



How to Get the Most Out of Working with a Recruiter

If you're searching for a new position, here's what you should know about how recruiters work and how you can use them to your best advantage.

Your Career Liaison

To begin with, companies generally pay a recruiter they have engaged a percentage of a candidate's first year's salary. This percentage does not come out of your salary. It sometimes includes bonuses and overtime. Therefore, a recruiter will want to negotiate the best possible deal for you. It's a team effort. The company ends up with a happy employee who will hopefully stay for many years.

It's a recruiter's job to save you time and effort. They are out in the marketplace every day with a finger on the pulse of the industry. Recruiters know which companies 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. Good recruiters have direct lines to the company's department directors, as well as HR directors. They can reach the ones who are in immediate need of a qualified candidate far better than any résumé ever could.

The edge that recruiters can provide is that a recruiter has 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 a 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 a position appears to be a good match, the recruiter's main objective is to get you on an on-site interview as soon as possible. If the chemistry works for both parties, a recruiter helps prepare the client to make an offer and the candidate to accept that offer.

When the opportunity is out of your area, a recruiter will work with the company to coordinate all your travel arrangements and expenses, such as accommodations and a rental car. You can also expect the recruiter 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 many decisions you'll need to make. This reduces the 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. You're looking for someone with strong communication and organizational skills.

If you feel that you can trust a recruiter, and he or she seems to have your best interests at heart—and is not just interested in making a placement—it can be the beginning of a great relationship.

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 closely with their recruiters. 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 them with your recruiter. Be candid about your strengths, weaknesses and preferences. How will a move affect your spouse's career? 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 a 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. 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 facility without checking with you first, and won't call certain sensitive references before it 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 are available 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 time and can maintain a good relationship with the client.