
Maximizing Search Firm Success

Why some companies *fail* to obtain results from search firms ... while others consistently *succeed* year after year ...



By Frank G. Risalvato

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Search Firm Success

Understanding the Relationship Dynamics

Once you have found a reputable search firm you wish to engage in a corporate recruiting assignment, the next most important item is understanding the symbiotic relationship which must take place between client company and search firm representative to achieve a successful hire.

Contracting an executive recruiter is not unlike hiring an expert fishing or hunting guide. Such a guide knows which waters hold certain type of trophy bass or trout, what lures and bait should be used depending on the specific type of year or game sought, the best times of day to make your casts and precisely which rate of speed you should reel your line back in with.

The process of recruiting is similar in many aspects. It may on the surface, appear simplistic. After all one might think *is it really more than making many phone calls, sending emails, and initiating dialogue with prospective candidates?* Yes, it is. In the hands of a well-trained, dedicated, expert team the process unfolds much like that of a classical music orchestra under the leadership of a master maestro.

Just as an Olympic figure skater can gracefully execute an elaborate feat such as a Triple Lutz as if it were a walk in the park; decades of daily, focused, and dedicated training went into perfecting each individual portion of this move.

While a search firm can assist tremendously in increasing the percentage of trophy fish that will bite on your baited hook ... just as a fishing guide would be able to do ... it inevitably becomes the company hiring authority's responsibility for correctly reeling the fish in and ensuring it does not flop out of the boat before you've had your chance to have your photo taken (or bring it home to grill).

While an expert guide can facilitate *finding* trophy game fish ... it becomes the fisherman's duty to react responsively so as to not lose such once hooked. The same principle applies to manager's that must react to a fresh candidate presented.

Many of the frustrations with recruiting firms often stem from a break down in this "handing off" process. There are other reasons search firms may fail to produce despite their best efforts. The most common reasons for search firm failure are outlined in this manual.

Keep in mind the "causes and effects" we will reveal have been observed, recorded and studied over more than twenty years while supervising and training hundreds of recruiters both internally and externally for other firms throughout North America coupled with the

management of hundreds of millions of dollars in recruiting projects for companies large and small in numerous industries.

What you are about to read distills all of this experience and recruiting and project management expertise to identify the most common and critical breaking points.

There are many search firms and recruiters that to be sure, should not be in business. Some are outright lousy. Others never achieve a level beyond mediocre performance at best. However in a majority of our studies we found the original search firm engaged was more than adequate and the problem occurred when the maestro passed his baton to a client manager.

This manual is not designed to help you *choose* a recruiter. This is also not designed to analyze whether retained versus contingency or which fee approach is best. Both of these subjects will be covered extensively in follow up publications currently in the works.

This is to help you identify the most common problems so that you avoid many of them before they actually take place. In this manner, once you have begun to work with a particular recruiting firm, you can be knowledgeable of what is needed from you the client hiring authority or decision maker.

Search Firm Success

Common Causes of Breakdown

For decades our recruiting firm has often been asked to “fix” vacancies previously unfilled by other well-known search firms. Many of such openings were initially contracted to very expensive, internationally acclaimed firms with costly upfront retainers.

Yet a half a year or more later there was the vacancy as it was on day one. Empty desk. Empty office. Nothing to show in return for thousands and tens of thousands in retained fees. Why?

Sometimes the reason for this is that some retained search firms quite frankly, possess far more energetic and convincing account acquisition professionals than they do when it comes to competent recruiters that can actually follow through with the “candidate search end”.

When this level of capability is not duplicated when it comes to the actual recruiting talent behind the scenes, the first instance of breakdown occurs.

The next occurrence is when the candidate is passed on to the client for arranging a first interview.

Consider our symphony orchestra analogy for a moment. Imagine the conductor's reaction when his deft application of symphonic styles ranging from pianissimo to crescendo and fortissimo descend into a cacophony when he passes his baton to someone who just stepped up from the audience. The result would be a noticeable difference with how the rest of the musical score played out.

