

Working with Recruiters

Why Work With a Recruiter?

One of the best ways to find a new job is to have a friend “on the inside,” someone who has a personal relationship with a hiring manager who can put in a good word for you. Working with a recruiter can be a little like that. A good logistics recruiter is well connected with the types of companies you want to work for, and is trusted by client companies to recommend candidates that are a suitable match for the organization.

As any professional who has ever been out of work knows, finding a job is no small feat. Locating positions of interest and convincing employers you are the one to hire can be unnerving and frustrating, particularly if the search has been a lengthy one. Enlisting the assistance of a specialized recruiter can ease some of the pressure and help you target your efforts to only the most promising opportunities.

When you submit your resume to a company directly, your resume and cover letter often wind up as one of hundreds of applications on an over-loaded human resources coordinator’s desk. A good recruiter will have direct access to hiring managers, and can often arrange interviews for good candidates without even sending in resumes.

Many companies will fill urgently needed or confidential roles through a recruiter, rather than put up postings themselves. For a highly specialized role, a company will often go to a search firm with expertise in their field. While you are diligently scouring newspaper and Internet ads, they can uncover leads and vacancies that have not been advertised or even announced, thus giving you an advantage over job seekers who rely solely on information that is posted in the public domain.

Consider recruiters to be one part of your job search. The key is opportunities and who has them, and recruiters are a good source of both opportunities and industry knowledge.

How to Select a Recruiter

In the course of your job search, you may come across a few different types of recruiters, but they typically fall into one of these three categories, or perhaps a combination of these three:

1. **Retained executive-search firm:** Firms that specialize in finding top-level candidates exclusively on a retained basis, which means they receive payment from their client companies regardless of whether a candidate is hired. Most executive-search firms will only place Vice-President or Director-Level candidates and above.
2. **Contingency recruiting firm:** Search firms that place candidates in mid- to senior-level positions. Fees are paid by client companies contingent upon the firm finding a candidate who's hired for the position. Many contingency recruiting firms will also provide contract opportunities for mid- to senior-level candidates, often providing opportunities that will start out as a temporary position with the intent to transition into a permanent role at a later date. A number of contingency firms specialize in certain industries, and some of these specialize in logistics.
3. **Temporary staffing firm:** Firms that provide staff for temporary project or contract positions. There are numerous temporary staffing firms that specialize in temporary unskilled labour for warehouses or manufacturing operations.

It is important to keep in mind that not all recruiters are created equal. When selecting a recruiter, choose an individual who is an expert in his or her field. If you are hoping to find work in the logistics field, someone who has experience in the industry will be better able to understand your needs, and the expectations of potential employers. Ask friends and colleagues for referrals. Check with your professional association to see who they may recommend. Look at some Internet job boards to see who has postings that are similar to what you are seeking. Above all, you must be comfortable with the person with whom you have partnered and confident that he or she has your best interests at heart.

In addition, remember that you should receive a recruiter's assistance free of charge. These individuals are paid a fee by companies to locate qualified candidates, so view with suspicion any recruiter who asks you to pay for job-search services.

What Can a Recruiter Do For Me?

Recruiters can be of tremendous benefit to you in your career. They can guide you in preparing your resume, advise you on effective interviewing techniques, and enlighten you to new opportunities you may never have considered. They can also connect you with movers and shakers, propelling your career forward through their industry expertise, contacts and sound advice.

Recruiters also can serve as career advisers. If your resume does not accurately portray your skills, a good recruiter may help you rewrite your résumé to better highlight your experience, leading to immediate interest from employers.

In addition to working with you to refine your application materials, a skilled recruiting professional can offer guidance on everything from answering tough interview questions to negotiating the best compensation package to how to dress for your first day of work. They can also help you make a smooth transition from your current job to your new position without burning bridges.

What Should I Expect?

The following is a list of what you can reasonably expect from a reputable firm.

1. Face-to-face interview with a recruiter (where possible). Some firms will spend only a few minutes on the phone with a candidate before sending their resume to their client, but a good recruiter will take the time to meet their candidates in person to go through their work history in detail, cover some specific questions about salary expectations, and perhaps go through some behavioural interview questions or role-playing scenarios. If you want to be well-represented, work with only those recruiters who perform their due diligence.
2. Detailed information about a specific position prior to your resume being sent. There are firms that will send a resume out to their clients indiscriminately, without first clearing it with the candidate. A good recruiter will recognize that you will be sending your resume to certain positions on your own, and will expect you to be selective about where you want to work. You should expect to be consulted for any position prior to your resume being submitted to the client.
3. Detailed information regarding the company, compensation and interview process prior to an interview. Many recruiters will simply let you know that they've scheduled you for an interview at this company at this time, but you should expect much more than that. A good recruiter will walk you through an "interview prep" to share various tips that will help you to put your best foot forward in the interview and increase your chances at securing an offer.
4. Feedback following job interviews. Your recruiter will expect you to call him or her after an interview to share your thoughts and impressions so the recruiter can follow up with appropriate next steps. Likewise, you should expect your recruiter to share the company's feedback with you so you can improve your performance in future interviews.
5. Assistance and guidance during compensation negotiations. The recruiter will typically coach you on what to expect in terms of compensation, and will often handle the negotiations with the employer. It is in the recruiter's best interests to help you negotiate a good salary.

How to Work With a Recruiter

You will find a wealth of information on the internet and in job-hunting manuals explaining what recruiters do, but many candidates remain in the dark about the "headhunting" industry. They expect recruiters to find

them new jobs. Working with recruiters can be a valuable part of your job search, but it's important to understand how a recruiter works so you can help them to help you.

Keep in mind that the recruiter works for his client company, and although it may appear that he is working for you, the job seeker, it's the recruiting firm's responsibility to produce results for its clients. A recruiting firm may have hundreds of searches to complete, but can't fill them unless it identifies the right candidates, which often means collecting a database of tens of thousands of resumes. Conversely, you may have a great relationship with a search firm, but it won't help unless the firm has been asked to fill an opening that's a perfect fit for you.

When meeting with a recruiter for the first time, be open and honest about your background, experience and career aspirations. He or she needs to know as much about your professional life as possible to find the right position for you. What are your salary requirements? Do you prefer working for a large or small firm? Are you willing to travel? The information you provide may prompt the recruiting professional to suggest promising positions or career paths that you had not previously considered.

You also should disclose to your recruiter any aspects of your work history that may generate concern from prospective employers, such as a long period of unemployment or termination. The more upfront you are, the easier it will be for a recruiter to assist you.

Throughout the relationship, be forthright in communicating any changes in your career needs or availability. If you're interviewing for other jobs that you've set up on your own, let your recruiter know, and before accepting an offer from another organization, check with your recruiter to see if he or she may have another opportunity for you to consider.

Although using the services of a skilled recruiter can significantly improve your odds of locating employment, even the most successful recruiting professionals need time to find the perfect position for the job seekers they represent. So, don't get discouraged. Recruiters continually mine their sources for job leads and may suddenly discover an opportunity that is right for you. If you'd like a status update, don't be afraid to call your recruiter with questions. Checking in with him or her on a regular basis ensures both of you remain focused on the best opportunities for you.

A skilled recruiting professional can help you find the right job faster and open doors to new opportunities. By researching firms and maintaining communication, you'll be in the best position to locate and secure your next position.

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