Recruitment Agency Transcript

In today’s episode, we will be talking about recruitment agencies if you didn’t already gather that from the episode title! For some of the audience here today who may already have jobs, you may already be thinking of skipping this one since it would seem like it’s more aimed at jobseekers but stick around – you may learn something new here today or think a recruitment agency can find you a job more suiting to your abilities! Or rather, you can listen along and be smug that you have a job that you feel happy and comfortable in – either way works for us! A recruitment agency is really a win-win for everyone involved. We’ll go into more detail but if you’re really strapped for time just know that the jobseeker will be more likely to find a job, the businesses that take part will get more qualified people applying for their vacancies, and the agency will get to know their applicants better over time and what positions they will fit well in potentially better than the applicant themselves. Let’s go into more detail now though.

Let’s take a look at the perspective of someone who may be working in a recruitment agency or plans to work in one. Well, an agency would of course benefit from you going to work with them so that they are able to actually do their job – seems like the most obvious one for a start. Everyone would like to have their job made valuable or feel like they are contributing something. Furthermore, most agencies work on a commission so the more candidates they get into vacancies the more money they’ll be earning. To some of you thinking of going to an agency, you may hear this and feel that removes some of the attachment between an agent and a candidate but don’t worry – so many recruitment agents want what is best for their candidates. Hey, even if we do look at it cynically, surely you’d want them to have incentive to get you a job faster and better too! All joking aside, agents take their job very seriously and getting to know you and being on good terms with you is a huge part of the job. For you agents that are listening right now, we have something for you in this podcast as well. If you are thinking about working at a recruitment agency as well then this bit will be helpful to you as well! We have five tips that work for any new start or struggling recruitment agent (we also discussed these tips in a previous blog):

Tip #1 – Treat new applicants the best you can

Some applicants and jobseekers may not be too sure about signing on with a recruitment agency so you need to give every potential applicant every reason to join you. An applicant for a recruitment agency is the same as a customer at any other business so they need to be treated well so they have a good impression. Since you’re basically advertising yourself and the business to them, you need to get them excited about working with you and to trust that you will get them the best job opportunity over finding one themselves or with another agency. You also need to treat them well in regards to their time and schedule. No one wants to waste time particularly if they are already stressed out because they are looking for a new job – this means making yourself available to them as often or as clearly as possible. Let them know when the best hours to contact you are. If for whatever reason you are going to miss an appointment, let them know in advance. At the end of the day, this could be considered simple human decency but it’s important to bring this up. Lastly, try to make them feel comfortable with you and the office. They may need to be going quite often and if they don’t know their way around or feel like they aren’t really welcome then they will simply turn up less. This means an unhappy jobseeker, less contact hours, and less chance of finding a new job which is a lose-lose.

Tip #2 – Make attention-grabbing Job Descriptions

The best job descriptions have the following:

1. An accurate job title that is as specific as possible. For starters, jobseekers are always attracted by more information since a job is clearly an important commitment.

2. An interesting and exciting summary that will get the candidates engagement will therefore lead to more applicants! Trying to stand out a bit more with your job descriptions has a huge effect

3. Have a description within about 1,000 to 2,000 words. According to Indeed, descriptions with this kind of word count receive 30% more applicants. It needs to be a good blend of a lot of info but not waffle.

4. Include the essential information about the job but describe it as emotively and as passionately as you can while also letting the candidates know exactly what it is they will do and need.

The effect of all of these together gives your Job Descriptions the best chance of grabbing attention and receiving applicants. If all of your advertised vacancies receive more attention then the business will too and then more people might consider going to you directly instead!

Tip #3 – Utilise social media and sponsored jobs

Speaking of vacancies receiving more attention, there is a lot of competition for the candidates themselves. Particularly if you are advertising a very specific role or something that requires uncommon qualifications then you need to make this vacancy known to as many people as possible in order to get that one person who may be qualified for the role. Social media can get you and your company exposed to a large portion of people if you deliver high-quality advertisements through Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, etc. It is important that you match the platform's demographics – Instagram has a younger audience on it compared to Facebook or LinkedIn, so if you had a company advertising a role asking for less experience then a younger market might be more appreciative and not over-qualified. Advertising on social media gets you more applicants and more relevant applicants to the role with the added bonus of direct exposure of the company!

Tip #4 – Success breeds success

Your own success will lead to more success down the road partly due to any experience you gain. If you know where jobseekers end up getting positions and what roles certain qualifications get then you know exactly what to do in similar future situations. Also, let’s say that you’ve done really well with a jobseeker, you’ve gotten them into a role and they’re really enjoying it, they’re qualified and getting the pay that they are happy with and you’ve left them with a good feeling about yourself and the company. For starters, well done! Secondly, think about what that ex-jobseeker is now going to be talking about when he overhears a friend who is in a similar situation to him before he met you! That friend of his will be coming straight to the company with the hope that he’ll get similar treatment. You’ll then get that mate of his a job and then the cycle continues. So word of mouth is a powerful tool but there are also internal programmes that can be created to push people in that direction, like a referral scheme. If someone refers a friend or acquaintance and you find them a job, give both of them a voucher or a small incentive. That leads to more recommendations and referrals and more jobseekers coming to the company!

Tip #5 – Keep yourself in the know

If possible, keep checking up on past candidates and how they are doing – are they happy in their position? Have they progressed further in the company? Check out other job descriptions being posted by the competition and see how theirs might be different and how you could improve your own against theirs. If there are any industry conventions or meets that you can attend to improve your knowledge we highly recommend going to keep yourself as knowledgeable as possible.

Following these tips should lead to greater success and ultimately more candidates choosing you over other agents as well!