Yet it is not entirely the client's fault as we in the search industry often fail to educate and explain just how much time, training, and staff expertise is being invested to produce what the client often sees as the final product of our endeavors: The resume. If we were more informative, and patient with educating more care would be invested with each candidate delivered to ensure expeditious processing.

The forensics in case after case of search firm/client failures have led us to conclude the failure was a result of several combined lapses which were contributed to by the company itself.

The list which follows illustrates the *Top Ten* causes of failure and identifies the originating source.

Keep in mind there are dozens of reasons a search may fail including those that fail without ever contracting a recruiting firm.

Our list compiles only the most common factors contributing to breakdown (failure) after a *search firm is engaged* by a company hiring authority.

Several assumptions are made in preparing this list as follows:

- A choice of some type of contingency was agreed upon versus retained search
- A written agreement was put in place by both client and search firm representative
- The term “search firm”, “recruiter”, “executive recruiter” and “staffing consultant” are interchangeable

Search Firm Success

Top Ten Causes of Search Firm Failure

The list is arranged in order from the most to least prevalent factors.

By “failure” we consider any recruiting effort that was not completed within a six month period. This is considered an ample time frame for most recruiting projects but for the highest level searches for very visible roles with the largest publicly traded corporations.

TOP TEN CAUSES OF SEARCH FIRM FAILURE

- 1) **Fee Attitudes: Expense or Investment?**
- 2) **Stalling with Feedback.**
- 3) **Passing the ball to the wrong Team Member.**
- 4) **The Search Party Posse Strategy**
- 5) **Excessive Authority in the Wrong Hands.**
- 6) **Cutting the Recruiter Out of the Loop.**
- 7) **Too Many Chefs Seasoning the Soup.**
- 8) **Overselling, Under-Performing Search Firms.**
- 9) **Requesting References.**
- 10) **Cleaning House.**

We now explore the common underlying factors that result in each of the above.

1) **Fees: Expense or Investment?**

Many consider search fees as expenditures. It is a line item to be placed under the debit column. Or is it?

Few bother to speak to managers across town or state lines to find out what financial impact may have resulted from the service.

Company executives have frequently revealed that most search firms they contacted came “highly recommended”. It leaves one to wonder why then, so many proceed to spoil a good thing through hard-nosed negotiations to reduce a fee as their first goal in the process.

When asked about the fee, most clients hesitated in wanting to reveal “the great deal they received”.

During actual company visits and consultations, client’s eyes would often point downward when asked “what fee did you work out”. As if they know they may have done something wrong just as a puppy dog does when approached about soiling a carpet.

Only after probing did it finally become evident the low fee is precisely why they were without a candidate six months later.

Feeling “*you have accomplished something*” by bargaining the rate down some ten or twenty percent may momentarily inflate your esteem and instill a false sense of accomplishment. Especially for those making such decisions in the *human resource department* or financial executives somewhat expected to engage in negotiations.

Everyone loves a deal. Especially CFO’s and Controller types who thrive on such topics.

But we’re not talking about automobiles sitting on a lot that have gone unsold here. When months later you are left wondering why candidates are not being referred quickly enough, you may have only yourself to fault. A search firm may not always decline a search especially if a client came recommended – even though the industry would be better served if they did. But as other factors begin impacting the relationship later on top of the lowered fee ... the process breaks down.

Here’s what a postal service worker in a major distribution center revealed to me once about the difference between first and third class postage:

What ever you do Frank, never mail anything at third class postage rates. Do you know how third class is handled? The parcels are dumped in a corner and left there indefinitely until there is no longer any first class postage to handle. It can take weeks or months before that ever happens.

Nearly every search that has failed where we were called in months or years later to consult upon ... it was revealed to us that the company was *very proud to have obtained a very low fee on that search*. Third class fees.

They might have secured a low fee – and enjoyed being able to boast about it - but they still had no hire to show for their Controller, I.T. Director, Network Administrator, National Sales Director or CFO while millions of dollars were being sidelined or neglected during the stalled search.

It has occurred to us that companies rarely make the correlation between the lowered fee and lack of candidate production months later until we made the connection for them.

