



## **Why Recruiters Are Worth It!**

“When I need a heart bypass, rest assured I won’t select my surgeon based on what he charges.” That’s what an ailing executive recently said when his doctor informed him of his arterial blockage problems.

Why then are corporate executives so tightfisted when dealing with what is so commonly considered the “lifeblood” of their companies’...top-talent? Companies think very little about paying the high fees charged by outside accounting and legal firms...or even the gaggle of consultants who promise cost-cutting and streamlining miracles in other areas. Yet, when faced with brain drains, talent deficiencies, or the need to replace one employee with another, thoughts all too often turn to parsimony.

So why are recruiters worth what they charge? Just a few of the often unspoken reasons follow below:

### **Expertise**

Nobody knows the employment marketplace better than a professional recruiter...nobody! In-house human resources, no matter how effective (or Internet-savvy), views the marketplace through an imperfect prism, and tunnel vision is a frequent occupational hazard.

### **Cast A Wider Net**

A professional fisherman will always have a greater selection than a weekend angler. Recruiters are in the marketplace day-in and day-out. They know the unfished coves, reefs, and inlets, including the unlisted addresses inaccessible to company insiders. Professional recruiters have a detailed roadmap to the hidden talent sources that cannot be accessed through newspaper ads, alumni associations, applicant databases, or the Internet.

### **SearchPath of Chicago, Inc.**

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## **Cost**

There is a misconception among employers that the cost of a hire equals the cost of the ad or posting run to attract the person hired. Nothing could be further from the truth. Just add up the following and you'll soon see just how cost effective an outside recruiter can be:

- Salaries and benefits of the in-house hiring staff, plus those of the line managers involved in the hiring activity – people not productive in their normal job pursuits because they're out recruiting.
- Travel, lodging, and entertainment expenses of in-house personnel.
- Source development costs.
- Overhead expenses including, but not limited to, telephone, office space, postage, PR literature, applicant database maintenance, website costs, reference checking, and clerical costs to correspond with the hundreds of qualified respondents and more.

## **Reality**

Contrary to what some believe, recruiters do not try to fit square pegs into round holes. A recruiter's stock-in-trade is his or her integrity and reputation for finding someone better than a company could find on its own. The candidate selection process is not, as some believe, a matter of romping through the file cabinets or vetting an opening among others in the recruiter's network. For a mid-to senior-level executive, the average recruiter may develop a "long list" of a hundred or more possibilities. Each candidate must be called and evaluated against the position's specifications, including screening for personality "fit" with the company and the people with whom the candidate will ultimately work. Once the list is winnowed down to the "short list", an even more intensive interviewing process is commenced to narrow the search to a panel of finalists for review by the client. It is highly unlikely that a professional recruiter will plow new ground to fill your opening. Recruiters deal within spheres of influence relevant to your needs. Because they want to do business with you again and again, outside recruiters are looking for the "truly exceptional" rather than someone who is "just satisfactory."

## **Confidentiality**

Working with an outside recruiter can help keep your search confidential. Advertising or otherwise publicly proclaiming an opening, (aside from its high cost and demonstrated ineffectiveness for sensitive senior level openings), often creates anxiety and apprehension among the company's current employees.

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People often wonder why they aren't being considered for the position, or worry about transition challenges. Furthermore, advertising can alert competitors to a current weakness or void in an organization.

## **Speed**

Using a search professional who is continually tapped into the talent market is faster than one having to start the process from scratch. For every day that a key opening goes unfilled, a company's other employees must grudgingly do double duty. Productivity and efficiency are reduced. This is not to mention the profit opportunities or competitive advantages lost because a position remains unfilled or is performed on a part-time basis by others less qualified.

## **Post-Hire Downtime**

Not only is speed an essential part of the professional recruiter's job, the ability to locate a person who can immediately "hit the ground running" with a minimum of "ramp-up time" is also desirable. The learning curve is greater for hires selected through less effective resources; potentially requiring several months of expensive training and orientation to bring up to par.

## **Unbiased Third-Party Input**

A professional recruiter's primary function is not to fill a slot, but to provide the right candidate to solve a problem. Professional recruiters are often fast to recognize misconceptions about salary requirements, job qualifications, or the possibility that the hiring solution might lie in areas outside the target industry... factors an internal recruiter might either be unaware of or politically disinclined to reveal.

## **Negotiation**

Master negotiator Herb Cohen once said, "Negotiation is the analysis of information, time, and power to affect behavior...the meeting of needs (yours and others') to make things happen the way you want them to." As a buffer and informed intermediary, the professional recruiter is better able to blend the needs and wants of both parties.

Professional recruiters help companies arrive at a mutually beneficial arrangement without the polarizing roadblocks which all too frequently materialize in face-to-face dealings, especially in today's "show me the money" economy.

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## **Prioritizing Company Resources**

It is often perplexing to see how a company squanders revenue on non-productive perks while penny-pinching on what is its lifeblood...talent acquisition. Club memberships and the like may be fine, but no one really believes that these expenditures contribute to a company's profit margin. On the other hand, one well-placed employee can send a company's profits skyrocketing. The fee for hiring talented individuals pales in significance when compared to the contributions he or she can make to the bottom line.

The next time you think a recruiter's fees are too high, put them in the proper perspective before seeking out that blue light special or spinning your wheels trying to fill vital openings with less effective (but not necessarily less expensive) pedestrian methods. Enlightened executives learned long ago that the fee paid to a recruiter is a shrewd strategic investment, not an extraneous expense.

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