



WORKING WITH EXECUTIVE SEARCH FIRMS

Executive search firms are hired by companies to find candidates for open positions. They can also be known as recruiters, headhunters or third-party staffing firms. There are several benefits to working with a search firm. You stand out from the applicant pool when presented to an organization because you have been pre-screened as a viable candidate. A recruiter knows about jobs that may not be advertised to the general public. Also, recruiters are buffers and information channels between you and the hiring organization because they have relationships with key hiring personnel.

Search firms can be valuable resources for your job search. They may offer services such as job listing newsletters or networking events/fairs with employers. The firm will also send your application materials to hiring organizations for you. In addition, recruiters may provide suggestions for improving your resume as well as other tips for effective job searching.

General Tips

- Contingency firms (paid when a candidate is hired) are used mostly to find candidates for junior and midlevel positions while retainer firms (paid monthly retainer by client organization) conduct searches for more senior or executive-level jobs.
- Search firms generally charge the employers, not the candidate. *If a firm asks you to pay to be placed, read the fine print in the agreement to understand the entire process and what specifically they will do for you.*
- Understand what distinguishes an effective and reputable recruiter from one that is only in the business to close deals and earn money quickly. You want to work with recruiters who are willing to take the time to build relationships, establish credibility and find the right candidate.
- Good recruiters should be knowledgeable about their clients, the position for which you are interviewing and what the process will entail. He or she should effectively coach you and help you determine initially if you want to pursue the opportunity.

Process

- Once you submit your resume, the recruiter may call you for an initial screening to determine your suitability (or have an actual interview). Your resume will then go into a database to be searched when an opportunity arises. The recruiter will either contact you to see if you want him or her to present you to the organization or instruct you to apply.
- You will only become a candidate for a position after the search firm has determined your suitability for the job and after you have expressed interest in it. A search firm should not submit your name to the employer without your permission.
- The search firm should maintain frequent and timely communication with you during a search for a client. Also, they should give you a complete explanation as to why you may not be the ideal candidate for a search.
- You should never feel pressured by the search firm to make a decision on a job offer.
- Search firms may also help coach you through salary negotiations.
- Stay in touch with recruiters periodically if you want to continue working together. They may not continue cultivating a relationship with you after a search (unless you have specialized skills or experiences).

Questions to consider

- Ask the recruiter questions about his or her history in the industry and current business – e.g. what kind of clients they have, what kind of positions does he or she usually recruit for – so that you can determine the recruiter's level of integrity, respectability in the industry and willingness to act in everyone's best interest.

- A good recruiter will determine if you are the right candidate by asking you many questions. They will be conscientious about focusing only on qualified candidates for his or her client. A recruiter's reputation is based on quality of candidates placed rather than quantity.

Resumes

- Use chronological resumes since they are the easiest for busy recruiters to read.
- As in any resume include quantifiable accomplishments such as money saved and other percentages and numerical values. This will help recruiters easily see you as a viable candidate and thus as a means to a commission.
- Fill your resume with keywords used in your industry and in the kinds of job descriptions for which you are aiming. Recruiters scan resumes for keywords or place them in a database which sorts resumes in the same manner.
- Follow proper etiquette when contacting search firms and send your resume according to their preferred means (usually via email or an online application form).

Cover Letters

- Although resumes tend to be more important to recruiters than cover letters, if your resume indicates you are a qualified candidate, your cover letter will be seen eventually. Since it is secondary however, be sure that all key information is in both your resume and cover letter.
- Recruiter cover letters differ from conventional cover letters because they tend to provide factual information about what you are looking for rather than tell your "story". Some firms indicate what information they'd like from you. You may need to include:
 - Reasons for leaving
 - Positions/industries/locations of interest
 - Salary history
- Keep letters short, particularly if you are emailing the letter, but still try to provide the information they'd like. Do not rehash your resume or get into a lengthy discussion of your background and goals.
- However, you may want to include brief remarks or bullets on your accomplishments and key selling points.
- As with resumes, include keywords in your letter since some do get placed into keyword-searchable databases.
- Send your cover letter in the body of an email to a recruiter, not as an attachment.

Sample List of Educational Recruiting Firms

Please note that CSO does not endorse one firm over another. This list is just a sample of various firms available to you.

Educational Resources Group - www.ergteach.com - Independent school faculty placement nationwide

Educational Placement Service - www.educatorjobs.com - jobs for teachers in Colorado, Illinois, Missouri and surrounding states

CalWest Educators Placement - www.calwesteducators.com - specializes in the placement of qualified teachers and administrators in independent, private, and charter schools throughout California and other western states. In addition, Cal/West helps schools find qualified people for a variety of specialty positions such as admissions directors, college counselors, development directors, business managers, and many other staff positions.

Carney, Sandoe & Associates - www.csa-teach.com/Default.asp?bhfv=7&bhfx=7,0,0,0&bhqs=1 - recruitment, search and strategic consulting services for independent schools worldwide; specializing in recruiting teachers and administrators.

Commongood Careers - www.cgcareers.org - Commongood Careers is dedicated to helping today's most effective social entrepreneurs hire the best talent. Founded by nonprofit professionals, Commongood Careers offers personalized, engaged services to jobseekers and organizations throughout the hiring process, as well as access to a wealth of knowledge about careers in the social sector.

Relief Resources Inc. – www.reliefresources.com - specializing in Children Service's programs, Human Services/Behavioral HealthCare agencies and Social Change enterprises

Search Associates - www.search-associates.com/main.html - Each year Search Associates places over 1,000 teachers, administrators and interns in international schools throughout the world.

Southern Teachers Agency - www.southernteachers.com - an employment agency for teachers, administrators, and coaches who are seeking jobs in public and private schools - an independent southern teacher's agency

The Spelman & Johnson Group - www.spelmanandjohnson.com - a specialized search firm with a proven history filling positions within higher education.

TimePlan Education - www.timeplan.com - Independent staffing service in England for teachers, run by teachers and other educationalists. We provide qualified and competent teachers to work in schools.

Footprints Recruiting Inc. - www.footprintsrecruiting.com/index.php?abarcarsession=235fbe424286674dec762047732ca69
Footprints Recruiting offers free ESL teacher placement services to native English speakers from around the world.

For more information, contact Career Services
617.495.3427
cso@gse.harvard.edu
www.gse.harvard.edu/about/administration/careers/