

10 Steps to choosing a Recruitment Agency

If you decide to outsource your recruitment to an agency it's important that you make the right choice in finding the best one for your requirements.

1. Specific or General ? - If your recruitment needs are fairly general then you should look at a range of generalist agencies. However, if you are in a highly specialised industry or require someone with very specific skills you need a sector specific agency.

Ask for evidence of experience in that industry. Have they found candidates for your competitors, or has anyone in the company worked in that industry themselves?

2. Check their screening process

You are paying for a service to save you time and money - you do not want to be wading through CVs that are not applicable to the job specification or sitting through interviews with candidates who are clearly not suitable.

Does the agency meet their candidates in person to interview them in depth and check their eligibility to work in the UK (or EU etc.)?

3. Speak to someone!

The quality of their consultants will reveal a great deal about a recruitment agency. They should be up to date on employment law that applies to you. They should ask you lots of questions to determine the skills you require.

4. Look at their mission statement

Do they subscribe to rigorous codes of practice and standardisation? Look for indicators of a commitment to high performance and ethics, e.g. Recruitment & Employment Confederation (REC) membership.

5. Do they practise what they preach?

Do they believe in professional qualifications and developing their own staff? Look for recruiters with industry qualifications or experienced consultants with extensive industry experience who are trained to select and interview candidates for accurate matching.

This information was prepared by Steve Young (Managing Partner) of Downtown Recruitment, if you have any questions, comments or wish to discuss this guide or have any recruitment requirements please contact Steve on 01844-211792.

6. Can you complain to their industry body?

Are they members of an industry body with a complaints and disciplinary procedure? This gives you added peace of mind by offering you considerable leverage in the event of a complaint.

7. Everybody loves them

Have previous clients left testimonials in praise of the agency? Good recruitment agencies often have glowing sound bites from satisfied customers, and case studies from successful projects.

8. Experience of armies or individuals

Do they have specific procedures for dealing with the needs of small and large projects? Recruiting a single permanent staff member is a world away from co-ordinating an army of temps, and their recruitment policy in each sphere should reflect this.

9. The pricing

An agency that promises personnel at a price below market value might not necessarily be the best choice if it's not attracting high-quality personnel. On the other hand, a high-priced agency might be paying workers very little and charging an excessive markup. Investigate these issues before making a decision.

10. Hear the pitch

If you are still unsure, why not invite the agency in for an on-site visit? This gives them the opportunity to identify their USPs and quality of service they provide. A good performance tells you they are committed.