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The Straits Times



Pick a WINNER

How do you select the right search firm, if all of them offer identical levels of service?

Outourcing your recruitment needs to a search firm can be a difficult task, especially with so many international and local search companies in Singapore.

How do you know that you get the best results from search firms? Do all the search firms appear to offer similar services? Ask yourself these questions:

- Are large firms necessarily better than small boutique firms?
- When a firm has overseas desks, is it more likely to have "hard landing grounds" because professional standards are

work on them that are not set in S.E. Asia? Do they use the same job posting guidelines? Do they use the same criteria to select candidates? Do they use the same criteria to select candidates? Do they use the same criteria to select candidates?

When you're picking a search firm, don't resort to guesswork. Make sure you know what their strengths are.



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Outsourcing your recruitment needs to a search firm can be a difficult task, especially with so many international and local search companies in Singapore.

How do you ensure that you get the best candidate quickly, especially when all the search firms appear to offer similar services? Ask yourself these questions:

- Are large firms necessarily better than small boutique firms?

When a firm has numerous clients, it means they have less “head hunting ground” because professional ethics preclude a firm from headhunting candidates from a client organization.

- What is the reputation and image of the firm? Does it project the right image to attract suitable candidates?
- Are international firms necessarily better than local ones? Where is your ideal candidate likely to come from? If it’s from Singapore, will it make much difference?

However, if your candidate is likely to come from outside Singapore, obviously a firm with an international network is more advantageous. Do the consultants work together effectively? What is the style and culture of the firm?

- Is it better to choose a firm on a contingency basis or on a retainer basis? The contingency choice appears less risky because you don’t pay them until you select the candidate.

But as you have not made any payment, will the firm be committed to your assignment? Contingency firms take on assignments as and when they come along, but obviously, they will be motivated to work on those that are easiest to fill, so that they can get paid quickly. However, if the position is not too difficult to fill, the contingency approach could be the best.

- When should you choose to retain a search firm?
The advantage of retaining a search firm is that it dedicates its resources to the task of finding you the right candidate and sharing market intelligence with you.
- Who will handle the assignment? Some large firms send in their best sales staff to pitch for the account, but delegate the assignment to a junior, inexperienced consultant to handle.

Seasoned users of external recruiters will agree that the most important criteria in choosing the recruiter is not so much the firm itself, but the consultant who will handle your assignment.

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