

This shows the extent of the misconception that exists about the role of search firms.

So what do executive search consultants really do?

First, they do business development, upon winning assignments; they research the market for suitable candidates.

Time is of the essence as clients have demanding expectations, especially when their advertisements have failed to attract candidates.

Search consultants have to be very focused in identifying the short-listed candidates quickly as possible.

Clients settle only for the best as the services of search firms are not cheap.

Not every candidate approached will be interested in the job opening.

Those who meet the ideal profile may not be keen on the job. And those who are interested may not meet the client's expectations.

So getting a good match is indeed a challenge.

Ideally the candidate must be able and willing to do the job and also see the role as one which enhances his personal and career development.

The client must also be satisfied that the candidate is the "best fit".

For search firms, locating the right people is their business. Their survival depends on revenue, in this case from the fee-paying clients.

Candidates need to understand this and not view search consultants as professionals whose job is to help them in their job search.

It is perfectly alright to send your resume to search firms.

But candidates must understand that the search consultants' ability to assist depends on the assignments they have on hand.

Some candidates are "upset" with search consultants for not "helping" them.

A search consultant operating at the senior management level handles an average of 10 to 15 assignments per year.

On the other hand, he receives as many as 10 to 15 unsolicited resumes a week.

Candidates should understand that it is in the interest of the search consultants to present the result of their search to the client, because the sooner they close the assignment, the sooner they will get paid.

Search firms operate by market segments. Search consultants usually align themselves to an industry like information technology or financial services.

Candidates should not waste their time attracting the attention of search consultants who specialize in an area totally different from their background.

Questions you shouldn't ask.....

These are the common questions search consultants receive.

However, they are in no position to answer such questions.

- Do you provide services for overseas executive search, such as jobs in the US and Europe?
- How do you charge for a job search in US?
- How do I apply to a search consultant for a job?

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