

Title:

Employers - 10 Questions to ask a Recruitment Agency

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Summary:

If you are an Employer looking for permanent staff, using agencies can be an efficient and cost effective method of recruitment. Do your homework carefully and you can concentrate on what you do best, running your business.

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Article Body:

If you are an Employer looking for permanent staff, using agencies can be an efficient and cost effective method of recruitment. Do your homework carefully and you can concentrate on what you do best, running your business.

Here are some example questions to ask

How will they charge? - Most agencies these days supply permanent staff on a contingency basis. This is where, you only pay the agency if you select and recruit one of their candidates. The popular term for this is "No placement no fee".

What will they charge? - You need to make sure you understand how much using an agency will cost you. This is normally expressed as a percentage of first year salary. This will depend on a number of factors such as industry, location, level of role etc, but fees can often be between 10% and 30%. You might at first consider this to be rather a lot of money but just think how much its worth to you getting the right candidate with the minimum of fuss.

Is there a rebate structure? - Make sure that you agree to some form of rebate structure. Like it or not, some candidates will start a job and decide that its not for them and leave after a short time. You need to make sure that if this happens you can reclaim some of the fees paid to Recruitment Agency. This is normally done via a rebate structure. A typical example of this would be

If they leave within 4 weeks 80% of fees paid are refunded

If they leave within 8 weeks 50% of fees paid are refunded
If they leave within 12 weeks 20% of fees paid are refunded

However these scales vary between agencies. It is also becoming more common in competitive areas to see 100% refunds if the candidate leaves within 12 weeks.

What is their CV policy? - You need to make sure that they are going to make things easier for you and not just send through dozens of CV's that they have on their books, just on the off chance. Most reputable agencies will have a definite policy on this and be able to give you an idea of the number and quality of CV's in advance.

Any Client testimonials? - This is to help you ensure that you are dealing with the right agency. You don't want to have to spend a lot of time explaining to them what your company does or how they do it etc etc. The best way to avoid this is make sure that they have satisfied clients in similar business to your own. This will also give you an idea of how experienced the agencies and their consultants are in your business area.

How many agencies should I appoint? - It is a good idea to have a small number of agencies working for you as long as they are all on a contingency basis. This way you maximise your exposure to potential candidates while not spending all your working day dealing with agencies. A good idea is to start with 3 to 5 of them & see how it works out. You can always add more if you need to later.

What about a specialist agency? - Where possible you should consider industry specific agencies this if possible. Although they may charge more in fees this may be offset by the fact that they will probably be able to advise you more knowledgeably about the type of candidates available, market salary rates etc.

Are there any trade bodies? - A number of agencies are members of the REC (Recruitment and Employment Confederation), which represents the industry within the UK. You should try to confirm that they are members and that they conform to their code of conduct.

Will they do Candidate referencing? - You should check to confirm that the agency you plan to use both will confirm the identity of the candidates they send you but also if required can take up their references on your behalf.

And finally

Any other useful facilities?

Do you have an interview suite? - very useful facility as it means that you can

interview prospective candidates at their offices.

Do you offer Psychometric testing / ability testing?

Can you provide salary survey information? - This enables you to offer the candidates a realistic salary

Remember, recruitment agencies can charge you quite a lot of money so make sure that they are working for you!

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