**Recruiters Explained**

Daily, we at the Owen CMC have job seekers ask us for the names of recruiters who can get us a job in \_\_\_\_ field or in \_\_\_ city. Please review the following information about recruiters so that you can use them wisely as a small part of your job search strategy.

Excerpts in blue are from an article by Barb Poole at <http://hireimaging.com/articles/author/barb>

**What is the function of career services’ coaches?** To assist seekers in targeting functions and employers; to help seekers to create and promote their candidacy; to guide seekers in preparing for interviewing and negotiating opportunities; and to push opportunities out to seekers. Career Services’ coaches do not serve as placement agents, recruiters, resume writers, or job finders.

**How do recruiters work with job seekers?** Recruiters work for companies **not for** individual job seekers. Recruiters help their client companies find employees to fill open positions.

**Do recruiters place people in jobs?** No, and this is a second ironic misconception. Recruiters don’t care about finding jobs for people. They make their living by filling open positions with the most qualified people they can find. There is no reason for them to be interested in the [new graduate or] average out-of-work professional. Often the most qualified people are successfully employed at other companies. And even when the recruiter finds the ideal candidate, he/she can only recommend the person to the company. Recruiters present qualified candidates to companies, and sometimes conduct preliminary screening interviews.

**How do recruiters work?** There are two kinds of recruiters–**retainer and contingency**. Retainer firms have an exclusive contract on their assignments and are usually paid a portion of their fee at the beginning of their search and the balance at the end of their assignment, whether or not they fill the position. Contingency recruiters seldom have an exclusive assignment on a position and compete with other contingency firms. They are paid only when they fill the position. Retained recruiters are often called executive recruiters. Retained recruiters usually deal with positions that pay $100K or more, while contingency firms handle positions around $50K and up. In addition, there are employment agencies that work with people in the $25K to $50K range. Never, ever pay someone to “find” you a job. In general, these “job finders” take your money and do not find you a job.

**What are executive recruiters? “Headhunters”?** Executive recruiters are the same as retainer recruiters, though some contingency recruiters will advertise themselves by that name. “Headhunter” is an accepted slang term for executive recruiter. It is like calling a psychologist a “shrink.”

**Are there people who should not use recruiters?** Yes, people who have been out of work for a while, and career changers. These people will simply not be served well in general.

**Why don’t recruiters respond to emails or phone calls?** It’s not worth their time. In this present economy, an executive recruiter may be working to fill 50 positions at any one time. To do so he/she spends most of her time speaking with people he/she already knows to be qualified for one of the positions or can recommend other qualified people. A headhunter can easily get hundreds of resumes a day. The chances that an unsolicited resume will present qualifications **exactly matching** one of the current open positions a headhunter is working with is exceedingly unlikely. So these resumes are fed to a database that already holds one or two million resumes. For even the largest search firms, the number of positions filled out of the databases is 1% or less. This dramatizes why it is that recruiters rarely look at the resumes which cascade into their offices.

**What’s the overall theme here?** Certainly consider recruiters as part of your job search strategy. However, don’t have unrealistic expectations of your work with them. **Recruiters are not in business to find you a job.** Do not rely on recruiters to the exclusion of other job search methods, especially networking, networking, and networking! And don’t take rejection personally; it plain and simple isn’t personal. Instead, explore whether there are things you could be doing (and not be doing) to tap into using a recruiter as a spoke in your job search wheel. We recommend that you do not use recruiters as a new MBA graduate; perhaps they can be a part of your strategy as a mid-career seeker. But even then, 80%+ of positions are found through word of mouth i.e. networking.