Now let's look at the other side, the candidate's point of view. This would more likely be applicable to most of you listening to the podcast now. If you are a jobseeker and haven't considered an agency then hopefully we can change your mind. An agency eliminates a lot of the stress that comes with finding a job - you may not know exactly what to look for, you might not know what the best position your qualifications can get you, maybe an agency can find you a job that you yourself didn't know you would be interested in. By taking out some of the complicated matters of finding a job, you can simply get in contact with your agent and find out what jobs are available to you and focus on other things such as improving your skills, getting your education, or working at the job you currently have but would frankly prefer to get out of.

Additionally, an agency is completely free. That's a mighty incentive. Companies and employers are coming to the agencies themselves to get their positions filled out, meaning that they are paying the agent's commission when they find the appropriate employee. What that means is that you would have a better chance of getting a job with any company that is in partnership with your chosen agency - not to mention that many vacancies are completely exclusive to agencies. So if you're looking for a specialised position, or if you're looking to work with a specific company, then agencies have a huge advantage to offer you. For example, say you had a qualification in media production and wanted to find a job in that line of work, an agency that works with many media companies is going to know the best position for you as well as have the specialised positions and vacancies available to them before any website. Compare that to getting the qualification and having to search high and low through website upon website to find the positions, you potentially end up applying for a position that doesn't suit your qualifications, you don't end up with an interview or maybe not even a reply, the list of issues could go on. It's a considerably more effective and more efficient process to use an agency. On top of all this, a lot of agencies will also offer some training when it comes to writing CVs and cover letters if you are completely new to the experience.

We also have some tips for all the candidates who are currently considering an agency:

Tip #1 - Have a target or career ambition

If you have a dream job then all the better because you can do all you can alongside the agency to work towards that goal! However, if you don't know what career you want to work towards then you'll have to plan through this step by step. Do you know what career or sectors you would really like to avoid? Are you happy working in a temporary position? What would you consider your skillset? Each question you can answer yourself is one that you can tell your agent. The more info your agent has then the more specific a job they can get for you that will suit your needs and wants.

Tip #2- Have a good relationship with your agency

If there is one tip that you learn from and take away with you, make sure it is this one. Kindness can go a long way and obviously an agent (whether they like to admit it or not) would prefer to help someone who is nice to them over someone who is cold and maybe even mean to them. It's also just common courtesy, these agents will be helping you so please be nice. It is a lot more than just being nice though, you should try and build a relationship with them. Keep in contact with them, and update them on important things during your job search like if you're taking a class for a new skill or if you're particularly interested in a certain job. Even when you get the job, it's important to update them on how the job is going, or even to express gratitude. These moments will mean a lot to the agent so they feel appreciated. Also, you never know if you will need them again!

Be loyal to your agent and agency. Don't play agents against one another to see if they can get a better job for you by competing or saying that one agent has offered you a better position. That's only going to annoy the agent currently working with you and ultimately mean a worse experience for both of you.

Finally, be honest. There is no use lying to your agent as ultimately the best way your agent can get you the best job to suit you is by getting to know you. If you lie about your qualifications or your experience then they will start looking for jobs to suit that criteria. When you start getting interviewed and then the truth begins to come out, it's only going to lead to embarrassment as well as a breakdown in the relationship between you and your agent.

Tip #3 - Only use one agency

This is quite similar to the previous tip but it's obviously on a less personal level. You're not necessarily going to be hurting feelings by doing this but it's still going to ruin the connection you have with one agency. Whatever agency you are with, you are going to get the same treatment. The differences between most agencies are going to be mostly in the companies and sectors they are partnered with. However, picking your chosen agency is also very important since you're going to want to stay with them as long as you can to get started on building a relationship.

Make sure that you are picking a respected and reputable agency and then you won't need to look for a second agency.

Tip #4 - Consider your timeframe

Of course, anyone waiting for a new job would be somewhat impatient. Particularly so if you're in need of money. You'll need to consider how long you can go without having a job for a start. Are you in a position to be out of work for a few weeks or months? Are you already currently working and just looking for a new job? There are a lot of factors that can adjust your timeframe so you'll need to make some sort of plan. If you have no job but you do need money then perhaps you should consider temporary work. There are a lot of benefits to temporary work that we have discussed previously in a blog:

1. There's a lot of flexibility in temporary work that will allow you to fit it around your schedule or time constraints such as someone with a child or a student who is working on the holidays.

2. It will bring plenty of experience and new skills that could lead to better and more job opportunities as well as generally prepare you for a career.

3. There is a lot of competition for permanent positions but not so much for temporary work. You have a much higher chance of getting the role.

4. On top of that, a lot of temporary positions can lead to advancement to a permanent role anyway!

5. Your agent will know the dates of all your temporary contracts so can always get another temporary job lined up and ready for when your temporary contract comes to an end.

This means you will either have a temporary contract that leads to advancement to permanent, or you will have lots of temporary contracts that will provide you with the income of a permanent role with the addition of letting you experience a lot of varied work that could potentially help you figure out what jobs and roles you enjoy!

Tip #5 - Get all of the information

Finally, make sure that you get all of the information about the role from your agent. What's the company like? Why is the position available? What is the payment method for the new role? Get all the information from your agent that you can get and research everything else. This will help you substantially in the interview process and also whether you think the company and role would suit you!

So there you have it! A bonus for everyone involved. If everyone follows the tips provided then agents will be able to make sure their candidate's needs are appropriately catered for as well as effectively advertising the roles out to potential newcomers, and if the jobseekers follow the tips provided then that agent will feel appreciated and find a better job for them too!