As Benjamin Franklin so succinctly stated these were cases of being “*Penny wise and dollar foolish*” (*Back then the dollar was actually a British pound.*).

2) **Stalling with Feedback.**

Receiving resumes via email, and then failing to provide feedback for more than two or three days. Candidates are a perishable commodity. The better ones are quickly turned off by unresponsiveness which can be interpreted as a lack of initiative or seriousness on behalf of the hiring company.

Providing essential dialogue and reactive feedback at a glacier pace negates all the hard work and effort put forth by your recruiting partners.

Some average or mediocre candidates might endure a sixty to ninety day extended hiring process for certain rank-and-file positions depending on the fields and geographic market variables.

Most of the better candidates however, will not stand for it. There are plenty of other companies that have their hiring act together. Flubs, flops, stalls and stagnation during the feedback will get noted and encourage astute candidates to accelerate seeking alternate career choices elsewhere.

Put your search firm through more than one or two lost candidates, and they will most likely render your search unserviceable and walk away as well.

3) **Passing the ball to the wrong team member.**

Initiating a search agreement between upper level management (COO, CEO, CFO, CIO or other similar level), and then turning the executive recruiter over to recently hired, low-level, inadequately trained or inexperienced human resource coordinator as “*the person you must interact with for setting up interviews*” is a guaranteed recipe for failure.

I have experienced many cases where the search was sufficiently mission-critical for the chairperson, Senior Vice Presidents or CEO of billion dollar companies to conference directly with us, only to later instruct us to “*deal with Jennifer from here on*”.

To our surprise, “Jennifer” often turned out to possess barely one year with the company and little to no previous experience. It made no sense.

“Jennifer” (name is used to fill in for all such administrative types) was rarely available, didn’t quite care, and did not view the project with the same mission-critical vision the chairperson did.

If the position is responsible for millions of dollars – have someone that understands what it takes to generate millions and appreciate the value of time and money act as the coordinator. A human resource coordinator should not be undergoing training through trial and error during an important search.

Everyone has to have a first day on the job. We all have to learn on the job as well. But there must be a balance between which specific projects an inexperienced or recent employee is permitted to practice on.

Countless studies our researchers have conducted have demonstrated many human resource coordinators are overworked, underpaid for the volume of searches they are unrealistically expected to manage, difficult to reach, and will not interview during lunch, beyond five p.m. or during other non-business hours necessary to accommodate higher quality candidates limited times of availability.

Besides these minor shortcomings, human resource coordinators are usually very nice people.

While weeks lapse as a hard-working candidate struggles to fit a telephone interview into human resource’s narrow windows of opportunity the company is hemorrhaging the loss of untold millions, tens of millions or more due to key positions going unfilled.

All because *HR* does not want to call someone at six-thirty p.m. After all, that’s *after work hours and their private personal time*.

In contrast, such hours including weekends are when your external executive recruiters and staffing consultants are hard at work getting a leg up on your competition by being the first “accommodating” recruiter to empathize with a stellar candidate’s priorities.

All of the recruiter’s efforts risk unraveling when confronted with a different mentality by certain human resource staff.

Consider this:

A Fortune 500, multi-billion dollar corporation recently centralized its entire recruiting function with a thirty person team of recruiters. Most of the newly hired recruiting staff consisted of recent college grads with one to two years of experience; none of which was in the company’s industry. Few had relevant degrees. One had an education in zoology. About thirty percent were recruits who had failed in the search industry during their one prior year or so of experience.

Having failed so splendidly in the competitive world of recruiting they were now sufficiently qualified to be hired internally by a major New York Stock Exchange traded company. This was a case of the “Peter Principle”¹ in reverse.

¹ Dr. Laurence J. Peter; Raymond Hull (1969). *The Peter Principle: why things always go wrong*. New York: William Morrow & Company, Inc., 179 pages.

I personally polled a few recruiters of one Fortune consumer product company at the request of a Vice President who wanted to know if “*The newly reorganized department is working*”. I was unable to deliver good news.

Several individuals made a comment similar to this:

“Truthfully Frank, I have forty open requisitions on my desk. I can’t see how anyone could manage and keep track of more than fifteen or twenty max ... there’s no way I can ever get to all of these and half of what I have is going to sit around for awhile ... “

There you have it! The classic situation of most internal staff level recruiters.

