



Recruiter Relationships Are For Your Career—Not Just Your Current Job Search

Whether you're actively looking for a job or not, fostering long-term relationships with recruiters is one of the most advantageous ways to maintain access to the job market and career-advancing opportunities. Likewise, the success of recruiters is also interdependent on this connection. [Steve Rosen](#) walks through the Do's and Don'ts for candidates when it comes to nurturing this important relationship.

This is a rare time for candidates looking for their next opportunity, not just in Canada but for much of the West and other parts of the world. With low unemployment rates and nagging skills shortages, career opportunities are plentiful—for now.

Employers have become more attuned to their workers' demands, with attractive compensation packages and in-house training opportunities. However, the most telling sign that we are in an employees' market is the constant flurry of job offers we see being generated every week—especially for the high-demand positions. But previous business cycles have taught us that the pendulum can swing in the opposite direction quickly and unexpectedly.

With the current landscape in mind, it's a good idea for candidates to start building relationships with recruiters today (even if you're not actively looking for a new role). Being prompt, communicative, and helpful can lead to relationships that can help you down the road (when you are looking). Below are some tips on how to develop and foster relationships with recruiters. However, let's first dissect how this mutually beneficial relationship works.

Mutual benefits for recruiters and candidates

There's a definite symbiosis between executive recruiters and candidates. However, to be clear, recruiters are typically engaged—and compensated—by the hiring company, not the candidate. Candidates do not pay for the services of a recruiter.

Secondly, the success of recruiters depends heavily on their ability to build an active and robust network—ensuring they

have a large talent pool to access at any given moment. Recruiter's success depends, in large measure, on their long-term relationships—following the movement of their network and engaging with candidates when the right opportunity pops up.

Likewise, ambitious candidates should always be growing their networks. Developing relationships with quality recruiters is one of the best ways to grow your professional network. This will ensure that you are able access the job market when the time is right for you. Remember, most mid-level and senior roles are [not widely advertised](#), but rather conducted under the stewardship of a single recruiting firm and their existing network.

As you can see, recruiters and candidates have a lot in common and most of it revolves around finding you new and exciting roles that advance your career. However, in a job market like this, it is easy to forget these relationships are a two-way street.

As the world turns

It's easy to be complacent when times are good. As a candidate, you're likely being approached by recruiters with a steady stream of roles that don't pique your interest. You might even be inclined to ignore the overtures as an irritating distraction, but not so fast.

Remember, nothing lasts forever and at some point, the leverage will shift back to the employer. Do you recall the story of Joseph and his technicolor dream coat? (Hint: If the *Book of Genesis* doesn't resonate with you, think of Donny Osmond in the Broadway hit). Seven years of feast were followed by seven years of famine, much to the surprise of the masses.

Indeed, economic fortunes can change quickly, while careers may last decades. That's why it's recommended to stay engaged and active even if you aren't ready for a career move.

DOs and DON'Ts

So, how does an ambitious candidate cultivate relationships with executive recruiters for the long-term? Here are some suggested dos and don'ts, offered as a quick guide.

DO:

- if approached by an organization or recruiter, make sure you respond quickly. Though you might not be interested this time, you never know what they might approach you with next time
- try to be helpful, even if you're not receptive to a new job overture. Suggest other candidates from your network if the position isn't right for you
- be honest about your interest level and explain what is important to you in considering a new role

- be open about other opportunities on your plate, if any, and how far your discussions have gone with them
- think about what compensation package is appropriate and stay consistent. Avoid negotiating at the end when you think you have leverage, as this can backfire

DON'T:

- ghost the individual. Reply as promptly as you can. If you can't answer right away, at least acknowledge receipt and advise when you will answer
- renege
- get into the [counteroffer game](#) with your current employer. It's not likely to make you a lot happier where you are. And, even if it's a short-term win, it could stain your reputation for quite a while

The time for managers and professionals to foster relationships with recruiters is now since employers are at their most receptive at this point in the cycle. Keep in mind that the employment market and network are small and may be especially so within your sector or industry. In other words, you're likely to cross paths with the same recruiters again in the future. Relationships can be enduring, and memories (or contact databases) can be long. Manage your network for the entirety of your career, not simply when you need it.

Recommended for you

Employers are seeking executives with specific core competencies. [Find out how to stand out.](#)

Our Contributors

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