

HOW TO USE A RECRUITMENT FIRM

Looking for a Job is a Job in itself! Where do I start?

Even for the most able of job seeker, the job search can feel like a very lonely process. You can often find yourself in a whirlwind of preparing and sending resumes, writing cover letters, searching for jobs, participating in telephone interviews, responding to selection criteria, attending competency based interviews, completing psychometric assessment, juggling interviews, networking at every opportunity while waiting for feedback, which can makes it hard to focus and find that job you want!

You do all this in order to the land the job of your dreams. But you don't have to do it on your own. If you choose, you can have your very own personal helper/coach (at least of sorts). This person is a recruitment consultant. Using the right consultant can help you manage and improve the results of your job search.

In a yellow pages search there are over hundreds Recruitment/Personnel Consultancies and career advisory companies to choose from alone in New Zealand – where to start!?!?

Recruitment firms can certainly support your job search and will provide results that you may not achieve on your own.

Why use recruitment companies? What are the advantages? How to effectively work with recruitment consultants.

1 - The Power of Contact and their knowledge of the market

As a part of his or her job, the successful consultant has developed relationships within many different companies. Through these relationships and time spent on site and on developing the relationship the recruiter will have gained an in-depth understanding of what the employer is looking for. This is knowledge that can be passed on to you "warts and all" as you prepare for interviews.

Consultants also have access to people that they have placed in other positions. From these people, the consultant can gain an accurate picture of the work environment, culture and opportunities.

A good consultant may have a built their career around working within the recruitment industry for many years gaining a strong reputation in the market with clients and candidates alike – knowledge such as this is invaluable to a job seeker.

2 - For Support and Advisory

While the average person may go on 6 job searches in a lifetime, the experienced recruiter has been involved with many more! What this means is that they have tremendous experience in finding the right job as they have been exposed to many different company environments and job opportunities. They are an excellent source of information for your job search questions.

In addition, an effective consultant often gives tips on items such as improving resumes and interviewing preparation, techniques and negotiation.

At Wholeoranges we support our candidates through the whole recruitment process – from advice on making your CV stand out, to preparation and coaching for the client interview. This is not always the case so remember to ask your consultant for support if you need it!

3 - The hidden Job issue

Sometimes the best job opportunities are not advertised. The needs of the employer may be too specialised to be described, it could be sensitive, or the employer may not have time to waste in sorting through hundreds of resumes that could come flooding in by placing an ad in the paper or on the Internet.

In these cases the employer must rely on other sources to obtain the right person for the job. These sources often include trusted and highly experienced recruitment consultants.

4 - No Cost Involved

Most recruitment firms are paid for their services by the employer on a fee for service, project or contract basis.

Unless you decide to utilise the additional specialist career coaching or CV services to support your search process, considering all the advantages mentioned above coupled with the lack of financial outlay, using a recruitment firm is something any serious job seeker should consider as part of their job search.

How to develop a collaborative working partnership. Please come prepared!

The successful job seeker does his/her homework. Before you meet with a recruitment consultant give serious thought to what you require in a new position and what types of companies interest you (industry/size/position/location) and more importantly think about the types of companies that would really value your expertise – do your homework – research!

Have your CV up to date and completed prior to meeting with your consultant and ensure the following is included.

- If applying for a specific role where possible DO include a Cover Letter – this will make you stand out from the rest! Don't use a generic one; make sure you change it for each role you are going for
- Read the Advert carefully and identify the key competencies, skills, expertise and attitude the company is looking for
- Highlight the key skills that you have expertise in and where you feel you could add value to the position
- Keep it concise, free of typos, and grammatically correct!
- Let them know why you would like this position and why you would like to work for them
- Let them know you welcome the opportunity of meeting them to discuss your interest further
- Keep all Cover Letters and applications so you can review your efforts and keep tabs of your successes

Preparing for a Telephone Interview – How to effectively brand yourself

Generally after the consultant has received applications they will either contact you by email with a response on your application and in some cases if selected at the first stage will conduct a telephone interview (phone screen).

If you are called by a consultant for a telephone interview you must be fully prepared. If you're not ask them if you can call them back when you have the following ready –

- 1 - A copy of the job advert you applied for so you know which ONE to talk about
- 2 - A copy of your resume and cover letter
- 3 - Details of the consultant or recruitment firm so you are aware who you are talking too!

- During the conversation you will be asked why you have applied for the position, what value you feel you can bring, be asked to talk through your CV clearly explaining reasons for leaving and your core skills
- Remember your job is to highlight your expertise and display knowledge and passion about the position advertised
- Ask questions, show enthusiasm and clearly outline where you see your key differences are. Take your time, speak clearly and be courteous
- Know the core competencies (skills) of the position you are applying for and highlight these in your call
- Let them know the reason you are leaving your position and state openly and honestly about reasons for previous positions
- At the end of the call do ask them for timeframes on when they feel they will be in a position to make a decision on a shortlist for interview
- Let them know you would welcome the opportunity of meeting them!
- If invited to attend at interview ensure you ask them what you should bring – do bring along a copy of your CV, copies of any qualifications, copies of written references, and copies of any psychometric or technical testing you have participated in recently. You should always bring ID (passport or licence).
- Ensure you practise and prepare for relevant competency based behavioural questions

Interview Preparation with a Consultant

You have been selected to meet with a Consultant. What should you expect? Come prepared to talk about yourself!

