

IS HIRING A RECRUITER WORTH IT?

Hiring new talent is not cheap. But hiring the wrong person is even more costly.

Leaving a job open indefinitely while you wait for the "perfect person" to walk through is a costly gamble. One you (and your budget) can't afford to lose. According to the [U.S. Department of Labor](#), the price of a bad hire is at least 30 percent of the employee's first-year earnings.

Can hiring an external recruiter stop you from wasting your time and money? When [one in four employers](#) aren't sure why they hired the wrong person, and are instead chalking it up to "sometimes you just make a mistake" you bet it's worth it...

If you partner with the right recruiting firm.

Hiring an executive search firm is much the same as the process you use to hire new talent. Experience, skills, and "fit" are the key components in both. Just as you interview candidates, you too should interview the search firms you are considering partnering with.

Here are several key questions you need to ask before you sign a contract with an external recruiting firm.

How long has your firm been in business? You do not want to invest your resources in a firm that only recently opened its doors. An experienced search firm will bring with it a satisfied and repeat client base that will affirm or deny a firm's reputation. Ask for testimonials. Also, firms that have been in business at least three to five years have likely encountered more than one economic cycle. The fact that they are still in business gives them credibility

What is your retention/success rate? Bringing on an executive search firm is one your strongest defenses against hiring the wrong person for the job. A recruiting firm's retention rate shows their track record for avoiding those costly "wrong hires." There will be situations when a quick turnover is outside a recruiter's hands. However, the number of placements still employed 12 months after their start date should far outweigh the number who have left.

What is your average fill time? If you are enlisting the help of a search firm, more than likely you have already invested a significant amount of time trying to fill a role. An additional three to six- month fill process will leave you with an open role you need filled NOW. Ask your potential recruiter how long it typically takes to fill a role like yours in an industry such as yours.

Have you filled roles like ours in an industry like ours? In order to have your pick of the best candidates for the job, you need a recruiter with a successful history of finding and placing candidates with the experience you are looking for, within your sector. Those successful placements not only reflect a reliable track record, but show the firm has established networks and will likely be a more effective recruiting partner than a more general hiring manager you may have on staff.

What is your sourcing process? When you invest your resources in an outside search firm, you are expecting higher caliber candidates than you have been able to find thus far. If a recruiter simply tells you they use LinkedIn to find professionals that meet your criteria, they are hardly doing anything you couldn't do yourself. However, if they use LinkedIn to generate a database of top-notch, passive candidates you never knew were out there, you're already getting your money's worth. Do not be afraid to ask them about their screening and interviewing process. After all, you are expecting a high-quality shortlist of candidates.

What do I get for my money? Be direct with questions about the external recruiter's role versus your internal recruiter's role. What do they do beyond sourcing? Do they screen and interview potential candidates? How many candidates will they present? Do they conduct background and [reference checks](#)? A good search firm should be confident in the placements they make and provide some form of guarantee to replace unsuccessful placements within a certain period of time for free or with a reduced fee.

What type of communication will we have? It's imperative that you set the parameters for your expectations and their services up front. As a client, there is nothing worse than a [recruiter who has gone radio silent](#) for weeks on end. However, it is equally [frustrating for a recruiter](#) to find emails or voicemails waiting for them on a daily basis. If a search firm enlists a team of recruiters to work on your contract, be sure to acquire the names of each person who will be involved. In addition, ask how the entire team will stay up to speed with the progress. You don't want to call someone on the team only to discover they have no idea what stage the search is in.

An executive recruiting firm with a track record of expeditiously filling searches with A-List talent in a reasonable amount of time will help you avoid "just making a mistake" and is worth their weight in gold.