USING RECRUITMENT AGENCIES IN YOUR JOB SEARCH

Recruitment Agencies can be an important component of your overall job search strategy, as they may be aware of job leads that aren’t advertised elsewhere; they actively seek job openings and employers approach them with job vacancies. Some employers even have exclusive arrangements with certain Recruitment Agencies.

WHAT ARE RECRUITMENT AGENCIES?
Recruitment Agencies are companies that are in the business of matching people to jobs. They are approached by a business to find the best person (s) to fill a vacancy – so it is important to remember they are working for the business that will pay them a fee for the successful candidate(s). Recruitment Agencies include the Job Network and are often referred to as ‘Employment Agencies’ or ‘Personnel Agencies’.

Recruitment Agencies can differ in their focus and size, and in the services they provide.
• They can vary from small and niche enterprises run by individuals, to large international corporations.
• They may specialise in one occupational area, or in several related areas, or be a general Agency that handles all occupations and levels of employment.
• Some specialise in entry-level positions, others in senior/executive jobs.

HOW DOES AN AGENCY WORK?
Agencies will recruit for vacancies across two main streams: permanent positions and temporary positions. These positions may be full-time or part-time.

Typically, representatives from the organisation that wishes to recruit staff will liaise with the Recruitment Agency and detail the skills, qualities and qualifications required in a successful candidate. The Agency will then advertise the position using the most effective method, which could include being advertised on-line, in newspapers or not advertised at all and filled from their database of registered candidates.

After screening candidates, the Agency usually holds interviews, and then presents a short list to the employer. It is usually then up to the employer to decide if they are happy with any of the short listed applicants, or if they need to go through the recruitment process again.

Using the services of an Agency should not cost the applicant anything at all – the employer incurs costs when positions are filled.

WHAT CAN AN AGENCY DO FOR YOU?
This really depends on what you are looking for.
You may be looking for:
• casual or part-time work whilst you are studying
• full or part-time work during vacation breaks
• full-time, permanent part-time or casual work once you have completed your studies.

Agencies may be able to assist you in all of these situations. It is important to remember that you need to make it easy for them to match you to a vacancy. You need to know ‘what you want’ and ‘what you have to offer’. It is unlikely that they will have the resources to provide you with Career Planning support and the Consultant will not be able to decide for you.

WHEN SHOULD YOU CONTACT AN AGENCY?
You can consider approaching Agencies while you are finishing your degree, during vacations or once you have graduated. However, as stated above, only approach an Agency when you know ‘what you want’ and ‘what you have to offer’. This will require you to have developed a resume/CV tailored to the needs of each Agency. Also review your schedule, be clear about your work availability, and determine the date you are available to start and how long you are available for.
HOW DO I FIND A RECRUITMENT AGENCY?

Research each Recruitment Agency before you make contact with them to ensure that they will suit your needs. Here are some starting points:

• The Recruitment and Consulting Services Association Ltd have an Online Member Index designed to help you quickly find a recruitment company: www.rcsa.com.au/.

• Also monitor job advertisements in your career sector – this will give you an idea about which Agencies may be of relevance to you. Many Agencies also have specialist divisions/consultants.

• Check the listings in the Yellow Pages.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU APPROACH A RECRUITMENT AGENCY?

Approaching an Agency entails a few fairly simple steps, depending on the type of work you are looking for. Each Agency will expect that you are well prepared, and know what you are looking for. First impressions count, and this will determine whether they will consider you when filling a vacancy.

Therefore, before your first contact with the Agency, take some time to think through the information that you need to get across to make the best impression. This could include a quick snapshot of your current circumstances, what type of work you are looking for, and an overview of what you can offer an employer. When you initially contact an Agency, expect to be screened or given a basic interview over the telephone.

Following your initial phone call, or follow-up call after registering online, one of two options will occur:

• You will be invited to register. When you register you will be interviewed to determine what type of work you are best suited to. This interview will include behavioural questions (these are questions that are aimed at predicting future behaviour based on how you have dealt with similar situations in the past). Prepare for this interview as you would for an interview with an employer and this includes dressing professionally.

• You may be advised that your application will be kept on their database and you will be contacted when a suitable vacancy arises. This would not require you to meet with them or undertake registration (at this stage).

Once registered, you may be required to undertake further testing – this could include verbal reasoning, numeracy, literacy and/or personality profiling. These are tools that assist with understanding your current abilities/preferences and will provide information to support the hiring decision. Further information on psychometric testing is available at the Careers and Employer Liaison Centre.

Practices will vary between Agencies and may also be at the special request of an employer. Referees will also be required, so you must be able to nominate 2 – 3 people who are able to discuss your work performance and your personal attributes in a positive manner.

ONCE REGISTERED - WORKING WITH YOUR CONSULTANT

It is important that the relationship you build with your Consultant(s) is a professional one and that it recognises and meets the needs of everyone involved in the process: you; the Agency; and the Agency’s clients. One perspective, on how best to work effectively with a Recruitment Consultant, is covered by Chandler Macleod in their brochure “Working With Your Recruitment Consultant” www.chandlermacleod.com/-222361/working-with-your-recruitment-consultant

Develop a good rapport with your Recruitment Consultant and make it easy for them to work with you – if they have a positive impression of you they are more likely to remember you. Always remember that the Recruitment Consultant has the choice of recommending you to their employer client base. The consultant may assist in pre-selection decisions for the employer client and can design and run assessment centres.

Be ready to respond quickly to any opportunities referred to you by the Agency and always be prepared to attend interviews at short notice. You may even be able to speak to the Consultant handling vacancies, which is of benefit to you. Just remember – whether in person, through your resume and letter, or online – you need to make it clear what you are after, what your availability is and whether you are looking for full-time or part time employment. Make sure you highlight your experience and skills relevant to your career goals.

SOURCES

• www.graduatecareers.com.au/content/view/full/142
• www.myfuture.edu.au