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Your Guide To Finding the Best Recruiter

How to Choose a Recruiter Who Actually Gets You Hired

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Even when you're eager to find the ideal role fast, getting constant messages from recruiters can be stressful. Some are thoughtful and specific. Others look like they were copied to a hundred people at once. It's hard to know which ones deserve your attention and which will end up wasting your time.

Finding a recruiter who genuinely cares about your goals makes a huge difference to your career. A good recruiter doesn't just pass along job postings. They help you consider your wants and introduce you to roles you might never see. That matters when up to 4 in 5 jobs today are never advertised publicly.

Unfortunately, not every recruiter has your best interests in mind. Some focus only on hitting their placement targets, and others know enough about your sector. You need to know what to look for and what to avoid, which we are sharing in this week's post.

The Foundation: What Makes a Great Recruiter

A great recruiter isn't just a middleman who fires off job descriptions. A truly reliable recruiter acts as your guide – they're honest with you, direct, supportive, and knowledgeable.

You can often start to see if you've found the right person. For one thing, a good recruiter listens. They're not just nodding along while they look for keywords on your CV; they're asking questions, diving deeper into your goals.

Instead of jumping straight to, "Can you start Monday?", they might say, "What would a meaningful next step look like for you?" That's not something you hear from everyone.

It also helps if they really know your industry. The best recruiters can talk through the state of the market without having to check a cheat sheet. If you're in healthcare, they'll understand the certifications and work environments that matter. That kind of industry knowledge is hard to fake.

Good recruiters are also clear communicators. They don't keep you guessing. If a process usually takes six weeks, they'll say so. If a promising role has challenges you must overcome, they'll iron them out for you. Then, there's how they treat the relationship.

The best recruiters don't vanish if a job doesn't pan out. They'll stay in touch, check in once in a while, maybe even send over information on a networking event or course that might be helpful. That tells you they see you as more than a slot to fill.

Communication Red Flags to Watch For

How a recruiter communicates with you is a big factor. Not every initial message you get from someone looking to fill a job role is worth your trust. Not every recruiter bothers to stay transparent and accessible throughout your job search process.

First impressions matter with recruiters just as much as they do for candidates. If you notice any of the following, step back:

- **Messages feel copied and pasted:** The message could have gone to fifty others. There is no mention of your work history or anything personal; it is just a bland pitch.
- **They can't tell you why you'd be a fit:** They don't mention why they reached out to you or reference your credentials. When you ask why you're right for the role, they give you a canned response.
- **The details are vague:** You get a message about a generic job – no reference to responsibilities, requirements, or anything.
- **They push you to act fast:** Maybe they say you need to share your CV instantly to get a chance, or complete an online test without any background.
- **They disappear.** You had a good conversation. Maybe send over your details, and then nothing. The recruiter seems to vanish into thin air.
- **They avoid your questions.** You ask about the company's culture or the salary range, and they either dodge or give you generic answers. You probably won't get transparency later if they can't be upfront.
- **They complain about other people.** Maybe they talk down about other candidates or vent about clients. It's unprofessional and usually means they won't speak well of you either.
- **It's all about their deadlines.** You hear many "I need to fill this quickly" and not much about whether it aligns with what you want.

Questions You Should Always Ask

Ask a recruiter questions. You're trusting them to talk to companies on your behalf, and that's no small thing.

Here are some things worth asking when you first start talking.

- **"Why do you think this role fits me?"** They should be able to tell you exactly why they reached out, not just say you have "a good experience."
- **"What did you notice about my experience?"** They probably don't know anything about you if they can't name anything specific. You might be a name on a list.
- **"How do you usually keep in touch?"** Some recruiters will text or call every few days. Others might email now and then. It helps to know.
- **"What's the culture like at this company?"** See if they can tell you something concrete. They might share stories, examples, or information about the employer.
- **"How long does this process usually take?"** They might not be able to tell you when you'll get a job offer, but they can give you a basic timeline.
- **"Can you share a couple of references from folks you've placed?"** Anyone doing this for a while will have people they can talk to.

