



Point of View

Employ a Recruiter to Help You Land that First Post-College Job

A recruiter can be an enormously helpful resource in your job search. They provide professional advice and valuable services -free of charge- that can make a big difference in your career success.

Remember the trauma of starting kindergarten, letting go of your mama's hand as you stepped into the cavernous school bus filled with unfamiliar faces? Well, it's happening again. Only now it's the scary work world confronting you. But just as your kindergarten teacher once helped you transition to the big world of school, a professional recruiter or staffing service can help you transition to the world of work.

If you're like many college students, you need the help. After all, leaving college is a huge change. Just knowing there is someone on your side, offering advice and rooting for you, can make a big difference in your success.

How a Recruiter Can Help You

A friendly and skilled recruiter can offer many valuable services. They include:

- 1) Helping you define and describe your skills and goals
- 2) Offering a birds-eye view of the job landscape
- 3) Giving advice for presenting yourself in the best light possible.

While "who am I?" might be less of an issue at 22 than at 18, it still looms large for many recent college graduates. A good recruiter can take you through a systematic process that helps you define your skills (marketable and not) and your interests. Then she can match those skills and interests with available jobs, including some you probably didn't even know existed.

You may like to noodle with numbers, to create Web pages, to develop architectural renderings using complex computer programs. A recruiter can be valuable in matching those skills with actual jobs, from actuary to CAD artist.

Second, an experienced recruiter can enlighten you about the job market. He or she can tell you what jobs are available, what they pay, where they're concentrated and how in demand they are. Looking at the overall market can also help eliminate some possibilities. Some jobs may not pay enough, given your student loan burden. Or you must live in a big city. Maybe the competition is overwhelming in Los Angeles but your skills would be highly valued in Nebraska.

Also, from buttoned-up offices to workplaces where Fido (and Fluffy and Pumpkin) rule the roost, each company has its own culture. A recruiter can help identify which culture is best for you.

Now that you've identified your skills and target jobs and employers, it's time for the workplace equivalent of online dating.

Again, your recruiter can be enormously helpful in presenting you at your spit-shine best. This might include reorganizing or polishing your resume, coaching you on interview skills, and even advising on appropriate dress.

So, there it is - a rundown of the free help available to you to help you launch your brilliant career. And unlike that scary transition to kindergarten, where your reward is 16 more years of school, at the end of this transition you get a paycheck. And another. And another. Think of it as the adult version of cold milk and warm chocolate chip cookies. Don't forget to say 'thank you' to your helpful recruiter.