Caspian

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# Unlocking the value locked up in recruitment agency data

**The world of opportunity revealed through business intelligence by Caspian from ETZ**

# Introduction

## Getting recruitment agency data to work harder

The world of recruitment is often very cut and thrust. With so much focus on the economic outlook, the prospects for the jobs market, and the day to day running of agency operations, the days of recruitment leaders and agency principals can be pretty full, leaving little bandwidth for thinking about less pressing matters.

One area that doesn't get perhaps quite as much thought as it might deserve is data. There is a mix of software and cloud apps in use in the recruitment sector. For each agency, we call this choice of technology the 'software stack'. A lot of the time data is spread across different application silos such as web apps, like ETZ or Xero, or desktop applications, such as Excel.

Agencies have a tendency to grow organically, and growth is often fast. With mergers, acquisitions, startups and breakaways continually remaking the marketplace, business entities are prone to changes. Staff come and go, and key data may sometimes be stored in senior staff's heads. This also tends to mean that silos of data from different systems - legacy technologies that are perhaps no longer part of your agency software stack - may hold data that cannot be used in a meaningful way.

Despite the fact that you may be able to link many of the software tools in the stack together through API integration to achieve specific goals, there is still an awful lot of data locked up from which you can't easily extract meaningful insight. This means your agency has probably been missing out on important opportunities, such as spotting how to do things more efficiently, cutting costs or identifying trends. That was until now...

Through leveraging developments in data technologies ETZ has developed Caspian, a business intelligence product for the recruitment industry. Here we outline the background and what it means for recruitment agencies.

# From the unfathomable depths of the data lake...

Companies have been amassing data and many have spent a lot of money on archiving and storage. For long established businesses this may go back decades. There had always been the promise that one day this digital information might be worth the costs associated with retaining it. And for some, that has come to pass. It is now possible to obtain value from this mass of data.

Technical breakthroughs in data science led to the development of the 'Big Data' branch of the IT industry. This essentially allows masses of data from different applications and data sources to be brought together as a 'data lake', a pool of raw unstructured data.

However, the problem with raw data lakes is that without appropriate data quality and data governance measures in place, they may become 'data swamps'. These are of little use and may take up masses of storage. Typically, they may contain duplicated or irrelevant data.

Despite this potential downside, a data lake is a step forward, but as a mass of unstructured data, by definition, it has no defined purpose, and it is only of use to the data science community.

## ...to the structure and order of the data warehouse

The key value of data lakes lies in their use for powering machine learning projects. For data scientists' this is like fuel, enabling the development of software that is able to make predictions. Analysing greater volumes of data improves the probability of predictions being correct. However, for typical business users this sort of functionality is meaningless.

The raw information in data lakes can be manipulated with special tools. This allows data scientists to understand and translate it for specific business purposes. This makes it possible to combine data from different sources which are held in different systems, and which cannot be easily examined using conventional approaches to data analysis.

# Turning a lake into a warehouse

To make a data lake of unstructured information usable by a business, its purpose needs to be defined for a specific use. Big Data technologies are used to turn a data lake into a 'data warehouse', which refines and structures the information so that it can be analysed to extract meaning.

