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## **The Financial Post**

***By Laura Fowlie***

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### **Finding a recruiter you feel comfortable with is as important as networking and research in landing a job**

A recruiter can be your best friend during a job search. Yet many job hunters do not understand the work recruiters do or the relationship they should be forging them. Developing a good rapport with a select few search people you can trust is an important part of any job hunt, along with networking and doing your own research, of course.

But never think a recruiter is working to find you a job. "You want to be able to call your recruiter regularly - and expect a call back even if they don't have a job for you" says Frank Bruni president of Career Lab Inc. (formerly Independent Management Group Inc.), a Toronto-based search firm that fills sales and marketing positions. "But don't forget who is the paying the bills. The recruiter is working for the hiring company not the potential candidate". " What it comes down to is that the recruiter is not working to find you a job for you. What he or she can do to suggest you for a job they've been

hired to fill."

Another important thing to remember is how recruiters are paid - and it's a question worth asking. Few firms operate on flat fee. More commonly, they collect a percentage of the candidate's first year's salary, anywhere from 20% to 35%, depending on the job level and the industry.

The percentage fee practice is contentious, however, mainly because of some of the high profile high ticket matches that have recently soured in the U.S. Michael Ovitz's nasty departure from his multi million dollar employment deal at Walt Disney Co. is an example of how quickly people can quit after the recruiter has already been paid a hefty fee to find them. In addition, many employers are questioning the validity of bringing recruiters into salary negotiations if a more generous offer to the candidate means the recruiter will collect more as well.

Choosing the right search firm starts with identifying the type of job you are looking for, then asking people in your chosen field the names of headhunters they have dealt with. Recruiters are typically specialists who stick to particular industries, disciplines and job levels, so if you can get a good reference from someone in your field chances are that search firm is still filling those types of jobs.

There are also several lists of firms to check for in the library, including the *Canadian Directory of Search Firms* (MediaCorp Canada) and the *Directory of Recruiters* (Continental Records Ltd). Choose a few firms to call. Smaller outfits typically offer better service to their candidates, including help with resumes, closer personal contact and attention to the "fit factor" of placing the right candidate in the right job.

Larger firms will often have more job vacancies available but may be less concerned about a candidate's long-term prospects than about getting the job done. A good recruiter will do a brief phone interview, then arrange a face-to-face meeting for a general interview, or specific interview if they have immediate opening you might be suited for. At this stage, recruiters recommend you evaluate them as much as they do you. If you leave your resume behind a headhunter is not obliged to call you before it is sent out en masse, a process typically described as "body shopping."

To keep things confidential and under control, leave your résumé only with someone you feel you can trust, and agree it will only be sent out with your approval. In addition inform any headhunter with whom you plan to work you plan may in contact with other search firms.

Employers often assign a couple of recruiters to fill a job, so your résumé could be forwarded from both sources. Since a recruiter

contracts with the hiring company to "own" a candidate for up to a year after initial introduction, you must chose who will collect the fee if you are hired.

Above all, be as professional and as courteous to the recruiter you choose to work with, as you would be with a potential employer.

Always return their calls promptly, even if you are already working and are not interested in moving. Five to 10 years down the road, you may want to make contact with that recruiter again. Communicate your skills and your goals openly and honestly, and never renege on a deal once you've agreed to it.

Recruiters put their reputation on the line each time they send you for a for job interview.

" It amazes me how many people treat their recruiter poorly, but still expect results," says Bruni. "The golden rule really applies here. Give what you would expect to get back."

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