This lamentation has been repeated hundreds of times and nothing little has changed whether we were in the age of the fax machine in the eighties, the age of the PC in the early nineties, or the internet age at the turn of the twenty-first century.

If you must have such a person handle some of the coordinating process, make sure there is competent oversight or a key contact the search firm or manager can call to cut through bottlenecks and red-tape where necessary.

This applies whether there is an external recruiting firm in the process *or not*.

You can pass off a process to human resources but designate a manager with sufficient authority as the *Roadblock Buster* to contact if things are not moving forward.

4) **The Search Party Posse Strategy**

There’s enough information under this heading to create a separate manual illustrating the pros and cons of contingency versus retainer. For our purposes we will highlight the most dramatic problems which surface under contingency search.

This is a classic scenario that has unfolded thousands of times in searches nationally:

1. Search firm “A” is hired under a contingency arrangement
2. Search firm “A” is perceived to not be delivering results quickly enough (pick any of the reasons outlined in this manual as the usual cause) so therefore ...
3. Company signs another contingency contract with search firm “B”. After all, it does not have to compensate to enter into a contingency agreement (in most cases ... however many search firms have changed their procedures due to this practice).
4. When search firm “B” realizes “A” already contacted many of the same candidates and the problems exist not with

candidate availability but with company protocol, search firm “B” places the order on the *backburner*.

5. Company now has two firms it views as “unproductive” so it invites search firm “C” and possibly “D” to what becomes the *ever-expanding search party posse!*

Sometimes a retained or other renegotiated treatment of the fee with the original firm would have been far wiser than starting all over again.

The longer the position remains unfulfilled, the increasing negative stigma and buzz develops *on the street* within the candidate community who wonder what might be wrong with that hiring company.

Keep in mind offering to alter the compensation structure to your search firm is one very easy, viable and efficient means of possibly getting candidates back in the pipeline and re-stimulating the relationship over the ***search party posse strategy***.

If any position represents a realistic search, one and only one search firm should suffice.

5) **Excessive Authority In The Wrong Hands.**

In contrast with item number 3 above, giving too much authority to one centralized corporate recruiting representative can often backfire. National hiring or candidate selection control for a specific product line or business segment results in “*absolute authority – corrupting absolutely*”. This can result in *premature rejection*. Or rejection for the wrong reasons (such as favoring one search firm over the other) as well as other egregious possibilities.

Whereas management may have appreciated knowing of certain candidates they have been prevented from learning about such due to excessive control from within HR. Other abuses noted have included

- Stalling intentionally on passing along search firm resumes for the perceived preservation of job security
- Stalling with the hopes of finding corporate recruiting sourced candidates prior to the manager’s learning of the search firm referral.
- Allowing individual ego and job preservation concerns to trump company goals and missions.
- Favoring one search firm due to gifts, kickbacks or other

When individual ego precedes company goals everyone in the organization loses.

Most often, top tier executive managers are never aware of what is going on at these levels.

6) **Cutting the Recruiter Out of the Loop.**

Having management arrange initial interviews with the search firm and then setting up a second or final interview directly with the candidate without informing the recruiter of the subsequent interview or offer intentions.

By cutting the recruiter out mid-stream, you are only preventing yourself from learning “inside knowledge” the candidate is inclined to share with the recruiter. Why short-circuit yourself from obtaining valuable information and consultation which can be incorporated into an offer?

Sometimes such information could result in savings of thousands in unnecessary perks you mistakenly assumed were needed. Other times a serious misunderstanding has taken place causing a candidate to resign without obtaining all the facts – leaving the search firm potentially liable even though you have prevented them from performing their due diligence by acting on your own.

Would you ever retain a Realtor© to sell your house, have them invest for months in a marketing program – then start calling potential buyers that came to your open house directly ? There’s no difference here.*

**Limited exceptions may apply to large corporations when conducting top level searches. Recruiters may sit in first interviews or facilitate the process to a certain point – then intentionally agree to step aside to allow sensitive dialogues to proceed while helping the candidate build rapport with the company.*

7) **Too Many Chefs Seasoning the Soup.**

Just as too many search firms invoke the *law of diminishing returns*. The same principle applies to *hiring managers involved in the hiring decision*.

