



Why you always want to know a good recruiter that works in your space

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In August, 2002, I found myself sitting in the lunch room of the John Deere factory where I worked, listening to a corporate HR person explain that the factory was closing and I would shortly be out of a job. I had moved to the area and bought a home in 2000, planning to work for Deere as long as they would have me. Needless to say I was a bit dismayed. The events of September 11th were still impacting the economy and the job market was not great. At the time I didn't even have an updated resume. I was caught totally flat-footed.

I did what anyone does in that situation. I panicked, and then I got my resume together and posted it on the internet job boards. I quickly got calls from all kinds of recruiters with all kinds of questions. Would I relocate? What compensation was I looking for in my next role? One recruiter was able to get me two interviews and I was fortunate enough to receive offers from both. I selected the one that fit me best (which was actually the lower paying of the two) and worked there for about a year until my current boss recruited me away to be a recruiter.

Looking back on my experience with the recruitment industry, I don't recall being impressed. Sure, a recruiter secured two interviews for me and I did get offers from both, but the counsel and coaching were lacking. I also did not get the impression that this recruiter really specialized in working with people of my background, but rather, was a generalist.

Now that I am a recruiter with some tenure I know that specialization is key. I also know that the individuals I work with need my counsel and coaching often in order to be successful in their careers. There are also a lot of parallels between that time and now, in terms of the economic outlook and job prospects. In retrospect, I should have been on a first name basis with a good recruiter in my space. Then, when the inevitable hiccup occurred, I could have just picked up the phone that very day and immediately had that expert working on my behalf, instead of putting my resume on the internet and hoping for the best.

What's the takeaway for you? Make sure you have an updated resume and references ready to go at all times. Be on a first name basis with a recruiter that works in your space and make sure that recruiter knows exactly the kinds of roles that you would like to hear about. Beyond that, help others who are struggling with their career whenever you can because you might be in their shoes one day.

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