ABSTRACT
Mention the word “recruiter,” and depending on the most recent use of one, reactions can be very positive and glowing or extremely negative and disappointing. I’d like to show you how to turn a possible “foe” into a “friend” when it comes to recruiter assistance; whether you’re hiring professionals or seeking that new career opportunity.

Recruiters come in all shapes and sizes and support a variety of roles for organizations. There are corporate recruiters that work exclusively for one company recruiting for multiple positions within that firm. There are contingency recruiters that are hired by those corporate recruiters and the managers they serve. The latter is what we’ll concentrate on, and the one I feel is best positioned to meet your career objectives.

INTRODUCTION
Finding the right recruiter may take a little “elbow grease,” but it is well worth the investment of time and research. Read on to learn the role a recruiter plays, tips to successful dealings with them, how to glean industry knowledge from them, and a few other general tips on recruiting or job searching that should help you.

RECRUITER’S ROLE
A recruiter’s role can be defined in many ways. For the “client” - they are hired (and paid) by companies to support recruitment needs for varying positions including professional, research & scientific, IT, accounting, industrial, and general & administrative functions. These positions can be for direct hires, contract hires or temp hires, and the recruiters’ fee will depend on specific contractual factors agreed to with the company. The most common use of a recruiter is in a contingency role whereby the company doesn’t pay a fee unless the recruiter identifies the candidate they select and hire. In some cases and in difficult to fill positions, companies will agree to pay a retained fee in advance in exchange of a recruiter committing resources & an allotted amount of time to source candidates.

For the “candidate” – they are used as a resource to: a) connect an individual with specific openings or prospective opportunities; b) provide current market information; c) provide information about compensation; d) obtain tips about resume writing or a multitude of other job-seeking or career-counseling advice.

Remembering the role of a recruiter is important when dealing with them; whether you are trying to fill positions within your company or looking for a new position. Your objective must be known and clearly stated in order for a recruiter to effectively help you. In cases where a recruiter cannot serve your needs, a true recruiting professional will advise you of this and try to point you in the right direction.

TIMING TO MARKET
Timing is crucial - whether hiring to fill a position or seeking a new position. Market conditions will play into this heavily as well. In a good economy where many firms are hiring, plan to give more time fill your role or find the right job. Candidates are interviewing for multiple positions and obtaining counter-offers from the current employers.

When filling direct-hire positions, it is imperative that you give at least 60 days for your search to be complete after it’s been turned over to a recruiter. And, for contract positions, at least 30 days.

When seeking a new job, you should give yourself 30 days once an effective and concentrated search has begun. You don’t want to enter the market unless you are ready to accept a position offered. So, be prepared to resign your current role and/or start a new job quickly if you are not working.

PRESENTING YOUR OPPORTUNITY OR EXPERIENCE
Selling the position to prospective candidates or selling your background and experience to potential employers is imperative to effectively recruit for a position or land the job you want.

To fill an open position, create a fact-filled job description. Remember your audience. Identify the top three duties the individual will perform and the estimated time spent on each. Identify how you will assess success in the role, and screen candidates against that. In addition to the job description, describe the “sizzle” of your job.....why would someone want this job AND stay in it after they accept? I like to ask my hiring managers, why do you like it there? To effectively write a resume, you must have an easy-to-read resume or curriculum vitae (“CV”). Remember your audience. Managers and recruiters see thousands of resumes annually. The important thing isn’t a pretty resume with fancy fonts, tables, etc.; it is the content and organization. Something that flows well and precisely states your capabilities and past work experience. Managers and recruiters are reading your resume to see if you fit a specific job they have in mind, so if you are vying for a particular job, take the time to re-write your resume to highlight the work you did that is closely aligned to the duties they seek.

IDENTIFYING THE RIGHT RECRUITER TO PARTNER WITH
It’s critical to find a recruiter that you truly can “partner” with. In order for a recruiter to be effective, you must level with the recruiter, stating your objectives and goals and being comfortable listening to the information and answers they give; which won’t always be what you want to hear, however, if you trust the recruiter as an industry professional, you are more amenable to accepting what they say.

“Partner” can mean many things, but in this instance, it’s meant to find a recruiter that can help you meet your objectives. That’s not always finding the right candidate for the right job, or finding the right job for you; it can mean being a resource to you, your friends, your boss, etc. by making recommendations, referrals, etc. Giving industry or market advice and information.

Start first by asking your industry peers who has been helpful to them in the past. Interview that recruiter or firm to assess their strengths and weaknesses. Get references if necessary. Specialty or niche recruiters typically work on a national basis; whereby generalists typically only work their local market. I recommend you find a recruiter that specializes in your skill set or business area, as those recruiters tend to network heavily and build a large pool of potential resources, have market knowledge and can serve more as a partner to you and your needs. In addition, if you seek to fill or find full-time employment-based opportunities, find firms that do that type of recruiting for their clients vs. the contract or consulting type recruiting firms that typically concentrate only on contract positions for their clients.

