

## How to Work Effectively with a Recruiter

by

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Are you on the hunt for a new job? Whether you are looking for a new culture or want more responsibility, a recruiter is a great resource to have throughout your search process. He or she should have insights and know details about the firms you are considering, will know exactly what the firm is looking for in a candidate, and will be able to help guide you through the process to find the best fit for *you*.

### Resume Tips

When reaching out to a recruiter, your initial introduction should be short, sweet, and to the point. Prepare a cover letter that describes your experience and what type of position you are seeking. Your resume should be comprehensive, but succinct. Ideally, you should be able to catch a recruiter's interest within the first few seconds of reviewing your information, so keep your resume to 1 or 2 pages, and list your experience in bullet point format, not paragraphs. A paragraph format makes the reader read from left to right and in complete sentences. A bullet format allows the reader to scan a resume for key points in a much easier fashion.

We have received very positive comments from our clients about those candidates who have used what we call a "bucket" resume. In this format you have headings under your job title that break out your various experiences in broad functions with detailed bullets underneath; this is a very manageable way for anyone who is reading your resume to digest the information. Also, remember to list all dates of employment and to be as accurate as possible, as background checks will often be conducted after an offer is extended.

### Putting Your Best Foot Forward

Be sure to have a professional email address and that the name that is set to appear in an inbox is your full name – no abbreviations or nicknames. Also, make sure you have a very professional voicemail message; something too casual may cause a potential employer to pause.

In addition to your resume, take this time to think about how to best represent yourself from all angles. If you have been let go (terminated), rather than laid off, from your last position, try to find at least 2 people from your most recent company who will be references for you. Review any and all online profiles you have, and be very careful about what you have posted. It is becoming very common for recruiters and employers to check applicants' Facebook and LinkedIn profiles.

Thank you notes are still very important, and if you decide to send one via "snail mail," it's best to get it into the mailbox within 24 hours – and don't forget to spell check! Finally, it is important to understand that just because a salary is listed at a certain amount or within a certain range, it doesn't mean the company will pay you at the top end of the range. More often than not, employers base your offer salary on what your most recent salary was, and proceed from there.

### Maximizing Your Recruiter

Once you have taken the initial steps to prepare yourself to meet with a recruiter, here are a few tips to maximize this relationship:

- Keep track of everywhere you have sent your resume and where a recruiter has sent your information. Firms always have agreements stating that they need to honor the first submission they receive; if you submit yourself, a recruiter can't help you;
- Don't go around your recruiter and contact people at the firm on your own. Recruiters are there for a reason, and if you have a question, just ask! ;
- Make sure you tell a recruiter not to send your resume without your permission to avoid any potential confusion;

- Keep in mind that recruiters are motivated to make the placement, but make sure that you feel comfortable with their professionalism and their process. While it may be tempting to contact every recruiter you know, you only need a couple or else they can run over each other. It will reflect poorly on you if more than one recruiter sends your resume to a firm;
- You should also ultimately recognize that recruiters are incentivized to get you as much money as they can, so trust that they will do all they can for you in this aspect of the search.

### **Interviewing**

So, you finally got the interview! What's next? Once a recruiter has set you up with a meeting, take note of the following etiquette rules:

- First and foremost, be courteous to everyone you meet. While this should be a general rule, remember that everyone's opinion matters. Whether you are meeting the receptionist or an assistant, make sure you are polite and make the best impression possible;
- Next, don't be late. If you are going to be late, call your recruiter and they will reach their client for you;
- Also, never smoke or spray perfume or cologne right before the interview; this has been a comment we have heard time and again from our clients. The intensity of the smells is very distracting to them;
- And lastly, always assume every interview is THE interview. Bring your "A" game to every meeting, and even if you may only be meeting with the Human Resources department, remind yourself that every evaluation you receive will be crucial to the firm's final decision.

### **Don'ts**

Now that we have covered all the things you *should* do when working with a recruiter, we would like to point out the one thing you should *never* do – Never pursue a position just to leverage the offer against your current firm for more money. This type of move does not ingratiate you with anyone. Your current firm will easily see your intentions, the new firm will certainly not be pleased, and you will lose the trust of your recruiter. You don't want to earn a reputation as someone who would handle a situation in this way. If you think you deserve a higher salary, then ask the management within your current firm. Provide evidence to your firm management that shows that you are "under market." If you are a key employee, then the firm won't want to lose you.

### **Looking to the Future**

Finally, a strong candidate's job search should never end – even when you are not actively looking, remember that someday soon you might be. To that end, network often! If people don't know you, they can't think of you when something comes along. It is also a good idea to update your resume every 3 months. Set an Outlook reminder, and make sure to include any new projects or responsibilities you have taken on, or innovative programs that you have initiated. This will also remind you to keep working to improve yourself and your skill set. Always look for ways to add value to your firm that is beyond your job description, without stepping on others' toes, and make sure the "right" people know what you are up to.

We also think it is a great idea to keep in periodic contact with key industry recruiters, even when you are not actively recruiting. They can provide insight and perspective and can also keep you in mind for a great opportunity. If you keep challenging yourself, and keep in touch with others in your field, you will be in a much stronger position the next time you begin your job search!

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