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A GUIDE FOR UK RECRUITMENT AGENCY OWNERS

10 tasks your agency should stop doing by hand.

And what each one is quietly costing you every week. Every task here is repetitive, rule-based, and happens in software you already pay for — which is exactly what a computer can take off your desk.

Half your recruiters' week never reaches a placement

Ask a recruiter what they do all day and "data entry" rarely makes the list — yet the research is blunt about where the hours actually go. UK HR teams report **17.7 hours of admin per vacancy**, more than two full working days. Recruiters lose **as much as one day a week** to pure administrative work, and across a ten-person desk that's the equivalent of paying two salaries for copying, chasing and re-typing.

None of it is skilled work. All of it is billable time that never gets billed. And because each task repeats dozens of times a week, the cost compounds quietly — hidden inside your wage bill.

The three-question test. For any task, ask: is it repetitive? Does it follow rules? Does it happen in software? Three yeses means it's a candidate for automation. Here are the ten we see most often on recruitment desks.

17.7h

admin per vacancy (UK average)

~14h

admin per recruiter, per week

5–8h

recoverable per recruiter, per week

THE TEN TASKS

1 Re-typing candidate details across systems

REGISTRATION

What it costs: the same candidate keyed into the job board, then the ATS, then the CRM — 30–60 minutes per candidate, plus the typos that follow them downstream.

Automated: details are captured once and flow into every system automatically. Your team checks exceptions instead of re-typing everything.

2 Reformatting CVs into your house template

SUBMISSION

What it costs: stripping fonts, rebuilding layout, adding your logo and anonymising — **15–45 minutes per CV**, dozens of times a week per desk. A client scans it in 7.4 seconds, so presentation is the content.

Automated: the CV is reformatted to your branded template in around 60 seconds, ready for a quick human review before it goes to the client.

3 Booking interviews by email tennis

SCHEDULING

What it costs: back-and-forth to find a slot, then a confirmation, then a reminder you have to remember to send — 15–30 minutes per interview, and a no-show when one gets missed.

Automated: candidates self-book against a consultant's live calendar; confirmations and reminders send themselves to both sides.

4 Chasing right-to-work and reference documents

COMPLIANCE

What it costs: someone keeps a mental list of who hasn't sent what and sends polite chasers between other jobs. Things slip weekly — and with GDPR fines now in the tens of thousands, slips are expensive.

Automated: a sequence requests, reminds, escalates and logs receipt, flagging a human only when something is genuinely overdue.

5 Updating candidate status and notes by hand

ATS HYGIENE

What it costs: after every call, someone types notes and moves the candidate along the pipeline. Small each time; at 10+ calls a day across a team, it's hours of pure filing.

Automated: call notes and status changes are drafted and logged automatically; the recruiter tweaks a line and moves on.

6 Posting one vacancy to every job board

VACANCY INTAKE

What it costs: the same role typed into board after board, one login at a time, with a tracker updated by hand afterwards.

Automated: a vacancy is captured once and posted everywhere it needs to go, with applicants routed to the right consultant.

7 Sending candidate and client follow-ups

FOLLOW-UP

What it costs: the highest-value routine task on the desk, and the first thing that stops when everyone gets busy — so warm candidates and clients quietly go cold.

Automated: timed, personalised follow-up sequences that pause the moment someone replies. Consistent contact without anyone remembering.

8 Collecting temp-desk timesheets each week

TIMESHEETS

What it costs: the weekly request, the reminders, the logging, the approval routing, the handoff to payroll — repeated every single week, per worker.

Automated: the whole cycle runs itself, chasing only the workers who haven't submitted and routing the rest straight to approval.

9

Running placement onboarding from memory

ONBOARDING

What it costs: each placement kicks off a mental checklist — contracts, references, first-day details, payroll setup. Every one is slightly different and steps get missed.

Automated: one trigger runs the whole sequence identically every time — documents sent, tasks created, nothing forgotten.

10

Letting contract assignments expire quietly

REDEPLOYMENT

What it costs: contract end dates sit in your ATS unwatched, so good contractors reach the end of an assignment and the idle gap becomes lost revenue.

Automated: upcoming availability is surfaced 30, 14 and 7 days out with a prompt to act — closing the gap between assignments before it opens.

Add it up

The six highest-impact tasks here typically recover **5–8 hours per recruiter, per week**.

For a ten-person desk, that's the equivalent of 1.5–2 extra recruiters — without adding headcount. The ROI isn't in cutting people; it's in revenue per recruiter.

Want to know your number?

Start with an **Automation Audit**: a 45-minute session plus a written report ranking your biggest time-drains, each with a fixed price to fix it.

The audit is **£295** — and it's credited in full against any build you go ahead with.

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