Evaluating Recruiter Industry Knowledge and Approach

You can tell a lot about a recruiter by how much they understand your field. Some people will say they “specialise” in an industry, but when you ask a few questions, they don’t know much beyond the job titles.

The best way to determine this is to listen to how they discuss your work and the market overall. Here’s what to look for:

- Knows the language of your industry, without getting confused.
- Understands your role’s latest trends, challenges, and opportunities.
- Can map out the standard career path for someone in your work.
- Asks you about specific technical skills and competencies.

If you bring up a common concept in your industry and their eyes go blank, that probably means they’re not as much of a specialist as they say.

Professional approach indicators

Beyond knowledge, please pay attention to how they handle the whole process of representing you. What they do before and after you talk will give you clues about their professionalism.

A recruiter worth your time will:

- Look into your background before calling you, so you don’t have to explain everything from scratch.
- Show you multiple options, if possible, rather than pushing you hard toward a single role.
- Share honest insights about salaries or benchmarks in your role.
- Give you direct feedback you can use, whether you move forward with the position or not.
- Stay friendly, while being professional, clear, and straightforward.

Some recruiters will also share advice you didn’t even think to ask for, like how to highlight certain parts of your experience or what to expect in an interview.

Building Productive Long-term Relationships

Once you find a recruiter who feels like a good fit, you must consider how to keep that relationship strong over time. The best connections aren’t just about landing one job. They’re about having someone you can call years down the road when you’re ready for a new step.

Here are a few things you can do to build that rapport:

- Be honest about what you want: If you’re still figuring out your career roadmap, that’s fine – but say so. If you have dealbreakers and priorities already, share them early.
- Give feedback: If they share a role with you that isn’t right, don’t just ignore them; let them know. Tell them when an interview didn’t go well or a culture didn’t feel like the right match. It helps them help you.
- Stay in touch: Even if you take a job, check in sometimes. This is just a quick update to keep the connection going.
- Refer people you trust: If you know someone who’s looking, pass along their name. Recruiters remember when you help them out.
- Show appreciation: We all appreciate a little gratitude. Thank them if your recruiter helped you find the role of your dreams

Remember, the relationship you build here can be an amazing asset. You’ll have someone who knows what matters to you and can spot the right job when it comes along.

Choosing the Right Partner for Your Career

Choosing a recruiter isn't something you have to rush. You have more control than you might think. The best recruiters won't just find you a job; they'll help you navigate your career.

You deserve a recruiter who can give clear answers, honest advice, and respect your time. Don't settle for anyone who treats you like another number or CV. Trust your gut when something is wrong, ask questions, and take your time.

The right recruiter will stand out because they'll treat your goals like they matter and go above and beyond to help you achieve them.

A little about Sarah Bishop and Recruit Recruit Ltd



Whether you're a sole trader hiring your first team member, a VC-backed startup needing to scale fast, or a corporate looking for top-tier C-suite talent, one thing stays true:

Your business grows when your people grow.

I help founders, CEOs and business leaders build brilliant teams through:

- **Recruitment:** finding and placing the right people for the right roles or embedding a talent team into growing businesses
- **Sales & Leadership Training:** developing high-performing teams that sell, lead and deliver
- **Speaking & EmCeeing:** energising events and conferences with insight, humour and practical takeaways
- **Coaching:** supporting leaders to grow confidently, communicate better, and build culture that sticks

Over the years, I've supported businesses at every stage, from bedroom startups to scale-ups and established firms navigating change. What they all have in common? A vision to grow and the ambition to get the right people on board to make it happen.

I bring no-nonsense advice, energy, empathy and results, whether I'm:

- Hiring a game-changing leadership role
- Training a founder-led team to sell with confidence
- Speaking on stage about team-building, fearless follow-up, or people strategy
- Coaching a business owner through their first ever hire

So, let's talk if:

- You're ready to grow and want to hire with confidence
- You need training or coaching to get more from your team (or yourself!)
- You're planning an event and want a speaker or EmCee who brings both energy and value

Drop me a message or connect – let's build something brilliant together.

Contact

Sarah Bishop
Founder & CEO
Recruit Recruit Ltd

www.recruitrecruit.co.uk
sarah@recruitrecruit.co.uk
01902 763 006
07827 860358