

Working with a recruiter

by Marie Minder, President of
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My brother was laid off the other day. He was a mid-level manager in an engineering firm that is facing financial difficulties. This will be the first time my brother, the brilliant engineer, (brilliant is a family term) has had to seek employment rather than be sought after by multiple employers. He calls me and asks, "So what is it that recruiters do again and how can they help me?" Finally, after six years of family reunions, someone finally has an interest in what I do. Actually it has only been five years since I started my own executive search firm, but I have been talking about it for at least six years. I cannot tell you all my family secrets, but I can share with you the information that I gave to him.

Opportunities. It all comes down to finding new opportunities and who has access to them. Please note that I have used the word opportunity and not the word job. Recruiters can help you find opportunities for employment, but it is up to you to get the job. Recruiters come in two flavours, those who work on retained searches and those who work on contingency searches. On retained searches clients pay the recruiters regardless if they are successful in finding the right candidate. Generally a retained search is done in a niche market for a highly specialised and highly compensated field. In contingency searches, the recruiter only gets paid if they are successful in placing the right candidate. Both types of recruiters are important and, if possible, you will want to work with both. The key thing to remember is that if they do not have an appropriate opportunity for you, all they can do is keep you in mind as new opportunities arise.

Recruiters spend a good portion of their day networking, talking with people both clients and candidates. All of these conversations have the potential to turn into an opportunity. Your goal is to be one of those candidates that the recruiter thinks of when the opportunities present themselves.

How do you do this?

- 1) Establish a relationship with two or three recruiters that you trust and are comfortable with. Share with them what you want your next position to be and what positions you are qualified for.
- 2) Keep an open mind, evaluate all opportunities presented. Be willing to interview if the recruiter believes that you are

a possible fit for the position. Many times during the interview process, the requirements will change after the manager interviews a few candidates.

- 3) Give feedback. If a recruiter does call with an inappropriate position, remember point two, listen with an open mind and if it is still of no interest, help them to understand why. For example, "It sounds like they want the person to do x and I have only done y." If it is a technical requirement perhaps a definition will help the recruiter to better understand the requirement. Be open with your referrals. If you know someone that might be a fit, pass on the email address and phone number.
- 4) Feedback after the interview is also important. Share with the recruiter all that you have learned about the company. Who you met with, what you learned about the position, etc. All of this is important information for the recruiter to evaluate the interview process. Some candidates may feel that the recruiter is going to use that information to help other candidates. This may be true to some extent but it also helps you. Ever walk out of an interview and say, "Darn, I should have told them about the xyz project?" Here is the perfect opportunity to share that information with your recruiter and it will get passed back to the client when they give their feedback to the client.
- 5) Be fair with the recruiter. He or she can only share with you what she knows and managers are not always responsive. Keep in touch with them and let them know the status of your search. If you are interviewing with other companies, keep them posted on where you are in the job process. A good recruiter will share that information with the hiring manager and, hopefully, guide the decision making process at a faster pace.

Consider recruiters to be one part of your job search.

The key is opportunities and who has them. Recruiters are a source of opportunities because we have been networking and meeting people for years.

CEO

To find out more you can email
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