

8 Questions To Ask A Headhunter?

By Anthony Kaul, Higher Bracket

At the senior level, chances are you will interact with professional recruiters during your job search. The higher up the organizational chart a position is, the more likely a professional recruitment firm will be called in to fill the position.

As in most walks of life the quality and professionalism of recruiters varies greatly. It is vital to nurture relationships with the good ones while not tying your personal brand to the less professional end of the spectrum.

Like any relationship it is important to realize that there are two participants. As the recruiter is learning about you, you need to be asking the right questions and learning about the recruiter to decide if this is someone who is going to help you build your career. So what questions do you need to ask? Here is a short list of things you need to know about your new recruiter "friend"

1. Who may I ask is calling?

Find out who you are dealing with. It is imperative to get full contact details out of your recruiter, find out which company they work for and how long they have been there.

2. How did you hear about me?

If they are contacting you, find out who referred you, or how they got your name. If it is from an old resume they had on file, their data will not be up to date and if it is a referral, the name of the person who referred you will give you a big heads up about what preconceived notions the recruiter has about you.

3. Are they the only recruitment firm working on this search or are there other firms sourcing for the position as well?

This question is a polite way of asking if they are retained for this search or if they are acting on a contingency basis. There are pros and cons of each, you will find that contingency recruiters may have a wider field and they may have other positions that they can put you on to. Retained on the other hand is specifically focused on this position. If you work in a specific industry or with very specialized skills, you will want to nurture a relationship with the recruitment professionals in your industry that work on a retained basis.

4. Have you personally placed people with this firm before?

The way they answer this question will often tell you if they are in a position to really put you forward for this position. Watch out for pauses, or redirections here. If they are a contingency recruiter and they have never placed anyone for this firm, then they may not have a relationship with the hiring manager or HR department and this may limit their ability to help you.

5. Why are they calling?

It is important to find out the compelling aspects of your resume or skill set that made the recruiter call. This will tell you what you need to expand on and focus on throughout the recruitment process.

6. Can you please send me the job advert or job description?

You may want to add to this question - "I understand that you cannot at this stage reveal the name of the employer, but ... can you send me the job advert or job description with their name removed?" This is vital... for two reasons. Firstly it will give you vital information about the job that you did not ask about during the call. Second, this intelligence will often allow you to use google to search out who else is posting the job and/or whom the employer might be.

7. What are you going to do with my resume?

When you send in your current resume, remember to ask if they are going to use that resume for anything other than this search.

8. Can you briefly describe the company culture?

Again if there are big pauses here or if they can't answer this question then you can be fairly confident that they do not have a well established relationship with the decision makers.

There are countless things to ask when assessing a recruiter, but the above will help you figure out if this is someone who you want representing you to potential new opportunities.

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