



## Standing Out: Getting Noticed by Executive Recruiters

Getting past the competition at the recruiter's office could be the first step to securing your next finance position. With so many talented applicants, top recruiters are busier than ever and can be tough to impress. Getting noticed by recruiters is all about standing out: with both your skills and finance credentials. There are several approaches that can help you get noticed and get ahead of the recruiting pack.

### **Use Your Network to Connect**

Asking for introductions from others in your field is often the best way to connect with a very busy recruiter. Without using your network for an introduction, it can be tough to develop a new recruiter relationship, says Michael Levine, Principal of Advantage Talent, an Atlanta-based recruiting firm. "My first calls are to the financial executives with whom I have developed personal relationships, and to members of my trusted networks," he says.

### **Time it Right**

You should pay attention to logistics. For one, contact recruiters early in the day when they are less tied up with potential clients, suggests Mitchell Feldman, president of A.E. Feldman Associates Inc., a Great Neck, N.Y.-based executive placement firm. "Try to be the first person they speak with," says Feldman.

### **Provide a Standard Resume**

When working with recruiters, don't use resume services that reconfigure your resume to keep employment gaps or other information out of sight. Use a standard resume format that highlights your successes but avoid vague marketing sheets. "Keep the resume simple with no gimmicks," says Levine.

### **Meet Face to Face**

To leave a lasting impression, work around the recruiter's busy schedule to set up a face-to-face meeting (instead of a phone conversation), says Nick D'Ambrosio, president of FirstHire, an Irvine, Calif.-based career development firm. "Having a face matched to a name will enhance your chances of being remembered should a job opening call for" your skills, he says.

### **Don't Share Personal Information**

While a recruiting interview is more conversational than interviews with your future boss, it's important to keep these exchanges completely professional. For example, when describing the ideal job, never mention spousal concerns as a reason that you wouldn't be interested in a specific position or relocating to a certain city, says Levine. "Answer questions as business executives, and keep the conversation on a professional level," he says.

### **Show Off Stellar Communication Skills**

The duties of many finance professionals are interwoven within the company, so communicating effectively is a key aspect of the job. To quickly single out the best candidates, many recruiters look for top-notch communication skills, which can be difficult to find among finance professionals, says Levine. "Many financial executives believe that having the right hard skills is enough -- this couldn't be farther from the truth."

### **Be Patient**

Thinking you're always the 'right' person for a certain position can hurt your relationship with a recruiter, says Robert Lee, president of Gibson Martin Careergoals LLC, a New Jersey-based recruiting firm which focuses on both finance and accounting. "If you have been in equity sales, and have a desire to do equity research with no actual experience in that area, you will be disappointed in the lack of interest in your resume," says Lee. Instead, understand that your qualifications may only be a fit for a specific finance role and demonstrate to the recruiter that you can wait for the right fit.

### **Show that You're Reliable**

For many recruiters, finding trustworthy candidate is one of the most important aspects of insuring he or she

is a fit for the job, says Feldman. To build a trusting relationship, make sure to never bypass the recruiter when applying for a position that the recruiter originally brought to your attention. Also, it's important be diligent about promptly returning phone calls or emails. "The recruiter has to feel confident that candidate will play it fair and play it straight, too many times candidates are very flakey," says Feldman.

### **Stay in Touch During Times of Employment**

For many job seekers, accepting a job means the end of a relationship with a recruiter. But instead of losing touch, experts recommend that you make time to check in every three to six months. By keeping in touch you'll be able to build on previous relationships instead of starting from square one with a new recruiter once you begin another search, says Levine. "It's a lot easier to get the attention of a recruiter when you need them if you have developed a long-standing rapport," he says.

In finance roles, many top recruiters work with clients two or three times throughout their careers. Building on a previous relationship also helps a recruiter to better understand your career path and provide you with positions that are a better fit.

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Since getting past the recruiter is often the first hurdle in landing a top-notch finance position, it's important to stand out among the competition. But there's not just one correct approach; you should try several of the strategies outlined above. Make sure to highlight your valuable experience, build a trusting relationship and communicate how your skills will meet the needs of a potential employer.

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