

Tips for Finding a Trustworthy Recruiter

by Leslie Stevens-Huffman

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Job Hunting

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Although most recruiters try to balance the needs of job hunters and hiring managers, [surveys show](#) that tech pros don't always feel that third-party recruiters have their best interests at heart.

Unfortunately, some recruiters betray the trust of candidates by prioritizing the needs of employers, submitting résumés without permission, and advocating salary concessions just to line their own pockets.

So how can you tell if a tech recruiter is worthy of your trust?

"Trust is confidence born of three dimensions: Character, communication and competence," explained Dennis Reina, co-founder of Reina, a trust building consultancy, and co-author of [Trust and Betrayal in the Workplace, 3rd edition](#). "Trust is always present. So you may not realize that trust isn't there until something is missing."

You can't be wary of your recruiter and still expect to develop a productive partnership. Here's how to use the three dimensions of trust to identify an honorable recruiter.

Character and Integrity

An honest person keeps agreements and exhibits character traits such as loyalty and consistent behavior. In light of that, if a recruiter shows up on time for your initial interview and returns your calls promptly, those are early positive signs.

From the outset, an honest recruiter will also be clear and explicit about what they will or won't do. Since body language speaks volumes

about our true intentions, your initial meeting should be in-person or via a video conference; observe how the recruiter responds to direct questions about client relationships, references, or placement rates. A lack of eye contact or reluctance to answer specific questions may indicate a hidden agenda.

“Does the recruiter seem genuinely interested in helping you, or is it all about them?” asked Richard Palin, senior technical recruiter for AVID Technical Resources. “If somehow the conversation always turns to them and their needs, that recruiter may have selfish motives.”

Communication

If a recruiter appears to hoard or withhold pertinent information, or tries to placate you by telling you what you want to hear, those are major red flags.

After all, every job has its pros and cons. A recruiter should provide insights about a company’s culture, promotional practices, politics, and technical stack that are not readily available via a typical Web search. And he or she should involve you in decisions and ask for your input, not brush your concerns aside.

“You should be concerned if a recruiter won’t disclose key details like the name of the client, the size of the team or the need to wear multiple hats,” Palin said. “They should be eager to give you all the information you need to decide if an opportunity looks promising.”

A lack of transparency about compensation may pave the way for a bait-and-switch job offer down the road. And a recruiting professional who’s uncomfortable discussing money or sharing positive and negative feedback may “go silent” after an interview and leave you hanging.

Badmouthing others is also a troublesome sign. “You should be concerned if a recruiter speaks negatively about another recruiting firm or doesn’t take responsibility for their mistakes,” Reina said. “Responsibility is an essential element of integrity and a requirement for maintaining trusting relationships.”

Capability

Can a recruiter be trusted to negotiate a salary package? Let’s face it: anyone would need a certain amount of technical acumen and market awareness to effectively represent your skills and track record. Without that capability, they may cave in to a hiring manager’s demands or pressure you into accepting lower compensation just to close a deal.

“First impressions matter,” Palin noted. A competent, well-trained recruiter asks questions that are relevant to your role, experience level, and specialty during your very first meeting.

“Recruiters who are truly interested in creating a win-win-win do their homework and present jobs that are relevant to your skills, abilities, location and career goals,” he added. “And they won’t pressure you to accept a bad deal, because they take a long-term view.”

In other words, if they exhibit the right expertise and attitude from the outset, you can probably trust a recruiter to land you a job you desire.

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3 Responses to "Tips for Finding a Trustworthy Recruiter"



January 10, 2017 at 3:31 pm, Kurt said:

Be aware of Indian recruiters. They have already taken a job from an American and they pretend to be in the United States and sometimes use fake American names

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January 12, 2017 at 9:52 am, Steve said:

Agree with Kurt above....beware of Indian recruiters. They have lied to me about having an interview and said other falsehoods just to string me along. I never speak with Indian recruiters nowadays except to say, "thanks and goodbye".

U.S. recruiters are usually professional and interested in longer term relationships with job seekers. They will never ask right off about rate. U.S. recruiters care about one's career path, benefits, the job FIT.

I've been continuously employed in IT as a contractor & FT employee for about 2 decades and haven't once landed a contract or job with an Indian recruiter.

This is not to say there aren't brilliant and talented Indian IT engineers; this post criticizes the Indian recruiting INDUSTRY, not the people nor the race, nor the country.

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January 12, 2017 at 10:53 am, Stacey said:

What about outsourced recruiters? I get calls from people with fuzzy phone connections and thick accents who say they have jobs, but don't seem to know my industry. They also ask for my social security number (or a part of it) that makes me wonder if I'm getting scammed.

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