You might not actually be able to compare the proverbial 'apples and pears', but you can bring together data that you wouldn't normally be able to, within a single report. For business users, this type of functionality is perfect for gaining insight. This technology and the know-how that goes with it have filtered down from enterprise level organisations and is being put to good use by mid-market and SMB businesses.
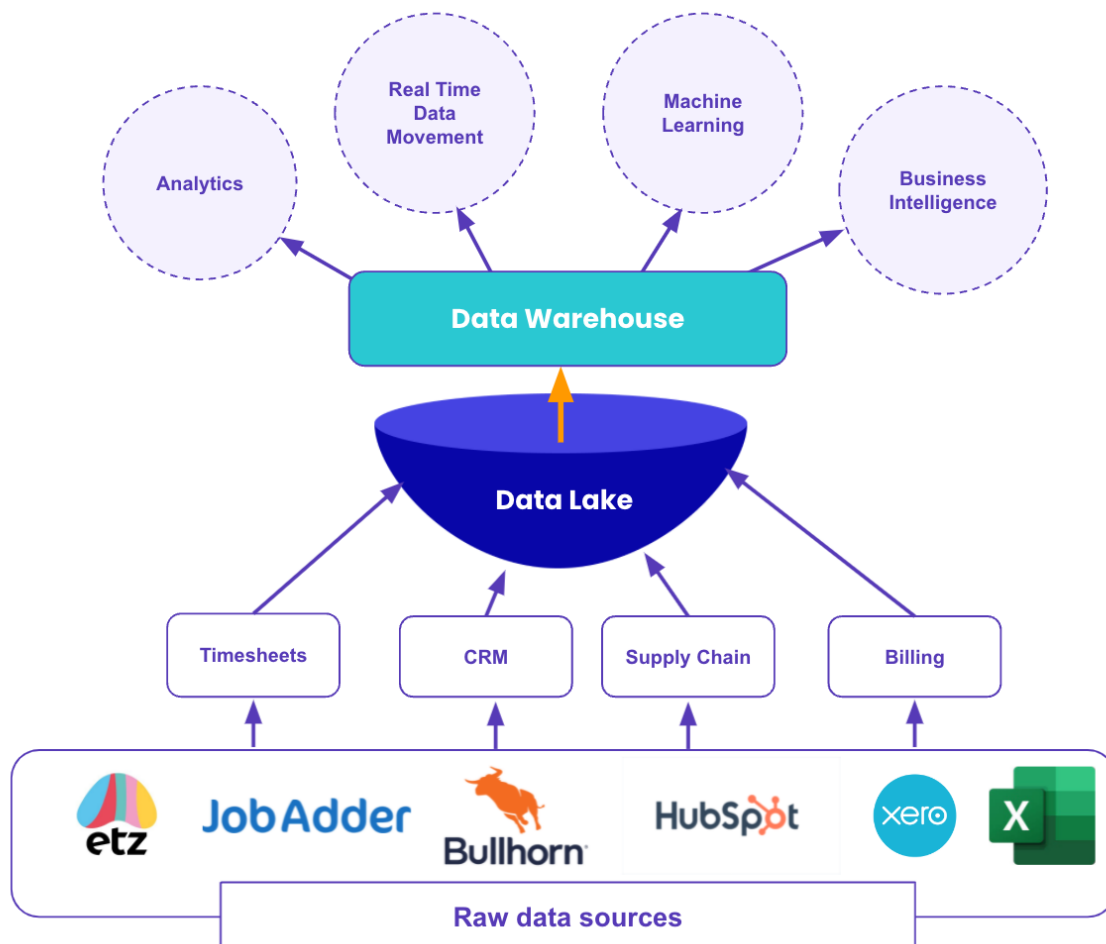
# Deep diving for treasure with Caspian

Caspian is the latest innovation from the founders of ETZ, built on Big Data technology, providing the benefits of Big Data technology for the recruitment sector. Caspian takes your agency's ETZ data and combines it with all the other information sources from across your software stack, to create a centralised data lake.

Caspian analyses and structures the information into a data warehouse, making it relevant and easy to use across your business. Caspian provides reporting, allowing you to combine elements of data that would otherwise be difficult or impossible to look at in a meaningful way.

# Getting more from your data with Caspian

Caspian radically boosts the ability of agency's that use ETZ to identify opportunities that would otherwise be missed, providing a powerful source of competitive advantage.

Caspian provides a dashboard that provides KPIs at a glance including figures for Gross Margin (cash amount and %), timesheet summary statistics and Gross Margin for each candidate.
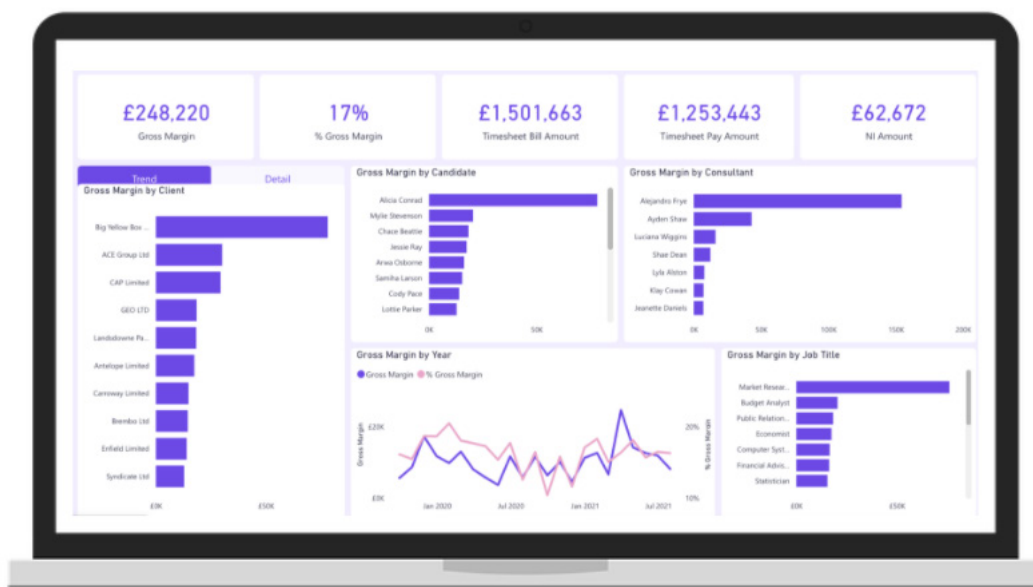
Standard report templates include:

- Consultant Commission

- Invoice And Payment Summary

- Purchase Invoice Day Book

- Sales Invoice Day Book

- Split Margin

- Timesheet Chaser

And of course, you can also build custom reports to examine anything else you might want to look at.

