

# differentiating recruitment firms:



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**T**he fast-growing recruitment industry has primarily developed as a transactional service, swiftly placing people in jobs, rather than a strategic business partnership between recruitment providers and their clients. To assist people in the selection of a recruitment provider an eight-point checklist is provided below.

## 1. How well does your recruitment provider know your industry, your organisation and the job you are selecting for?

Robust selection requires a thorough analysis of the job being selected for, together with a clear and explicit understanding of the wider organisation and industry in which a person is to work. Well developed, structured job analysis will provide a very detailed understanding of the role with regards to such categories as: internal and external contacts, decision making, work context, knowledge areas, equipment use and supervision given and received, allowing a thorough and accurate job description to be developed.

## 2. Does your recruitment provider use psychometric testing?

As not all test users are adequately trained in the use of psychometric tests, it is important for an organisation to ensure that the recruiters are adequately trained in strategic psychometric testing. The interpretation of psychometric tools is important in predicting productivity and therefore should be seen as a cost-effective mandatory part of a selection process, not an over-priced "nice to have" addition.

## 3. Does your recruitment provider collate your candidate data in order to enhance future selection decisions?

Candidate assessment and bio-data can be used to model trends in your organisation, build in-house norm groups, and assess any recruitment biases with respect to gender or ethnicity. Numerous agencies do collect selection data about candidates they have tested, but do not separate it out by organisation. This is because they do not have the technology in place, nor do they use this data to support targeted role profiling and benchmarking activity.

## 4. Is your recruitment provider trained in the area of structured interviewing?

Research indicates that the more structured the interview, the more likely it is to elicit the information required to make a robust selection decision. As a minimum, a recruitment firm which takes structured interviewing seriously should have a list of

competency-based questions that reflect the job under review, an objective scoring for grading responses and a means of determining reliability between interviews and reducing interviewer biases.

## 5. Does your recruitment provider use structured application forms or have a structured methodology for reviewing CVs?

Unlike the traditional CV, standardised job-relevant application forms seek the same information from all candidates, therefore allowing a client to more objectively compare one candidate to another and better assess the relative strengths of each applicant against critical role requirements. In certain circumstances the application form may be deemed inappropriate due to the amount of work that is required for its completion. Therefore a structured methodology is recommended in the review of CVs so as to endorse a more standardised procedure.

## 6. Does your recruitment provider have the capacity to run practical work simulations if required?

There are times when a practical job simulation may help determine the suitability of one candidate over another. From a candidate's perspective, job simulations are often seen to be more fair and equitable than other forms of testing due to their high face validity and obvious relationship to job.

## 7. How does your recruitment provider integrate selection data to make a final recruitment decision?

A recruitment firm may meet the six criteria specified above yet still select a candidate on the basis of "gut instinct". In contrast, the use of a more systematic and scientific selection methodology is recommended, one that combines all available selection data and evaluates it against competency standards.

## 8. How do you determine the performance of your recruitment provider?

Do you really know the extent to which your ability to select the right person has been improved by your recruitment firm? The answer to this question lies in the quality of candidate data that is collected over time. A recruitment firm that keeps data on placements and monitors its success will be able to learn from their mistakes and become an effective strategic business partner worth paying for.

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