



## TenStep Supplemental Paper

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### Learn About Recruiters Before You Rely on Them

There are some IT professionals that graduate from college, start working for a company and retire from that company thirty years later. A long time ago, that used to be somewhat common. However, it is becoming less and less of an employment option today.

So, the vast majority of people need to be prepared to periodically look for new employment opportunities. Sometimes this job search takes place while you have the luxury of still working for your current employer. Other times, a layoff puts you in the job market at a time that is not within your control. No matter what the reason is for you to be looking for a new job, at some point or another you will end up working with recruiters.

#### **There are many types of recruiters**

One thing you will realize soon is that there are many types of recruiters that work within different business models. This is not to say that any of them are bad. It's just that they fill different niches. Let's first look at a few examples.

**Company recruiters.** These are recruiters who try to fill current openings within a company. These could be within a traditional corporate environment, or they could be for consulting firms. The key thing to note is that this type of recruiter actually has jobs that need to be filled, and the hiring process is somewhat within his/her control.

**Agency recruiters (company-paid).** In many cases, companies use outside agencies to help fill their open positions. A company could seek outside help because they do not have recruiters on their staff, because their own recruiters have not found the right candidates, because they have too many openings for their own recruiters or because they are looking for someone in a specialty area that an outside agency is better able to fill. The key point is that agency recruiters are looking for candidates for positions that are not totally within their control. They are looking to fill openings for other companies. Many times when you respond to an ad for a job opening, it is from an agency recruiter that does not actually have the opening themselves and does not totally control the interview process. These recruiters make their revenue by charging the hiring company a fee, usually 20% – 25% of the first years starting salary.

**Agency recruiters (candidate-paid).** These recruiters are similar to the prior recruiters except that they usually offer candidates to a company for free. They make their revenue by charging a fee to the candidate. This fee might be paid by the candidate if the agency secures them a position. In other cases, the agency charges the candidate a fee just to work with them to begin with.

**Contract recruiters.** From the candidate perspective, these recruiters are similar to company-paid agency recruiters. Typically they are recruiting to fill openings for contract resources at their client companies. The key point is that they do not have the opening at



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their own company and they do not control the interview process. The contract recruiter is looking for qualified people to submit to companies for contract openings, but they are competing with many other contract recruiters as well.

**Executive / niche recruiters.** These are recruiters that specialize in certain fields and markets. For instance, one recruiter might specialize only in CIO's, one might only look for senior executives in the insurance field, while another specializes only in Database Administrators. These recruiters are always looking for people in their niche, whether they have openings or not. However, when they do have openings, they typically have some level of exclusivity that gives them a better chance to fill the opening.

There are other types of recruiters that have variations on these basic themes. There are also many opportunistic recruiters that work in more than one area. For instance, some recruiters will fill contract opening and provide agency recruiting hires as well if the opportunity arises. If you are not familiar with recruiters and how they work, you should keep in mind three lessons that will help manage your expectations.

### **Lesson one - recruiters work for the hiring company, not for you.**

In this respect, recruiters are like real estate agents. It should not be surprising that people work for their customer, and the customer is the person who pays them. As an example, you may contact a recruiter and he/she may be as friendly and helpful as can be. He/she may offer you encouragement and give you tips on the job market. However, he/she may never present you for an open position. The reason is that ultimately he/she is trying to fulfill the needs of the client. If you are a great candidate for an opening, you will be submitted. If you are not a great candidate, you will not be submitted. Please note that this does not mean the recruiter is bad. It just means that he/she is trying to provide a service to the customer, and part of that service is to present qualified candidates. If he/she presents too many candidates, or ones that are not qualified, then he/she loses credibility and can potentially lose a client.

On the other hand, if you are a good qualified candidate, the recruiter has every incentive to present you in the best possible light, and he/she will work hard to get you placed. If the company agrees that you are the best candidate, then the entire situation becomes a win for the company, a win for you and a win for the recruiter. However, if the situation does not work for the hiring company, it will not work for you either.

### **Lesson two - recruiters today receive thousands of resumes**

Many candidates get frustrated because they apply for a position that they think they are qualified for, and then they never receive a response back. Is this because the recruiter doesn't care about you? There is probably another reason. You need to understand that recruiters are inundated with resumes. It wasn't always that bad. Fifteen years ago, recruiters received probably about a handful of resumes in the mail every day. Typically, if the candidate fit a certain profile, he/she would be called in for an initial screening. Today, with the use of email and Internet job posting boards, recruiters may get hundreds, thousands, or even tens-of-thousands of resumes for open positions.



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What do you expect a recruiting company to do when they receive that volume of resumes weekly or even daily? They will do the same thing you would do - they buy software to scan and store resumes, and then they do keyword searches to try to find qualified candidates for open positions. If your resume comes up in the keyword search – great! If not, then you stay in the database. So, if you really want to be a Java programmer, but your resume does not say “Java” on it, you are probably a long-shot.

### **Lesson three - recruiters are just one of a number of options you need to pursue**

Whenever you are looking for a new job, you should use all available options, including networking, newspaper ads, Internet job boards, etc. In general, there are dozens, if not hundreds of job openings that you are a fit for at any given time. However, each position also has dozens, if not hundreds, of qualified candidates, so it may take a lot of time and effort to land a position.

### **Summary**

Recruiters can be valuable resources to help you find job openings. If you do not use them, you will not be represented for a vast number of potential job openings. Most recruiters are honest and honorable. However, they are also inundated with resumes, and their primary loyalty is with the company that has the opening. So, don't be afraid to use recruiters heavily if they are trying to fill positions that you think you are qualified for. On the other hand, don't use them exclusively, and don't mistakenly believe that they are working to find you a position. If you are looking for a new position, and especially if you are unemployed today, use every avenue you can to find your next opportunity.