WHY I WORK AT KINGSTON BARNES – KATE HALLETT

What makes Kingston Barnes stand out from the crowd of construction recruitment? We spoke to Associate Kate Hallett, one of the teams senior members for the Bristol based firm to find out.

When Kate Hallett left school at the end of the 90s, she knew that she didn’t want to go to university. Instead, Kate, “Wanted to start earning money!” And so she began her career in the construction industry in 1999 as PA to the Managing Director at Redcliffe Homes, a residential developer. During her four years with the firm, Kate was able to work alongside and within every department of the business, gaining insights into every aspect of the construction industry.

When a friend suggested that Kate would be a good fit for Hays Recruitment who were looking to open a Bristol office in 2004, she soon found herself working as a resourcer, finding candidates for the recruiters. Over the next 10 years, Kate worked her way up through the ranks and into the management team before becoming a mother in 2010, with a second daughter arriving in 2012.

KATE AND KINGSTON BARNES
James Kingston, Managing Director of Kingston Barnes, knew that Kate’s combination of industry experience and talent was just the kind of calibre he was looking for in his new venture, which is why he asked her to join the team in 2013. As she puts it, leaving such a long stint with such an established company as a mum to two young girls was, “Really quite a gamble”. But when Kate found out that Neil Sherreard was involved as non-executive director, she thought that “If somebody as experienced and influential as Neil had faith in James, then maybe I should too.”

YOUNG MUM, OLD HAND
Not every recruitment consultancy is flexible enough to accommodate the needs of a young mum, but James was happy to work out a way that meant Kate could bring her contribution to the company. The chance to work part time at a senior level meant that Kate didn’t have to choose between career and kids.

That flexibility in the way she works is one of the things she treasures about working at Kingston Barnes. “I can come in late one morning so I can take care of something - but then I do work on my days off! You get what you give, after all!”

“Kate acknowledges that she’s, “Very lucky” to find a role that’s been tailored to her, but she also appreciates the way that the day-to-day business is less rigid than the norm. She says that, “It’s refreshing to work for a company that really cares about what we do. It’s not just a numbers game.”

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CLIENTS AND KINGSTON BARNES
A lot of recruitment firms are rigid in the way they define areas by geography or sector, but Kingston Barnes is all about supporting its clients, so Kate can continue to foster the relationships she’s spent years developing. “Stability is very important for our clients. My clients are my clients; they trust me. Just the other day, one of my clients said to me, ‘You just know what I want!’ That comes out of industry experience and longevity and leads to a better hit ratio of candidates to new hires.”

CANDIDATES AND KINGSTON BARNES
Kingston Barnes takes their candidates’ careers seriously and the matching process means that nobody ends up shoehorned in to fill a quota. When Kate wakes up in the morning, she knows, “Which of my candidates are being interviewed that day and I get excited about how it will go!”

“We don’t have a revolving door of consultants. Everybody here has been hired for a reason. Everybody likes each other and we’re genuinely happy when somebody else succeeds. We’ve only had two people leave the firm in the last three years!”
EMPLOYEE CASE STUDY

And this personal involvement doesn’t end when the job offer’s made and the contract is signed. Kate’s rightly proud that, “If a candidate gets placed, we’ll send flowers on their first day in the job if it’s a woman, or champagne for the guys.”

SMELLS LIKE TEAM SPIRIT
So what kind of recruiter would make the grade working at Kingston Barnes? “Our consultants must be geared and motivated, with an entrepreneurial flair.”

Kate says that unlike the typical recruitment agency, “We don’t have a revolving door of consultants. Everybody here has been hired for a reason. Everybody likes each other and we’re genuinely happy when somebody else succeeds. We’ve only had two people leave the firm in the last three years!”

Wrong. Kate reckons that, “The commission structure is better than many other recruiters, with bonuses throughout the year, as well as monthly and quarterly incentives.

“At the start of the year, everybody here at Kingston Barnes gives James a list of five wishes up to a set value. It could be anything from money to a meal, a day off or a weekend away. If you outperform your targets, then James picks one of your wishes – and makes it come true!”

There are business owners – and then there are business leaders. James Kingston is a business leader. Extensively experienced and perfectly professional, James not only leads from the front; he also listens when the experts he employs have something to say. Kate says that, “James is always coming up with new ideas himself, but he’s also happy to hear ideas from anyone. And unlike a lot of bosses, he really follows through on them.”

WHAT’S THE CATCH? WE’RE STILL LOOKING...
So there’s flexibility in the way you can work, strong team spirit and the chance to be part of a rapidly building success story, but that must mean the pay’s not that great, right?

“Could you be part of the Kingston Barnes story?”
Any team is only as strong as its weakest player – and Kingston Barnes is looking to expand its team of industry expert recruiters right now. If you want to be a part of the journey on the route to success, join the winning team today. If you’re a recruitment specialist, think you can bring value and add a new dimension to the Kingston Barnes team, then we want to hear from you.

Friday is Kate’s favourite day of the week – not because she’s looking forward to a couple of days out of the office, but as she says, “The atmosphere’s always buzzing and positive, it’s a chance to look back over the week to see what we’ve achieved – and what we can do better next week.”

To find out more about how Kingston Barnes could help your career, contact us today: 0117 325 2233 office@kingstonbarnes.com

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