

## Getting Recruitment Agencies to Work For You

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It is widely accepted that many people do not enjoy working with recruitment agencies when looking for employment. It is common to find the process frustrating. You can feel as though you spend a lot of time preparing applications and are not getting any responses. Or alternatively you may spend time being interviewed by consultants and never hear back from them. Or the consultants do not seem interested in your longer term goals.

The good news is that these experiences need not be yours. With these simple tips you will be better placed to get the recruitment agencies to work for you.

### What Recruitment Consultants Do

- On average a consultant will receive 50 applications per advertisement.
- They will receive 30 plus calls per week from hopeful applicants.
- At any one time a consultant is dealing with a large number of applicants.
- Each week a consultant will interview a minimum of 15 new people, lasting a minimum of one hour.
- Of those they interview they will need to check some references and write up one page of comments.

Due to the volume of applicants a single consultant deals with every week, they do not always have the time to build a relationship with you. The simple and most effective solution is for you to maintain contact with them. Contrary to what you may think, most consultants appreciate you calling them to see what new jobs have come in and informing them of your availability, etc.

### Choosing the Right Recruitment Consultants

- Ask people you know who have been registered with recruitment agencies to recommend and refer you to a specific recruitment consultant.
- Speak to someone in your current or former Human Resources Department and ask them if they have used any recruitment consultants they would recommend.
- Include in your questions: "Which recruitment consultants have you been particularly impressed with?"
- When you read the job advertisements on the internet, look to see if there is a recruitment consultant who specialises in your area of work.

### Contacting a Recruitment Consultant

It is not advisable to arrive at an agency without an appointment and ask to see a consultant. The best way to make the initial contact with a recruitment consultant is by telephone. Generally after the consultant has spoken with you they will ask you to email your résumé.

The best approach is to secure a face-to-face meeting with the consultant. You may or may not encounter difficulties, such as the 'gatekeeper' receptionist or the consultant who is too busy to answer or return your calls. If the consultant has a good reputation and you believe they really can assist you in your job search, persist in trying to meet with them. If you cannot get a meeting, apply your energy elsewhere.

If you have been referred to the consultant, when you first contact the agency, be sure to inform them of the referral.

### **Meeting the Consultant**

- Professional presentation is essential. Treat the meeting as if you were meeting an employer.
- Remember that they are seeing you because they have seen your résumé and spoken to you on the phone. They are interviewing you because they either think you could be the one for the job you have applied for, or they are considering you for something else. Either way it is positive.
- Try to relax and enjoy yourself. Most consultants are professional and friendly.
- Open communication is paramount, however only give them the information they need to assist you.
- Ask them questions about the company, the culture and how many other applicants they are putting forward.
- Even if you leave with a bad feeling, the experience will benefit you. People have a tendency to be overly critical about their own performance in interviews.

### **Maintaining Contact with Your Consultant**

- Consultants appreciate you contacting them, so be sure to do so every 3 weeks. The majority of candidates do not maintain contact, which can work in your favour. If you are the one keeping contact, you are the one in the consultant's mind.
- If you see that the agency has a position advertised which you think would be suitable and they have not called you about it, call them. Do not assume that the consultant will remember to call you about every position they have available.
- Work with a handful of agencies (no more than six to eight) and keep in regular contact with your consultant, as this will increase your market exposure significantly.