



## FINDING A RECRUITER

By Bill Gaffney

**Q: I am looking for a good recruiter or two to build a relationship with. How do I go about finding them?**

**A:** First of all let me remind everyone that recruiters only place 10-15% of new hires in positions each year. Seventy per cent of the jobs are found through networking. Spend your time accordingly.

I think it is an excellent idea to build strong relationships with two or three [recruiters](#) before a person is ever in job search mode. This is good networking. Also as you help these recruiters with leads, suggestions, personal insights, etc. this causes them to be much more helpful when you are in job search mode.

Let me start by saying it is tougher to find a recruiter in your field, especially if you want to stay local, than it was 25-30 years ago. From the early 90's back recruiters tended to work more of what we called a local "desk" which meant they typically did searches for companies within a 50-mile radius or so. There were some that worked a regional "desk", typically 200-250 mile radius. While each recruiter was fairly specialized, IT, [Engineering](#), Sales, etc., the specialization was more generalized. Today specializations are much more focused. For instance when I worked telecom sales I primarily focused on data and call center/CRM sales people. What this means is that recruiters are now working a much larger territory and you may not find someone who specializes in your niche in your particular city, especially if the city is small to medium sized.

It is important that you understand the opportunities in your field locally, regionally and nationally. It is also important you understand what opportunities for your field look like in the next 5 years. This will help you to understand where the recruiters are. Off the point, but making the point, I want to share a story with you. A friend of mine came to me a good number of years ago. He had postdoctoral work in a scientific area. When I asked him how he got from there to IT he told me he knew he had better expand his background when he figured out there were only 3 or 4 positions in the world in his field of study.

Now for some suggestions:

1. This is my favorite. Check with [HR](#) people. They use recruiters and know the best ones. Usually there is no hesitancy to recommend a couple to you. Obviously you would want to check with HR people whose companies would hire within your field. While you are talking with the HR people do a little further networking and ask them, in general, who else they would suggest you should talk with.
2. Talk with friends or peers in your field who have used recruiters in locating them a job. This may seem fairly obvious but people either don't think about this or they ask any friend, even if they are not in the same field.
3. Use professional or trade associations of which you are a member. If you do not belong to it and there is a strong one in your field join it. Do not make the excuse, "I don't have the time". If you are interested in expanding or enhancing your career there is no better way than one of these organizations. They have many benefits, including job search services. You can use the organization several ways in the job search mode including locating recruiters who are posting jobs (The majority of professional associations have this service today.), asking the officers for recruiter recommendations, picking up the phone and calling other members for recommendations. By the way, my experience is if a recruiter uses one of these associations to post openings they are usually among the better ones.
4. Attend trade shows, or at least get hold of the attendance list. There are usually at least 2 or 3 recruiters there. The best ones, would not typically have booths but will be [networking](#). That is why the attendee list is invaluable.



## Career Tips

5. Check out organizations of independent [recruiters](#) like Top Echelon, NPA, First Interview (sales and marketing only). There are others as well. The first two will allow you to look up recruiters by focus. One warning, while these networks try to screen firms and ask current members for references or "negative information" you will still get paper shufflers in all of them.
6. Ask recruiters you know who do not specialize in your area. They usually are willing to give you recommendations if they know any.
7. There is a book called "The Recruiter Red Book" by Kennedy Information. It is an exhaustive list of recruiters. You can purchase the book or most libraries might have it. A caution, the recruiters are not highly screened.
8. If the recruiter calls and you are not in job search mode do not quickly hang up. Engage them in conversation. If all they want to do, is recruit you for a position and do not want to listen then hang up. If they, have a conversation with you without promoting the opening that is the recruiter worth keeping in

the file for future reference. Remember; give them permission to call you for help if they are working on an active assignment. That will give you a lot of credibility with them.

A couple of final pointers:

1. Most top end contingency recruiters will not very often post on the big boards. The pay off is not worth the effort involved and as a recruiter it is too time consuming to go through all the junk you get.
2. When you are blasting out resumes do not send it to every recruiter you can find. Look to see if they work in your field. Also do not respond to every opening.

### About Author

*Bill Gaffney has 17 years experience as an executive recruiter, and a career coach. Bill can be reached at 937-567-5267 or [wmgaffney@prodigy.net](mailto:wmgaffney@prodigy.net). For questions to be considered for this column or topic suggestions please e-mail [askamaxa@yahoo.com](mailto:askamaxa@yahoo.com).*

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