

Robin Doenicke:

A Transformational Leader Bringing new form in The Recruitment Industry

The role of entrepreneurs is to inspire and energize individuals to work towards their future objectives. They are able to work in the present moment while also looking forward to where the organization is heading. These leaders' vision is to transform their industry and break down the barrier that obstructs their organization's growth.

One such exceptional entrepreneur filled with creativity, vigor, and intentions to transform the recruitment industry is **Robin Doenicke** — the CEO and Co-founder of [Zensho Agency](#). Robin is an Australian entrepreneur, coach, and martial arts expert. He stands out from the rest of the crowd because of his strong direction for the path ahead and well-defined rationale.

The Motivation behind The Foundation of Zensho Agency

Robin began his professional career by working for the global advertising giant DDB in Sydney. He worked for four years at the company and, at the age of 24, became the company's youngest account director globally. He never thought of founding Zensho Agency at this junction until a turning point event happened to him. Recalling his memories, Robin shares, *"One day, I had a client who was looking for a lawyer – everyone told me not to waste my time as there was no market for lawyers in Japan – but I still thought I'd give it a shot. I met with a bunch of lawyers, ultimately filled the role, and then thought – why not try and find places for all the other lawyers I'd met?"* This event changed his perspective and encouraged him to leave the company where he was working. In 2003, after quitting his job, he focused on the legal sector and started his own venture. *"Just a bit of background about the market – the legal sector is very niche, quite small compared to any other sector here,"* opines CEO Robin.

Breaking Old Fashioned Tradition and Hierarchy

Zensho Agency is an innovative, technology-driven brokerage leading the global recruitment rebellion. With his tribe, Robin has redefined the relationship between management and recruiters – or "principals," as they are called. They have removed the old top-

down hierarchy of power and profit and abolished the "chained to a desk nine-to-six" tradition. In its place, they have created an environment and highly collaborative culture where initiative and entrepreneurship get rewarded. Freedom is given to everyone in this new culture. Moreover, the visionary leader is always ready to help his tribe pursue and realize the things that matter most in their lives. *"It enables and supports the pursuit of our greater purpose both on an individual and a collective level. The Agency exists for our people. They come first. Without them, we have no reason for being,"* shares Robin. He further adds, *"In 2016, Zensho Agency required third-eye vision, a fanatical belief in its mission, and the grit to persevere no matter what obstacles it faced."* The company's sense of changing the work approach and its dedication to the evolution of the recruitment industry is a vision that is beginning to be shared by an increasing number of recruiters globally in 2020.

Reshaping the Recruitment

Every business has its unique set of challenges, and Zensho Agency is no different. But within the context of doing business, Robin believes that Japan is a fascinating place to live and work. The degree to which the people commit to their work is unrivaled. "With the level of sincerity and consideration Japanese people express, you get a society that is focused on putting others first," says Robin. "In other words, a culture that mirrors our own here at Zensho Agency."

As a recruiter and entrepreneur, he is constantly coming across challenges, and there are different ways he can deal with them. Martial arts have helped him to remain even-keeled. He tries to live his life to go with the flow and be present with whatever is happening right now. Of course he has to plan, just like any business person; he just focuses on what's happening now that brings an extraordinary sense of clarity and peace to his life. He believes "building a wonderful business starts with having the right people and that translates into having the highest standards about the quality of work each of us does. Because we all represent each other and the firm as a whole, everyone is a co-director."

Forming an Open Culture

As the CEO of an admired recruitment company, Robin understands the mindsets of people. Therefore, he believes

more and more companies in so many different industries are turning to the Richard Branson way of doing things attract incredible people, treat them with respect, support them and reward them well, and then get out of their way so they can go and do what they do best. Also, office hours are an obstacle to that. At Zensho Agency, everyone has the freedom to express their ideas, opinions and knowledge. There is no restriction or barrier that impacts the productivity of the employees.

Empowering Everyone during COVID-19 Outbreak

At Zensho Agency, everyone is fully prepared to manage the crisis. Robin and his tribe worked flexibly, so they didn't have to change a single thing operationally. That said, they had to deal with the fact that most of their customers had stopped recruiting new talent. It was extremely encouraging to see how easily and smoothly their 32 consultants collected resources and data to find ways of working together on work that was already active so that no one was left behind. Robin shares, *"We made sure that we had each other's backs. That we checked on each other's families and made sure that our people, and those in their care, were coping with the stress and uncertainty of the situation."* He feels fortunate to witness the human spirit of individuals who genuinely care for each other and willingly go without to support another. This, unfortunately, is a very rare phenomenon in the recruitment business. **IZ**

My philosophy of leadership is that you should empower your people so they have the confidence and ability to leave but treat them well enough so they'll never want to.

