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RECRUIT
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Is he worth it?
Here's a checklist to help you choose an executive search consultant who will give you value for money.

1 Assess the consultant's background and experience. Does he have a broad base of search firms and clients, however, that shows the right approach to the job? Does he give clients the right approach to get value for money?

2 In the consultant's specialty, or a generalist, is he a specialist, or is he a generalist? Can he provide valuable advice based on his knowledge of the market?

3 Does he have an in-depth knowledge of the industry? Can he provide valuable advice based on his knowledge of the market?

4 Can he provide an in-depth knowledge of the industry? Can he provide valuable advice based on his knowledge of the market?

5 What is the consultant's track record? Can he provide valuable advice based on his knowledge of the market?

6 What is the consultant's track record? Can he provide valuable advice based on his knowledge of the market?

7 How important is the search process? Can he provide valuable advice based on his knowledge of the market?

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TREAT HIM LIKE A PARTNER
A good track record and strong project management skills are important qualities in a search consultant.

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Search firms appear to provide similar services. Experienced users of search firms will tell you however, that choosing the right consultant and not the firm is the key.

How do you choose the right consultant to get value for your money?

1. Assess the consultant's background and experience. Does he have knowledge of your industry?

Does he understand your business and requirements? Is he able to add value in determining the specifications of the ideal candidate?

How well does he understand the market for such resources?

2. Is the consultant a specialist or a generalist?

If he is a specialist, what is his expertise? Can he provide valuable advice based on his knowledge of the market?

Search firms are increasingly organised by industry practice groups.

Whether they are within large search firms or boutique ones, specialty groups exist for the information technology, telecommunications, financial services, consumer products and healthcare industries.

3. What is the consultant's track record and assignment completion rate?

4. Can he present an accurate picture of your organisation when speaking to candidates? Is he enthusiastic about your organisation and in handling your particular assignment?

Can he sell the opportunity without over-hyping it, and manage to meet the candidate's expectations?

5. What is the consultant's ability to approach candidates and appraise their technical skills, knowledge and attributes?

Does he understand your corporate culture? Can he assess whether candidates will fit into your work culture?

6. What is the consultant's style and personality?

Does he have strong project management skills? Does he have the tenacity to follow through the search till completion?

Will he give up when the search gets difficult and leave you stranded with no solution?

Is he passionate about what he does?

7. How important are you to him as a client?

Are you just one of his many clients? Or are you a major account for him?

8. Does he have the capacity to handle your assignment? What is his existing workload?

Treat Him like a Partner

It takes two to make a relationship work well. To get the best return on your investment, treat your search consultant like a partner - as your inside resource.

If you can't trust him, you're working with the wrong consultant.

Don't merely brief him on the attractions and benefits of working at your company, but also let him know the negative aspects.

For example, if the role involves managing office politics or handling difficult people in the organisation, don't hide it from the consultant.

The more he knows about your company, the better he can do his job in finding you candidates with the relevant skills.

Be clear on your requirements and manage your own expectations.

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