



1 IDENTIFY DIFFERENT TYPES

Headhunters generally operate in one of 3 business models.

1.1 One-person business: One-person show

1.2 Small groups: Boutique

- Number of consultants: 3 to 8.
- International network: Sometimes.

1.3 Large organization: Multinational

- Number of consultants in an office: 3 to 10.
- Number of offices in the world: 3 to 15.
- Communication between offices may vary.

2 APPROACH THEM

2.1 Identify the most relevant headhunters through friends

- Keep an up-to-date list of headhunters with their area of specialization (if any).
- Find out the headhunter's area of specialization (if any) from among your professional contacts.
- Use your contacts to know who is good and who is not.

2.2 How many to approach?

- Avoid flooding the market (approach 3 to 5 headhunters only).
- Develop and maintain a personal relationship with 2 or 3 headhunters by contacting them directly.
- If you choose to operate exclusively with one headhunter, let them know.

2.3 Best ways to approach them

- By chance in a face-to-face setting (seminars, events, association meetings, alumni functions).
- Over the telephone.
- By email or letter.
- Through a third party.

To identify and approach headhunters specializing in one field/industry, follow these 3 steps.

- Step # 1: Approach a friend/contact/alumnus working in a company (XYZ) which operates in this field/industry.
- Step # 2: Ask this friend/contact/alumnus to approach HR in the organization where they work and get a couple of names of headhunters specializing in this field/industry.
- Step # 3: Approach these headhunters by email/letter/telephone and tell them that you know from company XYZ that they specialize in this field/industry. Ask them if you could send them your resumé/CV. Never disclose your contact's name at company XYZ!



3 GIVE THEM THE RIGHT DOCUMENTS

3.1 What to send?

- Send a short but detailed document (with or without attachments) that summarizes your achievements, initiatives, responsibilities and skills, so they can retain your information in their files.
- Send them a scanned copy of any document/article mentioning your name. "People with visibility" are always appreciated.

3.2 Updating your documents

- Update your documents once or twice per year.
- Inform your two or three favorite headhunters (systematically) of any changes (promotion, move) in your current job or career.

4 DISCOVER THEIR PRACTICES

4.1 Process

Headhunters usually follow these 10 steps:

- Step # 1: Meeting with a company.
- Step # 2: Preparing a job description.
- Step # 3: Sending a potential candidate very quickly to the company. This interview will help the company reassess/define their real needs (through benchmarking).
- Step # 4: Gathering information on the market.
- Step # 5: Identifying prospects (candidates).
- Step # 6: Approaching prospects (by phone).
- Step # 7: Screening prospects (from files).
- Step # 8: Meeting with preselected candidates.
- Step # 9: Briefing some candidates.
- Step # 10: Presenting 3 to 5 candidates to company.

4.2 Fees

- Average is 2 to 6 months of the salary of the person recruited (most commonly 3 months i.e.: 25% of yearly salary of candidate recruited).

4.3 Short list

Screening is done mostly by:

- From a large list to a short list: Research assistant.
- From a short list to a very short list: Headhunter.
- From a very short list to one person: Headhunter and President/Manager of the company.

5 NEGOTIATE TACTFULLY WITH THEM

5.1 Their philosophy and characteristics

- Remember, at all times, that you are as valuable to them as they are to you.
- Most of them are: delightful, charming, efficient, versatile and highly adaptable.



5.2 Being noticed by them

- Ensure that initiatives or actions you undertake have a high level of visibility.
- Take the initiative: help them when they approach you for information only (be an “information broker”).

5.3 What to do when being approached

- Show respect and courtesy to a headhunter's assistant; they might end up as your best advocate to their boss.
- React positively when approached by a headhunter. Ask them whether they have approached you as a potential candidate or as an “information broker”. Help them three times and they should help you once in return. Supply them with information that is not confidential or proprietary to help them carry out their search. Act as a “super connector”.
- Immediately inform any headhunter who approaches you if you are not interested in their offer. Do not waste anyone’s time and energy to satisfy ego needs or find out your market value.

5.4 Best strategy to adopt when facing them

- Meet face-to-face with headhunters to avoid the exchange of information over the phone.
- View headhunters as people of many dimensions, and not only as consultants.

5.5 Trusting them?

- Never disclose strategic or confidential information or documents to a headhunter.
- Trust them, but do not be naïve.

5.6 Enriching their job description

- Ask for the job description.
- Study it with the headhunter.
- Make 2 or 3 positive comments and then, suggest 1 or 2 additional tasks to enrich the job description and differentiate yourself from other candidates.

5.7 Disclosing your current/last salary

- Do this as late as possible.
- Stress the fact that you’re happy where you currently work and... smile (they hear that all the time from 95% of candidates).
- Use the: 15% + 15% approach to negotiate your salary. Some headhunters consider that to “poach” someone from their current job, they need to offer a 15% raise (a strict minimum). If the candidate resists, they negotiate another 5 to 15% raise.
- Then, and only then, list your perks, place a value on them and add this to your salary.

5.8 Keeping in touch with them

- Send them some information about yourself every 6 to 12 months.
- Arrange to share a lunch or coffee/tea with them once every year or 2.