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When The Recruiter Calls

By Judi Perkins

Recruiting, retained or contingency, involves (or should, anyway) directly approaching individuals

who, based on their title or position, might well have the experience to handle the job description and position for which the client is seeking someone. The individuals who are approached, of course, are usually currently employed at one of the client's competitors.

If that individual is you, what would you do? What would you do when a recruiter calls and briefly outlines an opportunity with an unnamed company? Obviously if you're unhappy where you are and the opportunity sounds interesting, you're going to bite.

But I'm not talking about that scenario. I'm talking about the response when you ARE happy where you are. Because there's a smart way to respond and a not-so-smart way to respond. And either choice impacts your career far more than you'd think it does!

So there you are, sitting at your desk working on an important project, when the phone rings. And you pick it up. It's a recruiter, who introduces himself, his firm, and asks if you have a minute. What do you say? "Thanks for calling, but I'm happy where I am." And hang up the phone? WRONG ANSWER!!!!

Why? Because you just cut yourself off from knowing what's moving and shaking in your industry, which means you just cut yourself off from hearing about unadvertised opportunities that could potentially leverage your career.

You've just made the decision to limit your options. And if you don't have access to information, you can't make an informed decision, can you?

What should you do instead? No matter how happy you are with your current company, listen to what the recruiter has to say. You have a far better chance of leveraging your career when a recruiter calls you rather than when (and if) you contact a recruiter.

There are people who are truly happy with their current position and not interested in currently making a change, regardless of the opportunity presented to them at that moment. But you listen anyway, not

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to change, but to develop a relationship and keep yourself informed and in control for you when you do need to change.

A friend of mine went with a company that had statewide offices. She began in their corporate office right out of college. Over the years, she obtained her MBA and continued to rise through the ranks. For TWENTY-FIVE years she was with this company.....until she was laid off a few months ago. She hadn't seen it coming. And she freaked out.

If YOU aren't in control of your career, then your company IS. Corporate restructuring, layoffs and downsizing are taking place with alarming frequency as companies tighten their belts and look hard at who is contributing and who isn't.

Sometimes it isn't even a matter of contribution. In those plushy carpeted, window offices, the top executives and board members comfortably decide whose heads will roll and for what reason.

Sometimes it's simply eliminating an entire department – and it has nothing to do with YOU, individually, at all. For instance, it's not uncommon for a new manager or president to come in and bring his own people with him.

But it can happen that quickly, and it can happen to you.

Will you have a network to fall back on if it does? Will you have relationships developed with recruiters that you can tap into on a moment's notice? Develop it before you need it. The time to take control of your career is exactly when you think it isn't necessary: when you are happy and successful where you are.

Judi Perkins has been a contingency and retained search consultant for 25 years, with a short stint in the temporary and local permanent placement market. She has owned her own firm and been hired repeatedly by numerous clients. Learn thousands of ways to find your perfect job at

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How to Work Effectively With Recruiters

By Linda Matias

"R-E-S-P-E-C-T / find out what it means to me" is a line made famous by Aretha Franklin, and one that recruiters have adopted as their mantra. This is probably because there is a love-hate relationship between candidates and recruiters. Specifically, candidates love what recruiters can do for them, but at the same time, aren't fond of the fact that they need their services.

One can hardly blame candidates, since over the years recruiters have been branded as uncaring, money-hungry vultures who have their eyes set only on the bottom line. Whether there is a grain of truth to that belief or not, I can't say for sure. However, what I do know is that recruiters have been, and

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will continue to be, a viable resource for candidates. For this reason, recruiters shouldn't be dismissed, but instead appreciated for the role they play in the career services industry.

Many recruiters suggest that job seekers don't fully understand what a recruiter's function is in the job search process, and that this is where the lack of respect originates. In an effort to educate job seekers, below are some pointers that recruiters want every job seeker to know.

Respect what recruiters do. Although recruiters don't work for you, the good ones will work with you. With a hiring company in mind, a recruiter will make recommendations on how you should change your resume, the way you interview and/or the way you dress. If this is the case, heed his or her advice. Recruiters have insider information on the specifications the hiring organization is searching for, and the clues they provide are based on that knowledge.

Respect what recruiters can't do for you. The recruiter's allegiance is to the hiring organization. Therefore, he or she is going to spend his/her time and resources on scouting a candidate that fits the hiring organization's specifications, not on finding you a job. That's why it is important to realize that recruiters are just one source of getting interviews. Your job search plan should include other methods of gaining employment such as networking, answering want ads and responding to Internet postings.

Respect the interview with a recruiter. Save your war stories for your local bartender. When you contact recruiters, be discriminating about the type of information you provide. A meeting with a recruiter is an interview. Don't allow the informality of the conversation to convince you otherwise. During a meeting with a recruiter you will be judged on your performance; therefore, be professional at all times.

Respect a recruiter's time. When a recruiter has recommended you for a position, that means he or she has invested time in your career; therefore, respect their time, return their phone calls, and provide them feedback on the company after any interview. Recruiters are especially interested in knowing your interest level, your thoughts about the interviewer, the rundown of the interview process, and the next step agreed to by you and the company.

Respect a recruiter's reputation. Recruiters aren't just out to fill a job order. Their credibility is dependent on the caliber of candidates they send on interviews. As a result, recruiters look for

candidates who know what they want, present themselves professionally, and are out to win job offers.

When working with a recruiter, a partnership is formed; and in order for the relationship to be successful, there must be a mutual respect between the two of you. Recruiters want to work with candidates who want to work with them, not candidates who are having difficulty finding a job and want to be rescued. If you can effectively convey to a recruiter that you have a sincere interest in working with him or her, you'll find yourself in turn treated with respect.

Recognized as a career expert, Linda Matias brings a wealth of experience to the career services field. She has been sought out for her knowledge of the employment market, outplacement, job search strategies, interview preparation, and resume writing, quoted a number of times in *The Wall Street*

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How To Follow Up To Get That Special Job Interview

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