

WHY YOU SHOULD USE A RECRUITER: Working With Executive Recruiters

Executive Recruiters hold the keys to the "hidden job market" - career opportunities that aren't posted anywhere else. These professionals hold great influence within the hiring organization, and it's important for jobseekers to understand how to leverage this resource as **part of their overall career strategy**. What follows are a few facts about executive search firms, and how executive recruiters can help advance your career.

Four Key Facts About Executive Recruiters:

- 1. Jobseekers do not pay fees to search firms.** Instead, the companies that hire recruiters to fill a position pay for their services. This fee is calculated using the starting salary of the position, and can range from 15%-35% of that salary. Be wary of any recruiter who asks you to pay them a fee...If you are asked to pay a fee for job placements services, please let us know immediately.
- 2. There are two types of search firms - Retained and Contingency.** While both types charge fees only to the hiring organization, it is important to note the differences. When the hiring company retains a recruiting firm, that firm is paid regardless of the results of the search. Retained firms are typically used to fill higher-level positions at \$100,000+ salaries. Contingency search firms receive payment only when their candidate is hired. Over the last few years the "search" industry has gone through some significant changes. While contingency firms have generally always accepted retained work, many retained firms now accept contingency work... You decide which type of recruiter is right for you!
- 3. Don't limit your search by geography.** For many higher-end job assignments, recruiting firms will look nationally or even internationally. It is absolutely in your best interest to gain exposure among search firms who fill positions in your industry, function and salary range, no matter where they are. A Chicago recruiter is just as likely to have an assignment in Los Angeles as in Boston. That being said, it's much easier to network with local recruiters and they can be an invaluable resource when penetrating the local hiring market, particularly for non-executive positions.
- 4. Some search firms specialize, while others don't.** To make your search as effective as possible, target your efforts towards recruiters that work in your respective industry and/or specialize in your job function. As you begin to network with these specialized recruiters you'll find they are very much aware of where opportunities exist within the micro hiring "economies" of your shared areas of expertise. However, generalist firms should not be ignored, especially at the higher executive ranks...Whether retained or contingency fee-based, search firms are handsomely rewarded for filling positions on behalf of their corporate clients. Thus, networking and building relationships with qualified, reputable recruiters is a critical component of career management strategies.

Making Contact with Your Selected Executive Recruiters

Next, identify all of the communication channels that make sense for the firms and recruiters you've identified. The firm may offer an online mechanism for posting and/or sending your resume and cover letter. Review the firm's website for job opportunities currently under research, and establish the preferred communication medium for that firm. In all cases, respect the indicated communication preferences of the firm and/or the individual recruiter.

Not unlike introducing your professional "brand" to a hiring organization, make sure your cover letter and resume/CV are both positioned appropriately for the areas of expertise in which the recruiter works. Keep in mind that recruiters are not career managers. They may not have the expertise or inclination to advise you on changes to your cover letter and resume, so make sure they're tight before you send them. After providing your credentials in whatever communication medium you think makes sense, consider a follow up a few weeks later with another communication attempt. What you're striving for is a personal contact from the recruiter. Depending on your "hirability" (qualification level, experience etc.) you may have to be in the right place at the right time to be recognized at a personal level.

That being said, many recruiting firms have automated Applicant Tracking Systems that create an archived record of your contact information, your resume, and a profile that is created by their firm that is relevant to their tracking systems. Be patient! It could be a matter of days or many months (we've heard stories of years in some cases) before your specific credentials become relevant to a job that a firm has under research.

How Recruiting Firms Can Make a Difference In Your Career

When contacted by a recruiter treat them as though they are the hiring organization. Be professional, make your best impression, sell yourself and your "hirability", and understand that executive recruiters have access to a lot of talent. Remember, the recruiter doesn't work for you - so don't expect personal, individualized service. Working with executive recruiters is not an event - it is a process. We have testimonials from *Directory of Executive Recruiters* clients that indicate when working with an Executive Recruiter, the "hiring cycle" can take anywhere from two days to two years! In either case though, most positions secured through executive recruiters fit into the "dream job" category.

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