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Finding the right IT Recruiter for your business

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Finding the right IT Recruiter for your business

Introduction: the role of IT recruitment agencies

The roles of IT recruiters for the twenty-first century company cannot be overestimated and it is not only about the growth of e-commerce. In a situation where the company's very survival relies on local computer network and maintaining data security, and even accidental data loss may put a company out of business for weeks, employing the most competent IT personnel is a must for every company. The growing need for IT professionals has made looking for them even harder than before as the unemployment rate in this sector is at an all-time low.

Because of that fact, most regular methods of filling vacancies – such as publishing job offers in magazines or websites – are becoming less and less effective if applied to IT personnel. Even if you succeed in finding someone this way, most of the time you will usually receive a moderately-skilled professional when you need only the best if your company is to survive.

IT recruitment agencies are the only way to provide your company with the best IT personnel possible. However, this is true only if you contact the right IT recruiter – the one that will fit your requirements concerning the quality of the offer and the budget.

The types of IT recruitment agencies

Basically, there are three types of IT recruitment agencies.

“Database providers”

This kind of recruitment agencies relies mostly on providing an employer the access to the collected database of unemployed IT professionals. The employer has then a chance to browse through the list of most suitable professionals and send them his offer. The databases in this category of IT recruiters are virtually always “general” ones. They include literally everyone willing to find a job in the IT industry and rely mostly on the information provided by the prospect employee. While they are the cheapest, using them requires some time and unless they offer some additional support, the employing companies still need to take care of the whole recruitment process themselves.

“Staffing agencies”

Another kind of approach is the recruitment from a different angle. An employer provides them with all necessary information about vacant IT job posts he or she needs to fill. Then the IT recruiter searches potential professionals and does a series of preliminary tests in order to curb the group of candidates to only a handful of the best-fitted professionals. This is usually done independently of the employer, the hiring company has the right to supervise the whole recruitment process. Only the “best of the best” who pass all the tests are asked for the final interview in the employer's office. These

recruiters' databases are usually quite specific – many of such recruiting agencies concentrate solely on the fresh college graduates and final year students.

“Headhunters”

The two above mentioned categories of IT recruitment agencies have a single trait in common – they concentrate their attention on those professionals that are actively looking for a job. In some cases, however, this is not enough to provide an employer with a dream candidate – either the requirements are very strict or there is need for a professional with a very specific working experience or skills. In such cases in order to succeed, another kind of an IT recruiter is required: a so-called “headhunter”. “Headhunters” will take into consideration not only those professionals that are currently unemployed and/or those who have decided to contact the recruiter to add their CVs to their databases. While they also use the regular database, those IT recruiters will do their best to find the right professionals for the job regardless of their current job status or employment in order to present them your offer and negotiate the possible job swap.

Choosing the agency

In order to find a recruiter that will be able to provide you with the type of professionals you need, you have to take a few factors under consideration. These are: the employees you need and the IT recruiter's specialization.

1. What kind of employees do you need?

First of all, decide what kind of employees you need. If you have no special requirements and you want to keep the cost down, the best idea would be to contact the standard staffing agency (database providers). The whole recruitment procedure will be much faster then – but that is about all you can expect, as you will have to run the whole recruitment procedure virtually all by yourself.

If you need some higher-level professionals or if you need to fill a larger group of vacant job posts, using the services provided by regular staffing agencies would be probably the best. They will take the whole recruitment procedure on themselves – an important trait if you need to fill twenty or thirty posts as soon as possible! Additionally, as they offer their services to college students and graduates, they are the perfect place to look for temporary staff. Many of those staffing agencies specialize also in temporary staffing.

“Headhunters” are known for the highest level of services and most of them take pride in their ability to deliver the needed professionals regardless of any problems. The fees and the scarcity of such IT recruitment agencies make this method however, restricted only to the critical posts like IT managers or highly specialized IT personnel.

2. Learning the recruiter's specialization

Another thing is a specialization of an IT recruiter. Before signing a contract with an IT recruiter, it is recommended to check what the size and (most importantly) area of interest of their database are. Some IT recruitment agencies, for example, may concentrate solely on computer programmers while others fill their databases mostly with IT managers. As many IT recruiters have needed to diversify in order to stay in business, the content of their professional databases will be different, too. A manager deciding on hiring of one of IT recruiters should check first if the vacancies which need to be filled are inside the recruiter's area of interest.

3. Checking the references

The third important factor is the experience of the recruiter and the references they have. Due to the fact that the IT industry is a relatively new one, most companies have only a few years of experience, the most important factor a manager should take into consideration is the references. Look at both the size of referencing companies and their profiles. If they are close to what your company does, it is very good news. The chances are that both the database and the recruitment procedures will meet your needs.

Checking the references is the best way to quickly determine whether the IT recruiter will be right for you or not. Remember that in order to choose the right IT recruiter you should actually contact at least one of the companies which employed them. This is the best way to learn first-hand about the IT recruiter's strong points and weaknesses. Such check is especially important in case of “headhunters” - because of the delicacy of their tasks – and in case of employing larger groups of professionals simultaneously.

What can be expected of the agency?

Generally speaking, IT recruitment agencies can make the recruitment process faster, less resources-consuming and statistically more effective. In practice this means that if only the right type of the recruiter is chosen, you can expect a swift delivery of at least a few most suitable candidates to choose from. You can also expect that the amount of time spent on managing the recruitment process will be minimized.

However, unless you have signed a contract with an experienced IT “headhunter”, you should not expect miracles. Finding extremely experienced and hard-working IT professionals willing to work for half the usual salary is far beyond the scope of IT recruitment agencies.

Also, while it is very rare for an IT recruiter NOT to deliver any professionals for the employer, there is no way to give 100% warranty that an IT recruiter will provide your company ONLY with top-notch specialists. This is especially true in case of database providers who have to believe in everything that has been sent to them by professionals. IT recruitment agencies do a better job than most in-house recruitment departments, but it is still possible that once in a while they may provide a company with an employee that is

a clear miss. The good news is that the chances of such mishap are low, but it is nevertheless real, especially in case of lower-skilled or temporary jobs.

Common myths about IT recruiters

The cheaper the agency is, the better

There are two reasons for that. First of all, cheaper IT recruitment agencies specialize only in providing the access to their database. While it may be a good way to find lower-skilled professionals, relying on price only may bring serious financial losses in the future caused by placing a less-than-perfect employee on a key post. Then, if an IT recruiter's fee is too low, the chances are that it will not pay enough attention to your needs as it will need to have a host of employers to keep the business going. Especially in case of hiring key employees or highly skilled IT specialists, it is strongly recommended to look mostly at the quality of service than on the price alone.

The agencies give your company only the best employees

While IT recruiters are able to deliver statistically better employees than any other recruitment method including in-house recruitment departments, some sour apples show up and will show up from time to time. On the other hand, all IT recruitment agencies do their best to keep this rate as low as possible. They often perform thorough tests to make sure that every chosen professional is capable to work at the maximum efficiency. This is often augmented by interviewing professionals or even doing some checkup of professional's past. None of that can give the hiring company 100% probability of success. It would be a mistake to resign from IT recruiter services completely only because of a single sour apple – though it would be logical to switch to another recruitment agency instead.

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