

# Inside Leadership

**Its not your recruiter's role, to get you a job, they must do much more than that.**

Michael O'Leary of **HRM Recruitment Group** talks about managing your recruiter relationships effectively to achieve longer term career goals.

There are two points to make clear at the beginning of this article.

The first is that the point of your relationship with a recruiter is that it provides a means to an end. Your end, not the recruiter's end. Candidates frequently voice concern about their experience with recruitment firms, which is often due to a misunderstanding of the recruiter's role. Sometimes however, it is to do with poor service and a total lack of respect shown to the candidate, which is unacceptable at all times.

The second point to make, and there should be no ambiguity about this, a recruiter's role is NOT to get you a job. The role of a recruiter is expressly to identify and recruit the very best candidate

they can, to meet the specific vacancy needs of their client. The client pays their bill and they are bound to ensure that the client gets the very best solution to their requirement, not the candidate whom the recruiter might favour or feels most needs the job.

Whatever your current work status, you are virtually guaranteed that you will change job at some point in the next three years. Whether we recognise it or not, we are all candidates, it's just that some of us just don't have our CV written yet. That doesn't necessarily mean we are unhappy in our current jobs, but if you are serious about managing your career, then some basis of external benchmarking is essential to ensure you are on the right career path.

There are three categories of job hunters that a recruiter generally interacts with;

1. Candidates seeking work immediately,
2. Candidates seeking a change to a better position and
3. Candidates simply keeping in touch with the market.

If you are the first of these, clearly your priority is to get a job. Being out of work or facing the threat of this, is one of the most harrowing set of circumstances a person faces at any point in their lives. A lack of income threatens our security and for many being out of work affects their self esteem. Candidates in the second of these categories are employed but generally unhappy about some key aspect to their current positions. While not under



immediate pressure to move jobs, these professionals have mentally made the decision to find a new role, but will sensibly wait for the right opportunity to arise.

The third group of candidates are the “career managers”. Professionals who are focused in their current roles and happy to move up within their own organisations should the opportunity arise. But these candidates also know, that by managing a small network of contacts, they can keep a clear eye on their particular professional market and have external access to the next level in their careers should they decide to move.

Any piece of related research will tell you, that this third group are the candidates most likely; to secure the position they want, to receive the highest compensation levels and to rarely, if ever, spend a protracted period out of work. The difference between this group and the previous two is that they understand a relationship with a recruiter is about broader recruitment support to their longer term career goals.

The right recruiter puts you in touch with the right opportunity. Following this you make the decision whether or not to move ahead with that opportunity. How effective this process works, is influenced by two factors, how well set up the recruiter is to support your introduction to the opportunity and how closely you follow the five steps below to making the most out of your relationship with a recruiter.

By “set up to support” I mean how established the recruiter is, the volume of assignments they handle in that segment annually (100-120 is a good average), how well they know their market and how well they know you. On that last point, if your recruiter does not ask to meet with you, drop them. If you can not make time to meet with the recruiter, they should drop you. The notion that something as life impacting as job change can be done purely by telephone is a fallacy. The recruiter can not even begin to live up to their client commitments if they are not evaluating their candidates through a thorough interview, at the very least. Nor can they fully represent your potential if they have not conducted a personal meeting to evaluate you and your interests.

So what do the “career managers” do differently to fully leverage the potential value of their relationships with a recruiter?

1. They choose their recruiters very carefully and always, without exception, based on a referral or insight from their peer group. They never broadcast their CV and keep their contacts down to two or three at a time.
2. They ring first and introduce themselves before sending in their CV. They meet the recruiter to make sure the recruiter has a personal feel for the type of opportunity that would be of interest to them. At the same time, they make a decision about the value that recruiter can bring to their longer term career.
3. They build rapport with the recruiter and see the relationship

as being about information sharing. They solicit feedback from the consultant on several aspects to their application. The quality of this feedback will often determine whether they will continue with the relationship.

4. Over time they build their trust in the consultant and use the relationship to discreetly evaluate opportunities that arise through other channels. Often they will call to discuss related issues, hiring patterns, compensation rates etc.
5. They make a point of talking every quarter with their contact and will generally update their CV at least once a year. They know that recruiter in question may not provide access to the next opportunity, but may do to the one after that. They see the communication as being about a long term relationship not just the current transaction.

Securing the roles you want at the compensation you require, means you have to consistently take care of your career. While the recruiter’s role is not to get you a job, relationships with the right recruiter can really facilitate your personal career advancement. All good relationships are a two way street. Keep visible with that small network of recruiters that you choose and be choosy about who’s in your recruiter network.

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