

# Hunting The Head Hunter

By Robert Meier

When you send your resume to a headhunter, you should keep in mind that you are one of hundreds of potential candidates. Each call offers a short and long-term value: In the short term, you will want the recruiter to present your credentials to their client; in the long term, you will want an ongoing relationship that can benefit you when you find yourself needing to look again for employment. Remember, your key objective is to win an interview. In order to be successful, follow these steps when handling a recruiter's call:

## 1. Learn the Reason for the Call.

A great first question to ask is: "What aspect of my resume caught your attention?" You may need to be persistent here because the recruiter's tendency is to be dismissive or vague. They have a clear and limited agenda--to call dozens of candidates with one opportunity in mind-- so you need to stand apart from the competition. Secondly, you should ask if their call was placed for a specific position or just to touch base with you? If it's for a specific position, find out the job title, organization, type of field, etc. If you don't have time to talk at length, get the recruiter's name, number and a good time to follow-up.

## 2. Communicate Interest.

Recruiters are very sensitive to voice, tonal inflections or hesitation. And they don't want to work with someone who is merely "window shopping" for a new job opportunity. They will immediately eliminate candidates who fail to convey serious interest or flexibility, or who vacillate and/or appear unsure of themselves. You should always communicate interest at the beginning. You've been presented with an opportunity to work with the recruiter—remember this—even if the initial offer does not sound appealing. Often, following your meeting with the client or recruiter the position details may change and become more palatable or another opportunity may arise. Regardless of your interest at that point, you should leave a positive impression to ensure future consideration by the client and recruiter.

## 3. Demonstrate Confidence Through Your Voice.

There is a strong tendency for many of us to hedge our abilities with undue modesty or insecurity. It's okay to admit to friends that you have limited MS Word experience, but to a recruiter you should say: "I feel confident that I possess the knowledge and ability to navigate successfully within the organization using Word as a tool." There is something about your resume that intrigued the recruiter in the first place, and he or she may very well be testing you to see how well you respond to difficult issues and challenges.

## 4. Gather Detailed Information.

Make sure to extrapolate the following information from the recruiter during the initial phone call:

- Their name, company and phone number –write it down!
- Where does the recruiter see you as a potential fit—ie. type of field, position, etc. ("Robert, where do you see my work history fitting in the job market?")

- Be aware of any weaknesses they identify in your resume.
- Set a specific date and time for the recruiter to call you back.
- Attempt to arrange an interview within that first contact.

5. **Create & Rehearse A One-Minute *Power Blurb* About Yourself.**

A powerful summary of your career highlights should be tied into the resume and written, memorized and practiced prior to receiving any calls. The first few recruiter calls tend to be the best fit, so be prepared to build a favorable impression!