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Effective recruiting is critical to any organization's success so it's no wonder that recruiting firms, sometimes called "headhunters," have long contributed to the quest for and achievement of a sustainable competitive business advantage. Recruiting firms have become increasingly specialized by industry, function and geography. While the search process is generic to most sectors and functions, detailed and comparative knowledge of an industry or function is beneficial to the hiring company. In today's competitive job market, there are some definite advantages to partnering with a specialized recruiting firm.

There is little doubt that professional recruitment agencies save hiring companies a substantial amount of time when it comes to screening and undertaking preliminary candidate interviews. Professional recruiters have access to a résumé bank of key resources, many of whom are passive candidates who

Benefits of Using a Recruiting Firm

will learn of the hiring company and its opportunities only through direct contact by a recruiter. This increases the pool of qualified candidates that can be presented in a shorter period of time. The role of professional recruiters does not stop at candidate sourcing. They can further expedite the hiring process by facilitating necessary background checks, including reference checks, and continuing to touch base with both the client and successful candidate after the recruitment process to ensure successful onboarding.

When is it time to engage a professional recruiter?

1. When confidentiality is required. If your company is looking to replace a current employee professional recruiters can source candidates discreetly, including recruiting directly from your competition – an otherwise risky business tactic that can lead to raiding and headhunting wars.
2. When no internal resources or skills are available. Not all organizations have internal HR departments or managers with the skills or time to screen and interview hundreds of applicants just to fill one position.
3. When negotiating power is needed. Professional recruiters are experts in their markets and can often help bring agreement on realistic salary and benefit expectations to both clients and candidates.

4. When rare skills are needed. With the sheer volume of résumés and applicants that recruiters see, it is certain that their résumé banks contain skills that most companies cannot access.

5. When advertising is unsuccessful.

Tips on selecting a recruiting firm:

The recruiting industry is highly competitive with limited barriers to entry, so shop around. Check out several companies, check references, and verify credentials. Ask about their area(s) of expertise and industry knowledge, local presence, geographical reach, search process, fee structure, turnover rate amongst recruiters, track record of success, and guarantee. Can they deliver temporary, contract, and permanent resources? What assessment tools, technologies, and methodologies do they employ? Also, make sure the firm will visit your premises to get a feel for your corporate culture.

While the services offered by recruiting agencies are often not inexpensive, the benefits of their services to an organization generally outweigh the costs by several fold. And know for certain that the final hiring decision always rests with the hiring company. The recruiting firm simply helps clients get to final interviews with top talent more quickly. ■