Limit *group interviews* to only the most critical and necessary team leaders or members. The more company hiring representatives that must participate *and agree* in unison on a particular hire, the more likely the chances are of a “*hung jury*” syndrome. One or two is fine. Three individuals ... maybe. Once the hiring decision rests upon the shoulders of four or five or more individuals all coming to an agreement – you will have better chances at winning the lottery than getting a group consensus.

Human nature is the fundamental force at work here. If one ... just one person had a “bad day” or did not like his or her review last month; or is perhaps disgruntled for any other reason ... throwing a wrench into the hiring process could be their only hope in obtaining satisfaction and retribution. Whether they liked the candidate or not becomes irrelevant.

It happens far more often than executives ever become privy to.

If your search involves a team decision of more than two individuals, and you are experiencing months worth of delays, this could be your culprit.

8) **Overselling, Under - Performing Search Firms.**

Quite simply, you may have picked the wrong search firm. As we mentioned in Section 2, many intelligent, well-educated and smart business managers have been duped by an irresistibly charming account executive representing a search firm whose name and prestige may have long outgrown its actual capability. Even Donald Trump considered the master negotiator by some, admitted being “duped” many times.

In such instances the recruiting *bench strength* did not live up to the *account acquisition strength*. Too bad.

This is a problem that extends through to all types of businesses including hiring contractors, landscapers, plumbers for home repairs or any service oriented profession where a well-rehearsed salesperson convinces you he or she is right for the job.

You may think for a moment that on this one point blame is finally pinned on the search firm where it should lie. True, in this example the search firm might have over-promised and is now under-delivering. Yet, the same responsibility rests on the shoulders of the company.

Just as you would ask for references when hiring a candidate, you should conduct due diligence and ask for references of the search firm. This is not as easy as it seems however when big egos interfere. This leads us to failure number nine.

9) **Requesting References.**

Here lies the rub: Very few executives would actually call a reference even if a stack of them were left on the table. At least not when it comes to selecting a professional business consulting service such as a recruiting firm. We understand this may not be an appealing undertaking for various reasons, but at least *ask for the firm's track record*.

While companies are quick to check references on candidates, very few bother to ask for the same on the search firm they are about to contract.

One comparable analogy is that of the driver that would prefer going around a city for hours than stopping at a gas station to ask for directions.

And if one does not want to alert other industry movers and shakers – you can still ask for *printed testimonials* or a citation or summary of recent searches.

By obtaining track record and search placement success information, you can eliminate problem number 8 and avoid having signed on the wrong search firm².

10) **Cleaning House.**

² More detailed information on Choosing a Search Firm will soon be available through Searchlight Publications, Inc.

Savvy real estate sales professionals know that proper house *staging* can lead to important advantages in selling the house ... even while neighboring homes remain unsold.

If the old adage of "*location ... location ... location*" holds true when it comes to real estate investing, then "*presentation ... presentation ... presentation*" are the next three most important factors.

When it comes to *vocation* presentation becomes a highly important deciding factor. You are *not just offering a job* but providing a *home away from home where that employee is expected to spend most of their daytime (and in many cases night time) working life.*

When a candidate is greeted by a frumpy, unkempt, cluttered or outgrown office environment such will create a negative first impression. It may even be difficult to ever undo this negative reaction during the interview.

I've been asked to visit clients and help them understand "*... why we can't fill this position despite trying for more than one full year ...*"

Often these companies have used one, two or three search firms over one or even two years off and on. They have reached desperation.

Once I rule out the salary and/or compensation not being an issue given the title and responsibilities; the next most likely culprit we focus on are

a) Interview process itself (which we've covered in numbers one through nine)

or

b) The overlooked office environment and aesthetics

Sure enough, after excluding procedural causes outlined in this list, the office environment was the case in many instances after ruling out all the above items.

