

“Six Things to Have Before You Call Your Recruiter - Help Them First and They Can Help You”

A quick note about the author Ralf Weiser. He is a blogger who is dedicated to shaking up people's snow globes. This post provides a quick shake of the HR Manager's snow globe. www.ralfweiser.com

Recruiters can work miracles for you. That is especially true when you have your stuff together. Unfortunately, more often than not recruiters are either called too late in the game, or they are given incomplete information about what they are really supposed to do for you. There are also some people that expect recruiter Superman to show up and just pick up where they left off.

What I call “stuff” can be narrowed down to six very basic criteria. These may be basic, but they are extremely important for you to have in tow before you reach out to a recruiter. In fact, it is so imperative that you should have this all checked off the hiring list before you search for new employees, regardless of which type of placement firm you are using.

1. **Approval to proceed:** Do you have the actual “go ahead” to proceed with the hiring process? It is one clear check mark you must cross off your list from the beginning. This is followed by the question of what kind of authority you have been given. Will you be able to make the offer yourself once it has been established that you want to hire a candidate? You snooze, you lose - candidates move on quickly.
2. **Time table:** Often hiring teams have no concept of how much time it will take to find candidates and even when a suitable candidate has been found, the on-boarding schedule may not have been accounted for. The point is that when you have no idea how long the process will take, you may think you have more time than what you really have and great candidates could be hired right from under your fingertips.

Also, do not underestimate a hot job market and what that does to your interviewing schedule. Time may be of the essence and you need to be able to

schedule interviews on short notice. That means you need to have your hiring team's calendar cleared and ready for scheduling.

3. **Budget:** This is different from point 5 below in that this has more to do with how much your hiring process is allowed to cost you. Do not call a recruiter with no idea how much money you are willing to spend filling this position. Preparing this figure in advance saves you and the recruiter time and headache.
4. **Job description:** Most of the time this document is totally underestimated in terms of the time it takes to generate a good one (if you start with none), or to review an existing one. There are four different key criteria that should be addressed in order to provide a candidate with a good idea of what the new job will entail. Also, this document is essential in generating a good interview questionnaire, which will aid the hiring team. Finally, your recruiter can start looking for candidates immediately with a well-written position description. The following is a quick outline for your consideration.
 - a. **Responsibility and authority:** What functions and responsibilities will your new employee have? What are the primary job duties? At the same time, how will the new employee fit into the hierarchical and functional organizational chart?
 - b. **Competencies:** What are the behaviors, knowledge, skills, and abilities that your new employee needs to bring to the table in order to be able to function at your organization? What is a competency set for a beginner and what does one look like for an advanced candidate? Is there a possible career path and advancement plan for this position?
 - c. **Physical requirements:** Are there special lifting, reaching, vision, etc. requirements that you know of? If so, it is important that they are identified up front.
 - d. **Travel requirements:** How much travel is required for this position? Make sure you are being honest and clear about the amount of travel required, and state the travel frequency and duration as accurately as you can.
5. **Competitive market compensation analysis:** You may have an idea how much of a salary and benefit package you are willing to offer for this position. Great job.

Now, go the extra step and study your local market. In fact, establish first what “local” market means. To some this reaches only county wide, but for others this may include a few surrounding states.

Salary.com is one tool, but make sure to include a least two more reliable sources when you research what this or similar jobs pay in the market.

Remember that good candidates may have several offers to choose from; it would be a shame to lose a good candidate over this important detail.

6. **Interview plan and process:** Do you have a process and plan? It is always a good idea to keep in mind that you and your company are being interviewed at the same time you are interviewing actual candidates.

Not being able to tell a candidate what the hiring time table is and what the interview process entails will make you look unprofessional. At a minimum you will need to be able to tell potential candidates whether or not there will only be a face-to-face meeting, or if there will be multiple interviews with different people or panel interviews. What does the total hiring process look like?

I know, there are a lot of details to cover when growing your team. With proper advance planning and research, you and your organization will improve or maintain your professional image and make the training and onboarding process faster and more effective.

There seems to be a prevailing opinion amongst quite a few HR people that believe the above check list is what the recruiter should provide and help you work through. It is one of the most frequent misconceptions within the placement industry. Typically they should not be expected to do unpaid consulting. Your recruiter may be able to recommend consultancies that help generate this information.

Just remember, either spend the time and funds preparing properly first, or spend much more later on both when candidates either do not materialize, or you end up reviewing one unsuitable applicant after the other. With great preparation, your recruiter can work wonders and you should not be waiting for long before you have filled your open position.

Good luck with your next hiring endeavor.

Ralf Weiser