

Protocol and Etiquette for the Job and Candidate Search Process

Introduction

This article is meant to put forward some general guidelines regarding good protocol and etiquette for both the job seeker and the principals involved in the recruiting and job search process. These principals include the hiring manager, company staffing specialist, HR department and recruiter.

General Responsibilities in the Job Search/Candidate Search Process:

Candidate's Responsibilities in the Job Search:

- Of course, candidates must be sincere in their application for a job. If one applies for a position, then one should be serious about potential desire to join that company if a reasonable offer comes through and the candidate likes what they see during the interview, company research and the negotiation process. Two unethical reasons to apply for a job include: 1. a chance for paid transportation and lodging to a distant city for sight-seeing and brush up of interviewing skills. 2. To obtain a written offer to provide candidate with ammunition to bargain for a better package at their current employment.
- Of course, candidates must be honest in the application. This means not to pad the resume and not to lie about past achievements, work history, skills and education.
- A candidate should never accept a job and then back out of the agreement. It doesn't matter if the acceptance is written or verbal. Once a position has been accepted, even verbally, a promise has been made to start at that company. There's no going back – even if for example the current employer counter offers with a promotion and double the pay.

Recruiter's Responsibilities:

- Recruiters should have the best interests of their client in mind. This means screening candidates for position suitability. A recruiter should only put forward candidates who, in the recruiter's opinion would be a good fit for the job and are sincere in their candidacy and intention to stay for a long time at the client company.
- Recruiters should keep the candidate's information extremely confidential.
- A recruiter should not recruit from the client company.

Company's Responsibilities:

- Let candidates know that their resume has been received. Even an automated reply is preferable to silence. Even better, the company should let candidates know whether or not there is interest.
- Company principals should be up front with recruiters. They should let them know what's going on, especially when the position is filled or closed so the recruiters don't continue putting effort into a lost cause.

For Companies and Candidates using recruiters:

Candidates:

- It's best to use only one good recruiter. Candidates should choose a trusted and capable recruiter and stick with him or her. They should try to form a good working relationship. Before applying to a company, candidates should check with their recruiter to see if they represent the company of interest. If the recruiter doesn't represent that company, they should apply on their own. If they do represent the company, then the candidate's chances are usually much better if they apply through the recruiter. The recruiter will act as an advocate for the candidate.

- Candidates should use only one conduit to apply for each job, (directly, through a recruiter or through a friend). It only confuses the situation when candidates apply for a single job by multiple means. This confuses the situation, and it might even reduce the candidate's chances for success.
- If the candidate applies for a job directly or through a friend or contact at the company, they should not apply through a recruiter to the same company. Candidates should let the recruiter know to which companies they've applied directly, or through friends or through other recruiters. Once the candidate's resume is in the company's database, they should wait at least a year before you can use a recruiter for any of that company's sites.

Companies:

- It's best not to hire every recruiter in the phone book. Using just one good recruiter exclusively for a given position is a good idea. If the recruiter gets a sense that the client is using too many, then they're likely to prioritize accordingly.
- The hiring manager or staffing specialist at the company should give recruiters timely feedback on the candidates brought to their attention. Recruiting will be more effective if there is good communication. Companies should not wait longer than a few days to give this feedback. Recruiting and hiring is a team effort. The best candidates get multiple offers, quickly, by good companies. The hiring company should actively COURT their candidates. (It's a selling job on both sides.) Part of the courting process is treating the candidates as if they are important, and respecting them with punctual feedback.
- A good recruiter can make the company's job search MUCH more effective. However, the company must still invest effort and time into the process. This means studying resumes, talking with the recruiter about candidates, talking with the candidates, discussing the candidate with the hiring group, interviewing, getting feedback, formulating offers, etc. It all takes time. There's no easy way.
- If the hiring manager gives prompt feedback to the recruiter this will let him or her formulate a better idea of exactly the type of person the manager and group seeks to hire.

Conclusion:

A general thread runs through all of the above observations and suggestions. Communication, effort, honesty, cultivating good relationships and fair dealing are the foundation principals that

enable candidates to find the right job and build their careers, and companies to locate, attract and hire the right people.

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