

Recruitment Agencies

A guide for newcomers to British Columbia



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Contents

1. What is a recruitment agency?	2
2. Job Seekers.....	3
3. Employers.....	4
4. Headhunters.....	4
5. Choosing a Recruitment Agency	5
6. Protecting Yourself	7
7. Additional Resources.....	8

1. What is a recruitment agency?

Introduction

Recruitment agencies (also known as employment agencies) work to connect you with companies looking to hire employees. A recruitment agent's main role is to find the most suitable person for a job vacancy that they have been asked to fill.

Tip:

Recruitment agencies can help you access the "hidden" job market by connecting you to employment opportunities that may not be posted on traditional job boards!

Each recruitment agency has its own focus. Some are industry specific such as:

- Engineering
- Information Technology
- Health Services

Specialist recruitment agencies can be an excellent way to break into an industry. Recruiters usually have a good understanding of the industry and the key companies.

Some agencies focus on temporary or short-term administrative and accounting positions. Others specialize in long-term replacements or permanent full-time work positions.

2. Job Seekers

Using a recruitment agency can be a useful tool in your job search. Recruitment agencies act as your representative. They can help you by:

- giving you access to jobs not advertised or posted on regular job sites
- providing advice and insight about particular industries (ie: healthcare) or specific employers
- providing the opportunity to gain varied short-term experience with several employers
- providing the ability to set up work in advance of arrival in a new city

Choose an agency according to the type of job you are seeking.

To join an agency, call or email to ask how to join their employment pool. In general, you will be asked to do the following:

- complete an application form
- provide a resume and a cover letter detailing your skills and experience, and an overview of what type of position you are seeking
- in some cases, a typing test or other exam to test skills may be necessary
- a face-to-face interview may be required

General rules for using recruitment agencies

- *Supply the agencies with a resume that is targeted towards a particular work sector*
- *Tell the agency about any important factors – do you have any constraints?*
- *Tell the agency if you don't want them to send your CV to particular companies such as your present employer!*
- *Keep chasing the agency for progress – check in on a regular basis*
- *Don't rely on agencies as your only means of finding a job*

Source: Careers4Graduates.org

3. Employers

Employers hire recruitment agencies to help them fill temporary or hard-to-fill positions.

Employers choose to use a recruitment agency for a variety of reasons:

- *they don't have enough staff or time to deal with the recruitment process*
- *they are recruiting for a new type of job for which they have no expertise*
- *they want to hide recruitment activities from competitors*

Employers pay recruitment agencies for their service. The cost cannot be transferred to you, the job seeker, to pay. Employers and recruiters agree on a wage for the successful candidate and the recruiter's portion included in this amount.

Note: If there is a strike or lockout in progress, the recruitment agency should be notified. Recruitment agencies should not knowingly send a worker to replace an employee who is on strike or locked out without telling the worker.

4. Headhunters

Executive search firms, also known as headhunters, specialize in filling senior-level management positions that require extensive experience and knowledge. These positions are often not posted in traditional ways, so connecting with a headhunter can be the only way to find out about high-level professional positions.

5. Choosing a Recruitment Agency

With so many choices, it can be difficult to choose a recruitment agency. Finding a recruitment agency that fits your needs and professional goals will take time, but it can be a long term relationship.

Some tips for choosing an agency:

- Pay attention to how long it takes to hear from the agency after sending in your resume. They should at least send an acknowledgement of your application and give a timeline of how long it will take to become a registered candidate.
- Ask the recruiter about themselves. Do they have knowledge of specialized skills required for your industry? What they do with their work time? They should be networking regularly to meet candidates and employers. Do a web search on the recruiter: a well-connected, professional recruiter will have more professional contacts and hopefully more job opportunities.
- Recruiters should want to know about your plans and goals on a professional level and get a sense of your personality. This should include a face-to-face interview. They should have suggestions for improving your resume and interview skills.
- Check to see how much the recruiter helps during the hiring process and the negotiation process. The recruiter should be involved in the hiring process and act as the go-between for the employer and the candidate. A good recruiter should be willing to listen to concerns and take them back to the employer to find a compromise.
- Check on other services that are offered by the agency, such as resume editing or free software training.

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- Ask about the rate of compensation. Check salary surveys to compare market rates with the recruitment agencies' rate.
- Ask about temporary to permanent employment; this will indicate how successful the agency is at placing people into positions.

The following directories can help you locate headhunters and recruitment agencies:

- **Directory of Canadian Recruiters** / Continental Records Co. 2011. Central Library, 658.311025 D59
- **HR Vendors Guide** / Thomas Reuters Canada. 2016. Central Library, 658.30025 H87 – see pg 158 for Recruitment & Staffing Services
- **HeadHunters Directory**
<http://headhunters-canada.com/regions/british-columbia>
- **Reference Canada**
Available from the VPL Digital Library:
<http://www.vpl.ca/digital-library/reference-canada>
Click on "Start Search" beside Canadian Businesses, then select the "Advanced Search" button. Select both "Keyword/SIC/NAICS" under Business Type and "City" under Geography. In the top search box enter "recruit" or "recruitment" and click SEARCH. Select the appropriate headings. Lower down, select the Province, choose the cities, and click the "View Results" button.

NOTE: *You can access this database from a Library computer. If you are using a computer from outside the Library, you will need a Vancouver Public Library card to login to this database. After clicking on the database name, you will be asked to enter your library card number and PIN (usually last four digits of your telephone number).*

6. Protecting Yourself

It is against the law in British Columbia for you to be charged a "placement fee" by a recruitment or employment agency.

You should not be charged a fee to use a recruitment agency. The cost of the agency's service is paid by the employer because the agency is helping the company fill a position. There may be costs for updating your resume or for personality testing, but those costs should be optional rather than required.

Recruitment agencies must be licensed under the Employment Standards Act in BC. Check to make sure the agency is included in the following list:

- **Licensed Employment Agencies in BC**

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/employment-business/employment-standards-advice/employment-standards/licensing>

Updated annually

[Note: The only time a recruitment agency does not need to be licensed is if they hire only for one company.]

If you choose to register with more than one recruiter, let each one know you are working with someone else as well. It can be an issue if your resume is given to the same employer by two or more recruiters, as recruiters get paid per placement.

7. Additional Resources

- **British Columbia Employment Standards – Employment Agencies**
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/employment-business/employment-standards-advice/employment-standards/licensing/licensing-employment-agencies>
- **WorkBC Employment Services**
<https://www.workbc.ca/Employment-Services.aspx>
- **Working with a Recruitment Agency, Monster.ca**
<https://www.monster.ca/career-advice/article/working-with-a-recruitment-agency-canada>
- **Click on ‘Job Search Resources’ at <http://skilledimmigrants.vpl.ca> for help on:**
 - Avoid employment scams
 - Getting Canadian work experience

***Questions? Please ask the Information Staff in the Central Branch,
Vancouver Public Library or telephone 604-331-3603.***

Please note that the information in this guide is also available online through the Skilled Immigrant InfoCentre website at <http://skilledimmigrants.vpl.ca/>.