In one company, I walked in to a small lobby, had to go up a staircase that was not painted in perhaps ten years ... containing scuff marks, and what appeared to be a hole from a boot kick. I would not want to work anywhere where people kick holes in the wall ... especially not knowing if someone standing there was the intended target.

Once upstairs, the carpets were loosened from the wall, bubbling and snaking (they had long outlived their purpose). The lack of attention to aesthetics continued when I walked into the controller's office and noticed an herb garden that was overgrown and spilling over shelving like something out of "Little Shop of Horrors".

Needless to say, this company was never going to get anyone to accept an offer. In fact I learned it had offers rejected three times over a period of one year despite offering ten percent *more* than local competitors for the same type of job.

This company had to attract at least three times more candidates for each single position they expected to fill due to the unpleasing work environment which the president was not about to change.

Search Firm Success

Million Dollar Solutions

It goes without saying, that if you can avoid the common causes outlined, you greatly enhance your search partners ability to deliver the outstanding service you were expecting from a recruiting service.

It was called to our attention that this list could be interpreted as if the problems are skewed toward the hiring company's actions. We are not vilifying companies by any means. To the contrary, many companies avoid the problems outlined here and quite a number of corporations have developed procedures for assuring constant and consistent results from their search partners.

In order to accept your search partner as an integral part of the process trust is required.

Trust must be earned. You must also extend trust to receive it.

Trust also requires time to evolve and strengthen just as a marriage grows stronger with each new crisis that is dealt with and overcome.

Following is a bonus list of useful suggestions and tools which can be implemented to improve hiring results.

Effective Ideas For Improving Results

1. Ask for references, placement examples, hiring history of the search firm you are about to work with. They should at least share recent results within your industry or specialty which demonstrates recent success. "Recent" can be defined as within the last year or two since activity can move slowly at higher salary levels. You ought to feel confident and fully trust the firm you plan on working with or else tension will arise throughout the process.
2. Have oversight over interview coordinators - Depending on the size and employee head-count of your company, you may or may not have dedicated recruiters in your personnel department. Some companies do not have a personnel department at all. Should you find it necessary to have a dedicated recruiter assist in the interview process make certain there is some oversight or someone with *intervention authority* that can be contacted in the event of a road block or lack of adequate cooperation.
3. Many companies insist on working only on *contingency*. Then they are occasionally left guessing who's "side" the search firm is on when it comes to candidate representation. Some executives have exhibited defensiveness during salary discussions for this reason.

If you insist on a contingency compensation format, the recruiter is actually working as a *dual agent* similar to such in the real estate industry. They are representing you. But they are *also looking out for the candidate's interests as well*. There is nothing wrong with this and in fact they are ethically and legally bound to look out for candidate's interests lest they be subjected to serious liability issues.

4. Written Confirmations – Search firms may handle millions of dollars of offers and acceptances on a semi or quarterly basis. While individual managers may engage in only a few "hands on" hires annually, many recruiters are managing the equivalent of a manager's entire yearly hiring load every week. This requires documentation for everything and you should not take being asked for offer confirmations, start dates, or other written confirmations as a sign of distrust but view it as a sign of utmost professionalism.
5. Ask the search firm to report back with any observation they make which may be impeding your interview procedure or hiring. You might also consider requesting "periodic updates" such as every two weeks or so.

If there are several weeks of silence, this might be due to the recruiter's focused and diligent work, or lack of attention. You won't know one way

or the other unless you maintain dialogue and “bi-weekly” updates are a great way to dispel much second-guessing.

6. Contingency firms often invest thousands of dollars and engage highly talented, continuously trained staff to each search project. The fact they are working “contingent” upon results should not be viewed as a “free pass” to interviewing candidates just to get the scoop on industry competitors, or for other ulterior reasons beyond the goal of actually hiring.

Some companies abuse contingency search services by tying their offices up for months – then discarding the search. Carefully consider each search you assign. You might think you are “getting away” with free services ... but astute recruiting organizations have highly effective strategies for dealing with such abuses which often provide quick, efficient remedy yet belie detection by the egregious client.

