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THINGS YOU MUST CHECK BEFORE APPOINTING A RECRUITMENT FIRM

1. How long has the agency been established?

Start-up agencies need to begin somewhere of course. However do you want them to cut their teeth on YOUR vacancy? If you need a position filled quickly, they may not yet have the breadth of contacts needed.

2. What proven, recent experience in filling your type of vacancies do they have?

No agencies cover all sectors. Establish what their specialties are, maybe you'll use two or more recruitment firms to fill a diverse number of opportunities.

3. What guarantees and/or financial rebates do they offer?

Some recruitment businesses offer a finder's fee only, others a free replacement of between a month and several years. Others offer rebates if things go 'wrong'; or a combination of the above. Just ensure that you know what's on offer.

4. Will they actually MEET the people presented to you?

Now in certain situations, this is not always possible (often due to geography) but for 80% of the time, I suggest that if a recruiter intends doing the job 'properly' it is crucial that they actually sit in-front of the candidate prior to the client meeting them. Skype is an acceptable alternative at a push.

5. Who will really handle your search assignment?

Just because a senior member of the agency team discusses the role with you does NOT mean that they will actually WORK on it. Find out who will do the resourcing, initial conversations & first interviews. Is it the same person you have been talking with? Splitting elements of the search assignment is perfectly acceptable; but establish the credentials of each person who will work on YOUR vacancy.

6. Do you 'click'?

I think that it is important that you 'get on' with your recruiter of choice. If you rub each other up the wrong way, it does not bode well. Work with someone who is on the same wavelength as you are.



7. Which of your competitors are they already working with?

This question is rarely asked. If the recruitment firm already works with your competition, you might find that it severely compromises their search activity. For example they won't contact employees of your competitors if they are already the agencies clients.

8. Are the fees you have agreed enough to inspire them to work on your campaign?

Whilst you may pat yourself on the back on having done a great job of negotiating your fee down; ask yourself if you have driven it down so far (often with a more junior member of the recruitment firm staff) that you have taken away all incentive for them to commit genuine resources to finding outstanding candidates for you rather than carrying out a very basic database search, just 'in case'. Agencies will naturally work harder to fill vacancies with higher fees. Wouldn't you? Don't bargain too hard otherwise you won't fill your vacancy! You DO want it filled after all don't you?

9. What are their conversion/success ratios?

It is important to know what percentage of 'your type' of vacancies your agency fills. If it's only 1 in ten, then I suggest that you 'move on' however if it's 1 in 4 or better then you may have found the right agency. The UK average is 1 in 4. Why no better? Simply that clients change their minds, fill positions internally (how DARE they!) or the recruiters don't have the resources to find suitable candidates. Additionally, some recruiters accept vacancies to fill that are unrealistic; the salary is too low or the criteria unrealistic. Ask what their interview to placement ratio is? If their clients only recruit approx. 1 in 10, then I'd suggest they either throw too much 'mud against the wall' or they simply don't understand what their clients need! 1 in 3 or 4 is the perfect ratio.

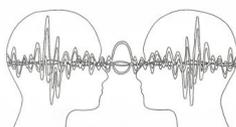


10. What resources do they use to source suitable candidates on your behalf?

Databases are never up to date. How can any organisation possibly keep tabs on the thousands of people they have registered? Do they simply advertise on the same websites as everyone else or have they invested in CV databases, carry out proactive calls, have a specialist forum on LinkedIn, attend category specific networking meetings, have articles or books published and email potential referrals for recommendations?

11. Do they guess each candidate's personality or do they use psychometric testing?

A best guess is dangerous. Serious recruiters use one of approx. 6 profiling tools to establish a potential employee's personality type, how they perform under pressure and what their key traits are?





12. Do they test skills?

With so many different software packages available how does your recruitment firm assess their candidate's skills? Can they spell, are they numerate? How fast and accurate are their typing & data entry skills? Do they REALLY know Sage?

13. Can they send you a synopsis of your needs and vacancy requirements?

Has the recruitment agency REALLY listened and understood your needs? Double check.

14. How accessible will your recruiter be?

Can you get hold of them on a Friday afternoon when you want to make an offer or are they playing golf? (again)



To discuss YOUR vacancies with a recruitment firm who fulfill these criteria contact:

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