

Working with a retained search firm.

As you continue to grow in your career, it's important to grow your network with you.

Most professionals will benefit from having positive relationships with one or more quality recruiters. And most benefit from occasionally staying in touch with the market for people like themselves. Recruiters are the closest thing to that kind of market.

If you are considering expanding your career opportunities with a professional recruitment firm, here are some tips for developing an awesome working relationship...

Find the right recruiter.

The right recruiter can be more than a source of job opportunities... he or she can also react to what you are doing and provide detached and well-informed advice that may be hard to find elsewhere.

Mutually beneficial relationships are possible: Just like you need search firms, the search firms need you. While you're not the client, you may be a candidate for one of our client's jobs. Someday, you also may be in a position to recommend our services, to become our client on the hiring side.

Develop relationships before you need them.

The time to return phone calls or to take the initiative to meet a recruiter is when you're not in job seeking mode. It's much harder when you've just been laid-off, downsized, or you've just resigned. If a recruiter already knows and respects you, they will feel confident in matching you with new opportunities once you're out of work or choose to search for a new career. Develop an open and trusting relationship with a recruiter. The best firms want to help candidates make great personal decisions for their families and their careers.

If you're interested in a job, help the recruiter help you.

Help the recruiter imagine where you might be a fit with a strong resume that supports a compelling personal value proposition. Be straightforward about your strengths, and don't try and hide your gaps. Open and honest communication is crucial. Be honest and direct about your job objectives, past compensation, desired salary, geographical preferences and other details. When you work with a recruiter you have someone by your side who has your best interest in mind - again, good communication is essential.

Let the recruiter do their thing.

Let the recruiter manage your pursuit of an offer. Many times, during the negotiation process, the recruiter will perform the role of intermediary to ensure open and effective communication between the employer and candidate. In order to achieve the best results, the candidate must feel comfortable openly expressing concerns or special requirements during the terms and conditions of the negotiation. One of the biggest mistakes people make is trying to go around the recruiter, pinging the CEO or hiring manager they've just met with emails. These employers chose a search firm for a reason and will feel obligated to follow the process.

Remain flexible.

Recruiters are skilled in placing talent. If you remain flexible, you may find a career you didn't expect. A recruiter might find a better fit for you skill-wise. It's in a recruiter's best interest to place candidates who are qualified and eager. Trust them.

Always follow-up.

Once you've accepted the position, try to continue the relationship with your recruiter, updating them on how the position is going and if you have any concerns. If so, they may be able to help resolve any issues.