# Beyond practical benefits: The advantages of Caspian

The practical benefits of Caspian's specific reports help you to examine how your business is performing, identify trends, and pinpoint opportunities to make efficiency gains. But there is much more to it than that.

Some of the other considerations and advantages resulting from the effective use of data in your recruitment agency include:

## A strategic tool

There's more to recruitment agency data than basics such as numbers of timesheets, total hours and total billing. Caspian puts data all in one place and this is the basis for the strategic use of data from which many advantages cascade. Primarily, the effective use of data is a strategic tool that powers growth. Data is also a differentiator between competing businesses. Those that use it most effectively maximise data's potential as a source of competitive advantage.

# Data-led decision-making

Many might be familiar with the 'Moneyball' story which demonstrates the importance of data through the lens of the US professional baseball league. Moneyball shows that analysing player performance data helps make better team selection decisions than relying solely on the gut-instinct of experienced coaches and scouts. Whether in sport or other business, instinct is still a valuable asset. And, in recruitment, instinct-led decision making should always be supported by empirical evidence in the shape of data.

## All time information

The value of history is that understanding the context and outcomes of past events informs our decision making in the present day, as well in the future. Long established businesses may have accumulated data that goes back several years or perhaps decades. Now they have the potential to look back in time and gain insight into 'historical' developments and trends.

## Real time information

It's not just about data from last year, last month or yesterday. There's a lot of information flowing through an agency every day. The world moves in real time. Markets fluctuate like yo-yos. Automated trading is executed in a split second. If the true value of recruitment agency data is to be realised as an enabler of effective decision making, the information needs to be analysed, and where appropriate, actioned in real time too.

## Leveraging technology

The recruitment sector is acutely aware of the threats to many existing job roles posed by automation and machine learning technologies. Many millions of workers across the globe are likely to be affected and many are already seeing their jobs impacted. For some the glass is half-empty, and they see the increasing use of business technology as a downside. For others though it is an upside, where the glass is half-full. Typically, this attitude might be explained as seeing technology as a friend that is naturally better at things that we are not. Technology is there to be leveraged.

## Increasing the value of humans

Essentially, technology is more efficient and provides greater accuracy at recording and processing information and managing collections of information in large data sets. These are activities for which humans are unsuited and error prone. Recruitment businesses that leverage automation and machine learning technology free up their teams to focus on the things at which humans excel, the higher value and person-to person aspects of search and selection, such as identifying the right workers, freelancers and contractors.

# Summary

With so many of the fallouts from the pandemic influencing the job market, employment, and the very future of work itself, the operating environment for recruiters has perhaps never seemed so uncertain. For many, the day to day cut and thrust of agency operations can be all consuming.

In such an environment, strategic considerations may get overlooked, especially one that many may see as a 'nice to have'. However, data and analysing information to gain insight remains an activity that businesses cannot afford to let fall by the wayside.

The gauge that measures competitive pressure is only going one way. This is driving a ceaseless quest for quality management - to find ways to improve processes and results.

Essentially, no stone can be left unturned in looking for opportunities to optimise agency operations. Quite simply, using Caspian to put data to effective use as a source of competitive advantage is an opportunity that recruitment businesses cannot afford to ignore.
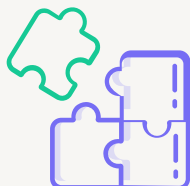
# Caspian

# About Caspian

## Business Data Reporting Re-Imagined

Switch to the Caspian data platform and revolutionise storage and reporting of all your business data.
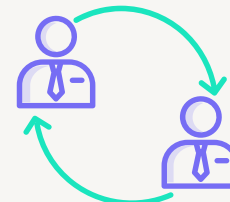
## Unleash the Power of Your Data

### See the Big Picture
Connect your data points to get a holistic view of your business.

### Grow With Data
Instantly identify areas for improvement with near real-time KPI dashboards.

### Inspire Your Team
Share insight, motivate and keep your team on the same page.

**Try Caspian for free. Visit Caspian.Cloud and start your free trial today.**

# About ETZ

## There's a better way to grow your recruitment agency.

**Save back office processing costs by up to 85%**

ETZ offers back office, timesheet and payroll software that saves money and helps your agency grow. The ultimate recruitment tech stack – because you've got better things to focus on.

Running your recruitment back office is time consuming, complicated and admin heavy. ETZ saves a lot of this hassle, time and money with our powerful software. ETZ automates and streamlines back office processes delivering cost and efficiency benefits while making timesheet, invoice and payment processing easy.

**Get Started**

To get started or find out more call us now on **0800 311 2266** or book a demo at **GetETZ.com**

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