Be Proud of Your Profession
Recruiters Have a Profound Impact on Peoples’ Lives

You really have two professions, you’re successful at both of them, and you should be proud of the impact that they have on peoples’ lives. You do a lot more than just matching the client’s job order to the candidate. You really are a Career Coach to candidates and a Staffing Consultant/Expert to clients.

You’ve helped companies grow and stay profitable. And, you have helped candidates thrive in careers that are rewarding both financially and intellectually.

Recruiters = Talent Scouts

“We’re talent scouts for the working world. It’s like being a professional scout for the NFL, but we’re just doing it in the business marketplace instead of the sports world,” says Greg Doersching of The Griffin Group (Greendale, WI).

Let’s be honest. Some companies don’t have the highest regard for the recruiting profession. Fortunately that mindset is being dismantled every time you work with a company and demonstrate professionalism and honesty.

Perception and Image

One term that was commonly used for a recruiter was “headhunter.” It’s still out there. Some like the image and its connotations. Some don’t. Jeff Skrentny of The Jefferson Group, Inc. (Chicago, IL) personally enjoys being called a headhunter, but he knows that the perception of recruiters varies greatly.

“One of the things you should feel good about is the resilience of the recruiting industry. Recruiting has weathered hard times, but it has never gone away and it never will. Technology was a potential enemy that turned out to be an ally. Let’s look at how this happened.

Technology is a Tool for Success

Technological advancements have often been perceived as the death knell for many industries. For example, the Internet was supposedly going to vaporize recruiting because résumés were going to be posted online. Obviously, that didn’t happen. Certainly the Internet has affected the recruiting industry through the use of job boards. But new technology, such as the Internet, should be looked upon as a TOOL to help you in business, not a threat jeopardizing your professional survival.
The human touch that you provide can never be replaced by impersonal machinery. The July 2006 issue of The Fordyce Letter published many responses from readers who all agree that there will ALWAYS be a need for recruiters and the knowledgeable, personalized service that they provide. The comments were both rational and emotional, and some gave personal examples supporting their argument.

Here are two memorable quotes from The Fordyce Letter’s July 2006 issue:

“… If the market continues in an applicant-driven cycle, the recruiting business and good recruiters will be strongly needed. The numbers are in our favor, as the talent pool is aging and there is simply not enough talent to go around. The Internet is not yet able to replace hard core referring.” – Gary Richards – The HVACR & Energy Recruiter

“What’s the empirical evidence that technology has ever TOTALLY replaced human intervention? Technology changes the human experience. … Technology is an enabler, it changes the way things are done, changing processes that speed the pace.” – Brandon Ebeling – American Incite

Many Paths Lead to Recruiting

Granted, recruiting is loosely defined and highly specialized. It’s a profession that is often eased into. At present, you don’t go to college and earn a four-year undergraduate degree in “recruiting” and then go out and look for a recruiting job with your newly minted recruiting degree under your arm and specific recruiting knowledge planted in your brain. But that is changing. It’s fairly common to make a lateral move into recruiting - you either worked in HR or within a specific industry that’s now your specialty. There is no one path that leads a person into recruiting. There is no right way and no wrong way. If you asked 100 of your fellow recruiters how they entered the profession, you would probably get 100 different answers.

When children are out on the playground, they often fantasize about being an athlete, firefighter, policeman, astronaut, or a ballerina. How often do they think, “I want to be a recruiter when I grow up”? That’s not meant to be demeaning. In fact, it simply illustrates what could be considered the “behind-the-scenes” nature of recruiting.

“I do know that thankfully there a few university programs where they’ve actually started talking about the staffing and recruiting profession,” says Skrentny. “They’re saying it’s one of the top 10 professions to get in for flexibility and financial freedom. It’s nice that at a university level we’re getting some good play because, frankly, there a lot of people who think of us as just above used-car salespeople.”

