



WHEN YOU'RE READY FOR A NEW JOB

What You Should Expect When Working With a Recruiter

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When you use a recruiter to help you in your job search you are actually entering into a partnership in which both of you have something at stake. I'm sure you know that recruiters are paid by the company, but that doesn't mean your interests are not important to the recruiter. If I can find you a job you are enthused about and really want, you are more likely to do very well in the job. That makes both of us look good to the company.

WHAT YOU SHOULD EXPECT FROM YOUR RECRUITER

A good recruiter is someone that can be a guide for you through the entire job search, interviewing, offer negotiation, and resignation processes, and also help with the transition into your new job. Since you probably don't change jobs very often (or at least shouldn't) having someone that deals with these processes on a daily basis can be a great resource and eliminate a lot of stress for you.

Some of the things your recruiter should do include:

1. Take time to learn about your background, skills, job and company preferences, achievements, and motivations for making a move.
2. Review your resume to make sure it effectively sells you to a potential employer.
3. Be a source and guide for what's going on in the job market.
4. Tell you about opportunities that match your criteria and describe the job and company to you BEFORE they send your resume. Your permission should ALWAYS be given before your resume is sent ANYWHERE.
5. Give you updates periodically on the progress of your job search.
6. Help you get an opportunity to interview and arrange it with the company.
7. Prepare you for the interview by giving you some background on the company, department, hiring manager, interview team, and problems they are trying to solve by filling this position.
8. Gather feedback from both you and the company after the interview and address any concerns or questions.
9. Help you negotiate an acceptable offer if both you and the company are interested in moving forward.
10. Help you prepare to resign and coach you on handling a counter offer.
11. Make sure you have all the information you need for the first day on your new job.
12. Follow up with you periodically for several months after you have started your new job to make sure it was a good fit for you.

If you are working with a recruiter that merely sends your resume to anyone they can think of without doing a presentation of your skills, you are getting short changed and should look for a new recruiter to help you.

WHAT A RECRUITER WILL EXPECT FROM YOU

As I said in the beginning, working with a recruiter is a partnership. Just as you have a level of expectation from your recruiter, the recruiter has some expectations of you as well. Every time a recruiter submits you for consideration to one of their client companies, their reputation is on the line as well. If you perform poorly in the interview, it also reflects on the recruiter. Some of the things your recruiter will expect from you include:

1. Honesty in areas such as:
 - a. Your willingness to SERIOUSLY consider a new opportunity.
 - b. Why you are looking to make a change, or why you have made job changes in the past.
 - c. Your current salary and expected salary if you change jobs.
 - d. Educational achievements.
 - e. Professional achievements.
 - f. Jobs held and actual titles

- g. Any areas of concern if background checks or drug screens are required.
 - h. Availability to interview
 - i. Other interviewing activities or pending offers.
2. A commitment to doing your homework before an interview.
 3. Showing up to scheduled interviews
 4. Following up immediately after interviews or returning phone calls in a timely manner.

A lot of work goes into finding the opportunities, setting up the interviews, and preparing you for the interviews. This service and all of the advice and coaching to help you through the different stages is free to you. That doesn't mean it doesn't have value. Proper preparation for an interview could mean the difference between an offer and a rejection. A good recruiter can help you throughout your career and can be a very valuable resource for you.

BE REALISTIC

You also need to make sure your expectations are realistic. If you have never managed anyone before, but you want a job that has you managing 5-10 people, your chances are pretty slim. Also, if you have held several jobs in a short period of time, it can be very difficult to get an employer interested in speaking with you. This becomes much easier if you have good, legitimate reasons for the job moves. Make sure you share these reasons with your recruiter.

Employers are looking for top performers with a proven and steady history of achievement and progression. They are looking for people that have improved their skills and taken on more responsibility in their roles. If you are not able to show this type of activity in your career, your search may take some time. However, if you have a very strong background and a lot of achievements that you can list, your recruiter may want to do a proactive marketing campaign to several companies to tell them about you.

The more over-exposed you are, the less a recruiter can do for you. If you have been sending your resume to every company you can think of, and/or have your resume posted in a resume and job boards, don't expect a recruiter to spend a lot of time promoting you to his client companies. Companies have HR people scouring the resume and job boards and placing ads to gather resumes. If you are all over the job market and a recruiter submits you to their client companies, a quick internet search can locate your resume and the recruiter is cut out of the loop. That is precious time that is wasted.

There is also an advantage to using a recruiter. There is a perception that a job seeker submitted through a recruiter (especially for higher level positions) is of a higher caliber than people who respond to ads or have their resume posted on the internet. It is presumed that these people have been targeted by the recruiter because they have the skills required for the job, and have been pre-screened before being submitted for consideration. That is why you will rarely see a Sr. Manager, Director, or VP's resume on these boards. They prefer to use a recruiter because it not only saves them a lot of time and hassles, but it elevates their stature in the eyes of the employer.

Make sure you have the right recruiter and then protect and respect the relationship. It will pay dividends for both you and your recruiter throughout your career.

Jeff King

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