7. Limit working with one search firm – You should need one and only one search firm regardless of payment/compensation format, contingency or non-contingency. In the real estate industry, no realtor would invest time or money to market the sale of your house while knowing another realtor was already contracted ... even though the original realtor’s contract remains “contingent” upon the sale.

Yet for some peculiar reason, certain recruiting professionals in the search industry permit themselves to waste valuable office, and veteran recruiting staff time while fully aware the same search effort is being expended by another competing firm.

Our industry is to blame and the acceptance of this practice is slowly going the way of the fax machine and postal resumes.

Consider this: How great can this search firm be if they are okay with working on your search while others also agree?

Being asked for an exclusive is for your benefit as well. It protects your company’s public relations image, brand and respectability.

8. Practice Timely Responsiveness – Responding within twenty-four to thirty-six hours to any call or email is appropriate. Any time frame longer than this jeopardizes the momentum of interest built up in the candidate’s mind.
9. Never extend offers without your recruiting consultant’s input or knowledge –

Each company has different styles of actually handling the offer stage. Some large Fortune corporations require a trained “Human Resource Official” extends the offer for federal legislative issues.

Even under this scenario, most professional human resource representatives will almost always call the recruiter first to “trial run” the offer and obtain the recruiter’s “thumbs up” before a live call is made to

the candidate. This ensures the initial offer is within the correct range and avoids days or weeks of renegotiations.

In other cases, the recruiter should extend the offer directly as the candidate may have already made pre-commitments to the recruiter of accepting at a certain level which the company is not even aware of, potentially saving money in the process.

The recruiter is also the ideal professional for “pre-assessing” the candidate’s commitment to accepting, and ascertaining no other impeding issue has taken place since the last dialogue to preclude being able to accept the offer. The recruiter can act as a “sounding board” and tension “diffuser”. Why not taken advantage of all this since you are paying for it?

Fact:: After studying thousands of cases of “rejected offers”, a majority of the cause was due to the company’s excluding the recruiter’s advise during the offer stage itself.

Some reasons for offer rejection include:

- Job offered too quickly. Candidate became suspicious or senses desperation.
- Job offered at a point just below the candidate “minimum”. A common reason for excluding the recruiter. Candidate rejected offer.
- Improper setup, delivery or timing.

10. Take notice of your office environment and the first impression it creates
– Walk through your own interview process in the eyes of a candidate. Enter the office from the same door, hallway, reception area, etc. Take notice of boxes, clutter, or other factors that might dilute making a positive first impression.



About The Author

Frank G. Risalvato, CPC

Frank graduated Cum Laude from New Jersey City University while working full time to earn one-hundred percent of his tuition expenses. He soon after joined a company in San Diego, California as a regional manager as his first post-collegiate career move. After returning to work for a Manhattan company he felt his calling was in the recruiting industry. Being influenced greatly by the positive role outstanding executive recruiters had on his own career, he entered the search industry in 1987.

After four years as a top producer for a privately held recruiting firm in Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, he founded several recruiting and consulting companies beginning with IRES in 1991 which continues to operate nationally to this day.

IRES and its affiliates have contributed billions of dollars in productivity and revenue gain to the clients that have benefited from the productive talent hired over the decades.

Frank has been called upon to provide expert testimony to state and federal government agencies on the subject of labor markets, hiring trends, workforce initiatives and unemployment processes.

He was recognized by the Christine Todd Whitman administration³ and appointed to a prestigious New Jersey State Advisory Committee role which he held for six years.

In addition to hiring and training scores of recruiters as IRES expanded from its New Jersey and New York origins and transformed into a national operation, Frank travels to train and speak at numerous professional associations around the country each year where he instructs hundreds of recruiters in his methods and best practices.

Today, Frank continues to manage IRES, Inc. from his hometown of Charlotte, North Carolina. He remains active in his local church as well as the National Association of Personnel Services where he is a contributing, instructional member who authors volumes of training material used by some of the nation's largest publicly traded recruiting franchises.

He resides with his wife of eighteen years and two wonderful children, Frank Junior and his daughter Rebecca Lynn.

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³ Former Governor of New Jersey