Selling a Service

“It’s a rare person who I have met who chooses our profession,” Skrentny continues. “Most of them fall into it through some happenstance, and most of them leave. It’s a sales job, and it’s not what they see themselves doing. We’re sales professionals. We have to know how to sell a service. I’m a sales professional the same way an attorney is a sales professional. Attorneys don’t get business unless people know who they are, what they do, and that they’re good at it.”

Both Doersching and Skrentny offer some wise advice to recruiters to promote themselves and the profession.

“I’d say the first thing is follow up with everybody. Give people - no matter how good or how bad they are for what you’re working on - the courtesy of closure. Let them know. Just give people the common courtesy of a follow-up,” says Doersching. “I know our days are busy, but there’s still enough time for common professional ethics. If we viewed our profession from a much more serious customer-service standpoint, and honestly accepted the fact that even though clients pay our bills, our candidates are still our customers, it would be one of the biggest steps we could make for changing our industry.”

Doersching continues, “Here’s the simple problem: You’re working for the client. Oftentimes it’s not your reputation that you’re actually damaging; it’s the client’s reputation. If you call a candidate and recruit him for a specific company and then you don’t give them the follow-up that’s due, they have a negative opinion of your client. You have to really guard against that. It absolutely gets back on to you as a recruiter. The worst phone call you can get as a recruiter is from one of your paying clients saying, ‘I got a call from this candidate directly who said they hadn’t heard from you.’ Your customers expect you to extend the same professional courtesy to those candidates that they do to their customers.”

“The best way to build a relationship is delivery of services. Be competent, capable, and successful, and then have a track record to prove it. Know
Q. How do you market contract staffing?

A. It’s simpler than you think! Recent survey results show that 85.7% of contract staffing placements come from recruiters’ permanent clients. Communication is the key. Talk to your clients!

• Ask your clients if they have a need for contractors.
• Ask your clients if they have any staffing problems.
• Ask hiring managers if they have any upcoming projects.

Top Echelon Contracting offers FREE customized marketing documents to recruiters. These tools will help you get started in contract staffing and promote this valuable service to clients. There are five different marketing documents available, and each one includes your contact information as the recruiter of record.

The Marketing Documents Available for Client Companies Are:
• Contracting Overview
• Contract Staffing Services
• Benefits for Clients - Contract Staffing Services

The Marketing Documents Available for Candidates (Contractors) Are:
• Optional Benefits to Candidates
• Contract Professionals - Reasons to Join the Top Echelon Contracting Team

Top Echelon Contracting can create the customized marketing documents in color, black and white, or both. We email them to you. These marketing documents are in PDF format. You can distribute them to clients and candidates by printing them or emailing them.

You can access these resources at www.TopEchelonContracting.com/recruiters/marketing.aspx
One of the most popular and highly publicized pieces of federal legislation passed in recent years has been the National Do Not Call Registry. This registry was created by the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) and Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to prohibit telemarketing calls to consumers who place their phone numbers on a do-not-call list.

However, this legislation raised issues for the staffing industry. The American Staffing Association (ASA) argued that these rules should not apply to recruiter calls to job candidates when the job candidates are not charged a fee. According to the Winter 2005 issue of the California Staffing Professionals’ magazine Inner View, the FCC confirmed the ASA’s interpretation of the rules in an opinion letter sent to a staffing firm.

Stephen Dwyer, the ASA’s deputy general counsel, says that the organization is unaware of any complaints filed with the FTC or FCC either before or after the opinion was issued.

Very few recruiters charge candidates a fee for their services. (Most, of course, charge the companies.)

“That’s the critical thing here. The definition of telephone solicitation revolves around encouraging the purchase or rental or investment in property, goods, or services,” says Dwyer.

‘Additional Services’ Charges Do Apply

However, be wary of the fact that additional services offered by some firms for a fee changes things. In such cases, the do-not-call rules do apply.

“Some staffing firms will often provide additional services such as employment counseling, resume review, etc., for which they will charge a fee to candidates. If that’s what they’re doing, it would come under the do-not-call rules,” Dwyer says.