

Tips for Selecting an External Recruiter by Ross Clennett

When you need external help to fill a vacancy, whether temp or perm, how do you make a choice between all the different recruiters jostling for your business? It's tough to make the right choice when faced with a blanket of white noise that has only minor variations on; *'We're a boutique, specialist recruiter with a focus on high quality client and candidate service'*.

Here are my top nine tips for selecting the right recruiter for you.

- 1) **Is a specialist:** evidence of delivering great candidates in recruiting for roles that are similar to your vacancy is an indication that they can access appropriate candidates quickly.
- 2) **Asks great questions:** anyone can take a job brief. A skilled recruiter will ask you probing, relevant and thoughtful questions about the vacancy, your selection criteria and your organisation's operations and culture.
- 3) **Will respectfully challenge you:** a recruiter who is prepared to professionally question some of your opinions or requirements with respect to; your selection criteria, desired remuneration or skills mix, is most likely to be a recruiter who is prepared, when necessary, to be unpopular in order to deliver the best outcome for all concerned.
- 4) **Utilises a wide variety of sourcing strategies:** does this recruiter just 'post-and-pray' on job boards and give their database a perfunctory search or will they use other sourcing techniques to access candidates other recruiters cannot?
- 5) **Conducts thorough evidence-based interviews:** a recruiter who uses evidence-based interview techniques can provide facts, rather than opinions about how a short-listed candidate's skills, competencies and motivation closely match the key selection criteria for your vacancy.
- 6) **Undertakes basic background checks:** depending upon which research you believe, between 20% and 40% of candidates have resumes that contain a significant inaccuracy or omission. I recommend you enquire as to exactly what action the recruiter undertakes to verify the accuracy of information provided by a candidate before that candidate is referred to you.
- 7) **Will be straight with you:** support the recruiter who is brave enough and considerate enough to tell you the truth. When a recruiter tells you they do not have a candidate that fits, they are demonstrating how much they value the relationship and no matter how tempting it might be they are keen to avoid wasting you and their candidates time.
- 8) **Is prepared to invest time in building a relationship:** how has the recruiter built their key client relationships in the past? What else of value has the recruiter provided to other clients, beyond candidates? It's not worth investing your time with a recruiter unless they can demonstrate they have done 'the hard yards' in building relationships with other clients.
- 9) **Is a RCSA member:** the Recruitment & Consulting Services Association (Aus & NZ) is the recruitment agencies' representative body whose Code of Professional Conduct provides the guiding principles of ethical and legal behaviour that govern all members in their business dealings with candidates, clients and each other.

How do you find out all this information? Simply construct a recruiter interview template that you can use to gather the necessary facts so you can compare one recruiter to another, in order to make an informed choice.

And finally I would recommend you give a recruiter a chance to be heard on their own merits; just because they work for a company you don't know doesn't mean

they aren't any good and conversely just because they work for a household name recruiter is no guarantee of quality.

Taking the steps necessary to find the right recruiter for you and your organisation is a valuable investment of your time, an investment worth making.

Ross Clennett runs Australia's first professional development website for recruitment company owners and managers. He is also a popular speaker, trainer, writer and coach for recruitment agencies and corporate recruiters. Ross's expertise covers recruitment trends, recruitment skills, the recruitment industry and executive coaching. For more information on Ross's services please visit www.rossclennett.com or email ross@rossclennett.com