with the work situation from both a technical and an interpersonal perspective. We keep records of these reviews so we can track jobs and relationships over time.

## **Managing the Client Relationship**

From time to time, there may be differences of opinion between a contractor and client, for any one of a number of reasons. Our account managers are skilled mediators who can grasp the essence of the relationship problem and lead all parties to a satisfactory solution. Contractors and clients may both be under a lot of pressure,

especially with critical projects. Our account managers can help both sides to come to a satisfactory resolution.

## **Efficient Administration**

Our business is thoroughly computerised, and is administered through an ISO 9002 compliant quality system, which means that there are numerous checkpoints and internal audits that ensure work is done 'right first time, every time'.

Amongst other things, our administration services cover:

- Tax
- Professional Indemnity Insurance
- Public Liability Insurance

On the rare occasions when problems do crop up, we have a speedy and 'user friendly' recovery procedure to fix problems fast.

## **Business Advice**

It is not our role to give you business advice. But we will tell you when you should seek advice — for example, about whether or not to form a company, or what to do if you are an overseas national working in New Zealand.

## **Technical Development Seminars**

From time to time we run seminars with local and visiting IT experts. These are designed to raise your awareness of technical and implementation issues so that you are better able to offer your client up to the minute advice on trends and new developments.

## **Personal Development Seminars**

Effective people in any walk of life bring their whole personality to bear on the work they do. Technical skills are important, but so too are self management and interpersonal communication, to name but two. ICON sponsors a range of personal development seminars to help you to be a more effective contractor — no matter how much you already know!

## **Discount Training Schemes**

Keeping your skills up to date is vital. Much of the time you will be able to do this in the course of your paid contracting work. However, as your own boss, you would be well advised to invest in professional development in your own and related areas.

## **Career Planning Reviews**

At your request, we will sit down with you and assess where you are at with your career — what sort of roles you aspire to, and what you need to do to attain them. This outside perspective on your career can help you to make the decisions which will maximise your long term success and satisfaction in your contracting career.

## **Internet Updates**

Information on all these services and more is kept up to date at ICON's web site <http://www.iconrec.co.nz>. Registered contractors can log in for updates and access to special offers.

### New Zealand Applicants

What we need from you is a brief resume of your career and skills which states:

- Your main skills (things you can do, not things you've read about!), including both technical skills and applications
- Projects you have worked on, including your role, responsibilities and achievements
- Your academic qualifications
- Membership of any professional institutions such as the New Zealand Computer Society
- Whether you are interested in being considered for intercity and overseas positions
- What sort of work you are looking for — and when you will be available!

If possible, this resume should be in Microsoft Word format.

Email it to:   Auckland   [resauck@iconrec.co.nz](mailto:resauck@iconrec.co.nz)  
                  Wellington   [reswell@iconrec.co.nz](mailto:reswell@iconrec.co.nz)

Don't forget to include your own email address and a working hours telephone contact – mobile is best.

***Don't forget the rule of 5***

- ***Anything over 5 years old should only get a brief mention***
- ***If the resume is over 5 pages long, there had better be a good reason!***

### **Overseas Applicants**

To work in New Zealand, you will need a valid work permit. In rare circumstances, where skills are not available in New Zealand, ICON can sponsor a temporary visa.

***Jobs suitable for overseas candidates are clearly marked in our advertisements and web site. We welcome applications from overseas applicants who are confident that they possess high level skills in the specialist area indicated.***

## TIPS FOR CONTRACTORS

Over the years, we have known many contractors. Most have been successful and happy. Here are some tips for a successful career in contracting:

- Always keep your agency up to date with your new projects and skills.
- Think ahead. What do you want to be able to do with what you learn on your next project?
- Know your strengths. Be able to tell people quickly what you have accomplished and what you are good at. But don't go on and on about it!
- Keep a cash float. Don't get so tight on cash that you feel pressured to accept a job that's not right for you.
- On the other hand, it's better to work 12 weeks at \$35 per hour than 8 weeks at \$40 per hour and spend 4 weeks twiddling your thumbs! Be realistic about the returns on your time.
- Appreciate and be responsive to each client's individual preferences and ways of working; adapt to fit into their organisation.
- Make friends! The IT community is a very close knit place. If you get offside with someone, you never know when you'll be paid back in kind.

- Go the extra mile. You will get out of your work only what you put into it.
- Get your time sheet in on time! And let us know at once if you have any problems with obtaining the client's sign off on it.
- Don't put off dealing with problems: talk to us before things get serious.

***One final tip:***

***Don't sign anything you don't understand. Contracts are legally binding, and you should know what your commitments are.***