Recruiters, like SAS users, have associations that they join to promote training & education as well as ethics within their industry. There are several organizations, but I recommend if you can’t get a personal referral of a recruiter, you start by finding one through these organizations. There is a national organization called NAPS (National Association of Personnel Services, www.recruitinglife.com), and their member firms are listed by state on their web site. In addition, each state usually has a state...
SAS IN THE MARKETPLACE

There should be smiles on most SAS users if they've been keeping their pulse on the market demand of SAS specialists. Job growth in the area of data and information management to include statistics, analytics, business intelligence, data warehousing and reporting has been on the rise for many months with little inclination that the demand will slow down for many months to come. A quick review of the job boards alone will reflect that the percentage of SAS jobs being posted today compared to one year ago has increased. Another tidbit….recruiters typically know about employment trends before statistics are released due to the requests by company clients seeking resources.

As a cross-business function solution, the SAS solution is utilized throughout many organizations in various industries. This broad use of SAS affords the SAS specialist an opportunity not shared with most other professions. Although client’s typically request same-industry background when screening candidates for jobs, we feel the core use of SAS can be transitioned easily from one industry to another.

Our firm along has seen a significant increase in requirements from our client companies from 2004 vs. 2005 in both our pharmaceutical and business divisions including contract and full-time groups. A quick analysis reflected a 40% increase in contract staffing requirements requesting to be filled in the first six months of 2005 vs. the first six months of 2004. The full-time requirements also saw an increase of almost 20% for the same period.

The demand of SAS professionals compared to the available number of professionals is not equal. This will result in companies being required to increase the salaries & rates to acquire the talent necessary. Companies will do themselves a favor to realize this market trend and ensure they assess their internal employees’ compensation plans and implement programs to retain them.

USE OF FULL-TIME VS. CONTRACT EMPLOYEES

Companies that complement their internal staff with contract employees do so for many reasons. We see the following: a) standard mode of operations, i.e. a company may have a standard line item in their budget to keep an allotted number of contract employees on staff; b) a specific project requires additional headcount to get the job done; c) a full-time employee slot is open, but hiring manager cannot wait for human resources to onboard the employee and wants to quickly fill the position with contract to keep the workflow going; d) a company has exhausted all recruiting vehicles and cannot find a suitable employee.

We’re finding a much increased demand for “try before you buy” or contract-to-hire in this market. Hiring managers want to ensure the level of skill as well as personality meet the requirements of their organization before committing to pay a placement fee. This also benefits the candidate, as they are in a position to also see if this is the environment they want to be in before feeling their fate is sealed!

A company’s treatment of contract staff in their environment varies. Some treat the contract staff like their employees, i.e. they attend staff meetings, go to the company outings, allow access to employee health and cafeteria facilities, etc. Other firms “quarantine” their contract staff from all employee-related functions and activities to prevent co-employment issues. Depending on your work style and desire to be a “part of the team;” it might behoove you to know how a company treats their contract staff before making a decision to accept a role there.

CONSIDERING CONSULTING?

Have you ever considered consulting as an option to the traditional full-time employment role? It’s got its pros and cons, but those primarily reflect the personal lifestyle you live and what you are willing to risk that may outweigh the cons portion of the equation.

Consulting is “loosely” used. The definition of a consultant according to Merriam-Webster’s is “one who gives professional advice or services.” We find that most of the consultants we place are merely giving services, and the clients are not really seeking advice. However, each situation varies, and some consultants can gain their customer’s trust and respect and position themselves to begin giving advice based on their past experiences and knowledge garnered.

Below you’ll find what we see as the Pros & Cons of “Consulting:”

Pros:
- In a good market, you can pick and choose which projects you wish to work on.
- You can command a higher base rate of pay
- You can see different parts of the country
- You get to work on a variety of different projects in varying stages
- You typically don’t get bored
- You’re able to bring past experiences into practice and share with your clients

Cons:
- In a poor market, you have to take what projects you can get.
- You cannot ensure you’ll be able to work in your local market….may end up poor or a road warrior!
- You may not be afforded benefits (i.e. health insurance, paid time off, holiday pay, etc.).
- You have to establish your own retirement plan if you intend to perform these services on a long-term basis.
- You’re always looking for that next gig – networking begins to be a part of your life!
- You must stay on top of your game – continual training, certification, etc.
- If working as an independent contractor, you may be required to carry workers compensation and general liability insurance.

If you’re considering a contracting or consulting role, investigate thoroughly the specific engagement, identify if it will affect your long-term career and personal objectives, and last but not least, explore the opportunity with your recruiter and ask for input. Don’t be afraid to ask the hard questions of the client or the recruiter, and don’t accept a position (whether consulting or full-time) with questions unanswered.

CONCLUSION

The recruiter’s role is that of “agent.” Although the client companies typically pay the recruiter, it behooves us to serve in an unbiased and “consultative” role. A recruiter’s clients are both the company and the candidate. It does no one good to put a bad match together.

Find a recruiter that will help you and your situation. If what you hear is too good to be true, it probably is. Ask for the upside and the downside of each situation and know what you are going into with your eyes wide open. The Internet is a world of information and you can get lost in it. A good recruiter is definitely a “friend” and should be able to provide resources and advice to you…just because they can’t find that perfect job or perfect candidate this time around, you should be able to get some leverage from your established relationship. If you’re uncomfortable with a recruiter, don’t use them….stick with your gut!
REFERENCES

SAS Consultants: A Sheep in Wolf's Clothing by Gary McQuown, co-owner of Data and Analytic Solutions, Inc., a SAS Alliance Partner, located in Fairfax, VA (http://www.dasconsultants.com).

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