

10 Tips to Working with Recruiters

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"Currently, 64% of executive positions are still filled through recruiters"

- Richard Nelson Bolles, from the book "What Color is Your Parachute?"

How to work effectively with executive recruiters:

If you are a professional, with at least five years of experience in a given function and industry, you'll likely find that executive recruiters are your #1 networking resource. The majority of our clients secure positions through executive recruiters. As such, we've assembled a list of items you should know about recruiters to maximize your success in working with them.

- 1. The difference between "Retained" recruiters, and "Contingency" recruiters.** Retained recruiters have an exclusive on a position with an employer. Contingency recruiters are paid only if they present a candidate who is actually hired. They are both paid by the employer. Over the years, the difference between the retained and contingency firms and services has been diminished. The retained services are more critical in high level, confidential searches where control of information is more important.
- 2. Some great benefits to you.** Recruiters assure your job search is confidential. It is hard, if not virtually impossible, to keep a full time job while searching discretely for another job. Recruiters solve that problem by giving you discrete exposure. Another benefit: potentially immediate interviews. Recruiters have inside contacts at employers. Those employers have openings all the time. Recruiters can enable you to be in the "right place and the right time." Additionally, recruiters can assess opportunities for you in an objective manner; they will often come across opportunities that you may have never considered, but which perfectly match your skills, experience and interests.
- 3. A liaison between you and the employer.** Again, to quote Richard Bolles, "Employers don't know how to find decent employees, any more than job-hunters know how to find decent employers." Yes, it's a bit like dating! It is always easier to have an agent as a liaison between you and the employer. Recruiters can communicate between the two parties with a level of sensitivity not otherwise available.
- 4. Realize who the recruiter works for.** Although the recruiters are a tremendous asset to your job search, remember who they work for. They work for the client, not for you.
- 5. What to do when a recruiter calls.** Talk to them immediately, not later. Listen carefully to the position they describe to you. Indicate your interest if the position intrigues you. You may be meeting with the recruiter in person or with the client, so take careful notes on what is expected of you. Get the accurate spelling and phone number of the recruiter who you are speaking with; take careful notes on your conversation.
- 6. What goes around comes around.** You may get a call from a recruiter for a position not meant for you. The recruiter may ask if you have colleagues meeting the criteria for the position. Be cooperative! These recruiters will remember you if you help them out. Remember, networking involves giving as well as taking.
- 7. When not to use a recruiter.** When you are making a major career change. Recruiters seek professionals with a steady career path in a given function and industry. They usually seek specialists vs. generalists.

8. **How to never get a Christmas card from a recruiter.** Never exaggerate your actual salary. Never use a job offer by a recruiter as "leverage" with your current employer. Never tell the recruiter you are willing to relocate, without getting your family's backing on that decision. Three "nevers" to avoid!
9. **Seriously consider Interim positions.** In this era of start-up operations and downsizing companies, a completely new breed of employee is needed: the temporary executive. If such an opportunity is presented to you, get all the facts on it. This may well be a great stepping-stone to other opportunities, offer you a very attractive salary, and quickly strengthen your career network.
10. **Some final advice.** Call the recruitment firm and be sure you are sending your resume to the recruiter in charge of your specialty. Be aware that many recruitment firms get hundreds of resumes every week, so don't expect to get a great deal of attention. Finally, if the recruiter does not have an immediate opening for you, don't expect them to call. Be patient. Pick a handful of recruiters who specialize in your function and industry. Hang tight. The only thing in life that never changes is change. And things often have a way of changing overnight!

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