

Getting The Most from Your Recruiter

As individuals increasingly search out new employment opportunities and make several career changes in their lifetime, it becomes important to understand the role of recruiters, placement agencies, and executive and professional search agencies. They can be a valuable resource, and you should clearly understand their role in the placement process so that you will have realistic expectations of their potential and understand how to get the best possible support from them when you are looking for a new opportunity.

A professional search firm can substantially increase your career search network as they work with numerous employers looking for the best possible candidate. These positions may or may not be advertised, and in many instances, are conducted confidentially. Recruiters and search consultants are experienced in finding the “right” person.

Many individuals come away with a feeling of being let down or unsatisfied with the support they have received (or lack of) from their recruiter because they don’t understand how recruiters or agencies work. Firstly, it is important to understand that the responsibility of finding your next job is yours, not the recruiter’s. In a three- month period during which you may be looking for a job, a recruiter may be working on one to ten specific assignments. In spite of your qualifications or your recruiter’s desire to help, they may not be working on an assignment for which you are the most qualified candidate, when education, experience, corporate culture, personality type and other skills and qualities are considered.

There are two types of recruiters:

- Search Consultants that charge a fee for services, or an hourly rate for their time; and,
- Others that get paid on contingency, which is based on a percentage of the employee’s annual wage (Example – If they place an employee whose annual salary is \$30,000 and their fee is 10%, the placement fee is \$3,000.00)

It is crucial that you understand that recruiters act only as facilitators, catalysts, and coordinators in managing the process of searching, finding and matching employees with employers. Recruiters work with employees or companies who respect their skills and accept their advice of recommendation. On the other hand, search consultants like to work with “manageable” candidates.

If you understand what a “manageable” candidate is, it will help you to position yourself as strongly as possible with your recruiter, so you will receive the best support and results. What is a “manageable” candidate? A “manageable” candidate is:

- **OPEN AND HONEST WITH BOTH THE RECRUITER AND THE EMPLOYER.** Be prepared to give total disclosure when asked about such things as salary, education, references, and previous experience with accurate dates. Be up front with your recruiter about any other opportunities you may be considering. The recruiter will always want your feedback in detail after each interview.
- **DEPENDABLE.** Show up on time and dress appropriately. Always return calls promptly when asked and in general, offer no surprises.
- **REALISTIC WITH THEIR EXPECTATIONS.** Establish clearly defined goals when meeting with the recruiter for the first time, and be clear and realistic on your job and wage expectations given your previous experience. In today’s market, it is generally difficult to get much more than a five percent increase in salary and is often difficult to change job function (e.g., from accounting to data processing) or industry (e.g., from a service firm to a manufacturer) when working through a recruiter.
- **COACHABLE.** The recruiter will be in a position to give your good advice on improving your resume, proper dress and how to conduct yourself in each interview. They will help with things like what questions to ask, what not to ask, and how to handle difficult questions.

- **PREPARED TO WORK HARD.** Be willing to research the companies to which you are referred. You should practice or role-play your interview beforehand.

If you begin the process of working with a recruiter with realistic expectations and take responsibility for the job search process and your future while at the same time being a “manageable” candidate, you will be pleased with the results and you will find the experience most worthwhile. We wish you every success.

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