

# 10 Questions You Should Ask An Offshore Recruitment Agency Before You Engage Them



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## What is the purpose of this guide?

Recruitment industry surveys frequently show that hiring managers are unsure as to whether they are working with the most suitable agency to serve their recruitment needs. They are often not confident that their sourcing partner is promoting their business positively - as an employer of choice - and they can also be concerned that the agency does not have access to the best candidates available.

Such anxieties are especially acute in the world of offshore recruitment where the cost of a recruiting error are so much higher, both in terms of additional financial expense (relocation, work permit) and the extra costs associated with delay (for example, whilst a work permit application is being approved for a replacement candidate).

We appreciate that finding the right agency can be challenging. Just as a respectable recruiter will carefully short-list and screen job seekers, so you too should filter prospective agencies before choosing to engage their services.

In short, you need to ensure that they will represent your company well in the marketplace and that they will give you a decent choice from the best candidates available. This guide will provide you with some useful pointers on how to make sure you only work with the best recruitment partners.

## 1. How long has the agency been in operation?

A recruitment business is only as good as the candidates it can attract and the quality of the service it provides. Agencies that consistently provide good quality customer service to their candidates and clients over time will represent your business well and stay in business. And the longer the firm has been operating effectively, the more comfort you can take that they are reliable.



## 2. What is the turnover level of its recruitment consultants?

You can find this out by asking your contacts how long they have been working at the agency or by viewing their LinkedIn profile. The lower the staff turnover, the better: higher turnover may be indicative of instability within the agency, making it a service provider to avoid. The recruitment industry typically has a fairly high turnover of staff and there is nothing more frustrating than finding out every time you call that the person who handles your vacancy has changed and you have to explain everything all over again.

## 3. What is the experience level of the people who will be working with you?

Arguably, more experienced and/or more qualified staff, with a broader and more effective network of offshore contacts and with enhanced staff sourcing practices, will provide you with a better service. To find out, make enquiries of your contact as to how long they have been in the sector.

## 4. What is their client base?

Reputable recruiters should be able to offer plenty of detail. They will be able to show a good record of satisfying repeat clients who have been with them for a number of years. The more experience they have with companies similar to yours, in a similar location, the better.



## 5. Do they specialise in your sector offshore?

In such a competitive candidate marketplace, specialist sector/professional knowledge is key. Make sure that the agency you are dealing with has significant experience dealing with offshore professional recruitment and understands the soft aspects of candidates' applications which, as you know, go way beyond what simply appears on a typical CV. A quick-fire question that will immediately tell you how much relevant experience the agency you are considering has in your market or field is to ask about the last time they filled a similar job on your Island.

## 6. Who will be your key point of contact?

You need to be absolutely clear who is working on your assignment. They may not be as qualified/experienced as the consultant who convinced you to use the agency's services during early communications. Be aware that some recruitment agencies split their workforce between recruitment and sales, and you need to know that you are dealing with the right people regardless of the organisation's internal set-up.

## 7. What is the agency's sourcing process?

The most effective agencies will have a high quality marketing, advertising and referral sourcing process. You are looking for the very best people to work in your business and you need to ensure that the recruitment agency you engage can reach a broad selection of candidates including passive ones. Ask your agent to explain how they will find relevant top talent, how they screen them and how they interview them so you can feel confident that they will give you a high-quality candidate shortlist. Ask them what they do differently from their counterparts to give them the edge and how they plan to approach your specific search request. Experienced agencies that work in your market should also have a pool of relevant registered candidates to hand on their own database, which is a great place to start for a quick turnaround of CVs if you have an urgent vacancy.

## 8. What is the success rate of placements?

Good recruiters will have a track record of success and will want to tell you about it. An effective agency should be able to reassure you with performance data relating to average time to hire/placement and maybe even placement success rates (e.g. how many of their placements last the typical two-year initial contract period).

## 9. What are the costs involved?

A recruitment agency will charge a fee for its temporary, contract or permanent recruitment services. Have them break down how much it's going to cost before you engage their services and ensure that you have it in writing with a copy of their Terms & Conditions. This document is there to protect your business as well as the recruitment agency. Typically the T&C will need to be signed and agreed to prior to any recruiter working on your requirements. If an agency isn't up front about the costs of using their service and fails to provide relevant information to you in writing, do not work with them.

Agencies want to create long-term relationships with their clients and they will be looking for repeat business. Find out if there's a discount available should you use them to find more employees in the future. Take the time to explain your recruitment plans over the next 6 – 12 months and you will be amazed how much more flexible an agency will be with their fees if they truly believe that there is potential for an ongoing relationship.

Another great way of reducing your recruitment costs, if you are happy that the agency can provide you with a variety of suitable people for your roles, is to work with them on an exclusive basis. Offering an agency an

exclusive vacancy or vacancies, where they are the only agency recruiting for your position for a limited time, will again encourage flexibility in their fees.

## 10. Is there any form of candidate guarantee?

A good recruiter will be confident in their ability to provide you with quality candidates and should provide some form of guarantee. This can take the form of a free replacement for any candidate who fails their probationary period, offering a reduced fee or providing some other form of refund or credit if things don't work out as planned. Make sure the agency's T&C are simple, easy to understand, and cover every likely eventuality (including work permit approval) for all your new hires.

*We hope you have found this guide useful. Hamilton Recruitment prides itself on the customer service we provide to our candidates and clients, and we do all we can to ensure that the recruitment experience is positive.*

## For additional information:

To contact us, please email [thomas.burton@hamilton-recruitment.com](mailto:thomas.burton@hamilton-recruitment.com) or use the Contact page on our website. We look forward to helping you find the professional staff you need!