- Bring your resume, cover letter, copy of the job position to this meeting
- In addition bring along your ID, copies of any references or relevant qualifications (best to email prior)
- Think about your key skill set and the skills you feel would be of value for the position you have applied for
- Know your strengths, weaknesses and what you are motivated by
- You will normally be asked to participate in a competency based interview where the consultant will be asking you specific questions around your skill set e.g. tell me about a time when you....., or give me an example when ... (it is critical that you clearly describe a specific situation.)
- In your response outline the *specific actions* you took and *focus on the outcome* - Just remember this 3 point rule of thumb 1 - tell a story, 2 - make it interesting & 3 - show passion - this will help you not just with the consultant but on client interviews.
- **SITUATION, TASKS, ACTION AND RESULT!**
- Typically most companies will ask for you to give examples relating to customers, teamwork or communication. Do ensure you do your homework and preparation for these.

Examples of Competency Based Questions

- **Leadership** - Give an example where your leadership strength made a considerable impact or key difference in your position/company
- **Teamwork** - Tell me about a time when there was conflict in your team and what steps you put in place to resolve this
- **Customer Service** - Describe a specific time when you managed a challenging issue for customer and when you went the extra mile to resolve the issue
- **Sales Development** - Give me a specific example of a client where due to your persistence and negotiation skills you successfully won a new business
- **Financial Acumen** - Provide a clear example where due to your financial ability and eye for detail you identified an area that required changing that resulted in a considerable growth or change for the business

Validation - Don't forget to provide details for referees

- Consultants as part of their validation process will need to take verbal references with your previous employers. They must be people you directly reported to and not team members.
- You will need to ensure that you give them all your information so that they have all the relevant documentation to support your application and you will be ready to act when the consultant presents a good opportunity.
- You may be asked to complete assessments – be prepared and find out how long you will be expected and if you will be required to complete assessments. You can ask for copies of these and ask for feedback.

Clearly communicate your Career Aspirations to the consultant. This includes items such as type and size of the industry, culture, location, position title, salary, interest in relocation, benefits, advancement opportunities and anything else that is important to you in your job search. You being upfront will help the consultant to match you with opportunities that you would genuinely be interested in.

In addition, be honest about your expectations of the consultant. Managing the expectations of a candidate can be difficult so please remember they are not magicians and won't always have what you are looking for. It is much better to look at this as a joint partnership where you can combine your knowledge – you with your industry knowledge and them with their recruitment knowledge to target companies of interest.

Be open with your skills or accomplishments. The recruiter is representing you to prospective employers and you want him to represent your true ability and experience. If there have been issues within any of your roles it is far better to be open and honest with your consultant so they can advise you how to handle this in interview.

Be Professional and Dress for Success. Don't save your good behaviour for the job interview! Show the consultant that you are a talented and committed professional who is bound for success. Your interaction with the consultant is key as their role is to identify on behalf of the client the right fit for a role, so the way you come across will be critical in the selection process. This is a 2 way street so do ensure you get all the information you require on a role you are interested in so you can make an informed decision on the suitability of the role and the company.

What can you expect from your Recruiter? An effective consultant should be able to support you in your search through their networks, contacts and advice. They should ideally be your advisor throughout the recruitment experience giving you support, feedback and constructive criticism throughout the process. They should also give you a good feel for a company and culture, who will be interviewing you and the type of interview you will be attending (assessments included). They are acting on your behalf and will also act as the go between in negotiation and contacts.

Remember for an effective relationship with your recruiter think partnership

To sum it all up, a recruiter can be an excellent tool to add to your job search arsenal. They offer a wealth of expertise, contacts, knowledge and guidance in a process that may sometimes seem overwhelming.

If you decide to D.I.Y., here are some branding and networking ideas to help you

- Network Associations work – join one in your industry – read industry publications. Brand yourself through writing articles in industry publications – get noticed!
- Talk to family, friends. Talk to previous colleagues or Managers
- Make a list of all the people you know who have jobs in your line of work then sit down and call each one, suggesting that you meet for a coffee. Ask for information - what is going on within the industry - would you have any suggestions on who I can talk to about what might be coming up in the future – just ask! Don't ask for a job – keep it light.
- Contact business people in articles of interest that you see in the Herald or other business publications. Read local papers & notice boards
- Helpful Job sites may include – LinkedIn, Facebook, Seek, Trade Me
- If you belong to clubs or associations network for opportunities
- Keep a note of industry trends and look for companies of growth
- Think nationwide – think globally
- Ask yourself “who would value my skill-set”? “What value could I bring to this organisation”?

Use your smart phone - here are some easy to use apps that will give you a career boost on the job front

To find a job use **mycareer, free** – this app brings the newspapers job section right to your fingertips, alerting you to leads and allowing you to send your resume to prospective employers. Just scored a promotion? The nifty Pay Rise Calculator can assess your upped income in terms of what it means for tax and super.

Use **Simply hired, free** – this app can be integrated with your social networks, like LinkedIn, to search for openings at your contacts' companies. It also pulls data from your profile, like your location and past workplaces, to find jobs that are better suited to your interests and skill set.

Want to create an attention grabbing resume? Try **Pocket resume**. This app gets you to fill out your information, make it look great, then converts it to PDF or RTF.

Try **interview buzz pro**, this is a pocket survival tool for job interviews. Whether you are a financial analyst or fashion designer, this app prepares you for different scenarios with over 600 commonly-asked interview questions and model answers, plus tips on etiquette and dressing to impress.

Monster's app **BeKnown**, which is free – it let's you set up a separate profile for professional networking on Facebook. You can view job opportunities, get headhunted and connect with friends. Don't worry about your piccies as it keeps your private and work lives separate.