



How to Get the Most Out of Working with a Recruiter

If you're considering the help of a professional recruiter to find the right job for you, here's what you should know about how they work and how you can use them to your best advantage.

Your Career Liaison.

To begin with, employers generally pay a recruiter a percentage of a candidate's first year's salary. This percentage does not come out of your salary. It sometimes includes bonuses, overtime and call pay. Therefore, a recruiter can often negotiate the best possible deal for you. It's a team effort. The better the deal is for you, the better it is for the recruiter, and the employer ends up with a happy employee who will hopefully stay with them for many years.

It's a recruiter's job to save you time and effort. They're out in the marketplace every day with their finger on the pulse of the industry. Recruiters know which facilities are healthy and growing and which may be in financial or administrative intensive care. When the opportunity is right, they can get you in front of the client as quickly as possible. While you can send your résumé out on your own, they usually end up with many others in the human resource department. A good recruiter has a direct line to the directors of the departments, as well as the HR directors. They can reach the ones who feel the pain and are in immediate need of a qualified candidate far better than any résumé ever could.

The edge that recruiters can provide is that they have already screened you and they've gotten to know who you are. They have confirmed that you have the specific skill set and the personality that is compatible with this particular position. They are your "agents," your spokespeople to present you in the best light. They also provide client feedback after each interview so you can fine-tune your presentation skills. When it appears to be a good match, the recruiter's main objective is to get you an on-site interview as soon as possible. If the chemistry and circumstances work for both parties, a recruiter helps prepare the client to make an offer and prepare the candidate to accept that offer.

When the opportunity is out of your area, a good recruiter will also coordinate with the employer to take care of all your travel arrangements and expenses, such as accommodations and a rental car. You can also expect them to provide information on living expenses, schools and real estate agents who can help with relocation. Since recruiters deal with candidate relocations on a regular basis, they know what to expect and can advise you on the numerous issues and decisions you'll need to make. This reduces the understandable stress you may feel about moving so you can focus on doing your best at your new job.

Choosing a Recruiter.

When deciding on the right recruiter to work with, ask trusted professionals in your field for their recommendations. Chances are good that they have worked with several recruiters. In addition to having experience in placing professionals in your field, you're looking for someone with strong communication and organizational skills. If you feel that you can trust this recruiter and they seem to have your best interests at heart—and are not just interested in making a placement—it can be the beginning of a great relationship.

Five Ways to Get the Most from Your Recruiter.

Candidates who are serious about finding the right opportunity are the ones who play by the rules of the marketplace and work with the recruiter as a team. Therefore, you should:

1) Be Honest. The more open and responsive you are, the easier you are to market. If you haven't done so already, you need to define your career path and goals and then share that with your recruiter. Be candid about your strengths and weaknesses. What are the personal dynamics that will come into play? How will a move affect the career of your spouse? What do your children need to make a smooth transition? It's best to know from the start, for instance, that you crave year-round warm weather and would never consider moving to any northern city.

2) Avoid Overexposure. When you post your résumé on the Internet, for example, you will be overwhelmed with calls and e-mails from recruiters and you can lose the value of your exclusivity. It's best to work with only one or two recruiters to make the most productive use of your time and to keep multiple recruiters from presenting you to the same facility. That doesn't look good for anyone.

3) Expect Confidentiality. A professional recruiter won't send your résumé out to a company without checking with you first, and won't call certain sensitive references before the time is appropriate.

4) Be Accessible. This process can seem slow and tedious one week and turn around quickly the next. If you are inaccessible for long periods of time, opportunities will pass you by. A recruiter may not be as inclined to work as hard for you as they would for someone who is easy to reach and easy to work with. Most recruiters can be contacted after hours and on weekends. You should be too.

5) Be Open to New Opportunities. As a good candidate, you need to keep an open mind and thoroughly explore all possibilities. Make sure you're not turning down a job possibility because of false assumptions. At the least, agree to a phone interview before making a decision. If you truly are not interested in a situation, let the recruiter know so they don't waste any more time and can maintain a good relationship with that client.

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