

## How to Select the Right Recruiter for Your Job Search

So, you've decided to begin a job search. It's a daunting and overwhelming process to begin, especially if you're currently working and trying to fit this new task into your daily list of things to do. Partnering with a good professional recruiting firm could make your search much easier – but only if you choose a firm to work with that's right for you.

Finding a good executive or professional recruiter is a bit like finding a good doctor. Most of us are not going to turn to a Google search when looking for someone to advise us on something as important as our health. It's likely we'll ask our friends or family who their doctor is and ask for a referral. In the same way, most professionals will not seek out a recruiter from a Google search, but look for a recommendation from a friend or colleague who has had experience with someone that they trust. Ask around, consulting with your inner circle and see who they might suggest you contact based on their previous experiences with a trusted individual. Seek out a firm where a large percentage of their work is done on a referral basis, for there you will find a quality organization to help represent you.

With a recommendation or two in hand, now it's time to ask a few questions of the recruiter and the firm they represent in order to determine if they're right for you and your search. Here's what we recommend you consider when evaluating a firm or recruiter:

1. **Know what you want** – Are you looking for a full-time permanent role? Or would you prefer to do part-time or temporary/contract work? Do you prefer to work for a Fortune 500 or small to mid-sized company? Would you be willing to make a commute and if so, how far? Are you open to considering an individual contributor role or only positions with a Manager-Director-VP, etc. title? What industries are you open to – or would you prefer NOT to work in?

Knowing exactly what you are looking for in your next move will help you clearly articulate your needs to a potential recruiting partner, and help you mutually decide whether or not they would be a good match for you.

2. **Know what you need** – Hate to use the doctor analogy again, but here goes.... Just like you can't visit the doctor for help with an ailment described as "Just make me feel better", you can't work with a recruiter by just saying "Help me find a job". Understanding why you need the support of a trusted partner and honestly sharing with them what you are looking for in a recruiter can help you quickly determine who's right for you. Discover what it is that YOU really need by answering these questions:

- a. Do you desire to have high level, professional representation as a candidate for a job opening?
- b. Are you looking for access to confidential and unpublished job openings?
- c. Is confidentiality and discretion important to you?
- d. Are you looking to work with someone who can become your "career agent", working with you throughout the course of your career, keeping an eye out for opportunities in your best interests?
- e. Do you need representation for and access to high level positions?

- f. Have you been conducting a search on your own through job boards and not getting the response that you'd like to?
  - g. Are you working in a specific industry, have a unique skill set or selected geographic location where their expertise could be leveraged?
3. **Know the firm** – After contacting the firm from a referral, chances are you already have a high degree of trust that the recruiter you will be working with is not a shark. But what if you're not that lucky and have been forced to Google "Recruiters in West Michigan" to find some help? Here are some things to consider as you make your final decision:
- a. What is the reputation of the firm? Be sure to inquire as to how many years they have been in the business, as longevity is a sure sign of a recruiter/firm who takes good care of their clients. Ask about their client base and areas of specialty, making sure that they are aligned with your needs.
  - b. Can they provide you with references? Knowing what others who have worked with them have to say can be very telling. Good search consultants will be able to provide you with references which might include individuals that they have placed or have worked with for years.
  - c. Consider your list of needs in comparison with their services and offerings. Can the recruiter help you achieve your long-term career goals?

Selecting the right recruiter for your search can make the difference between finding the job of your dreams or experiencing a frustrating waste of time. Do your homework, ask good questions, listen for alignment between your needs and their services. And above all – look for a quality organization that truly cares about what is best for you – not just what makes them a buck.