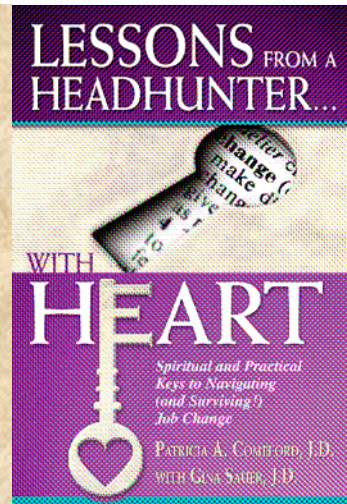


The following is an excerpt from **Lessons from a Headhunter...with Heart!**, the groundbreaking new book by THE ESQUIRE GROUP's President & Founder, Patricia Comeford, J.D.

Lessons from a Headhunter...with Heart! explores not just the nuts and bolts of a job search, but the spiritual, personal, and introspective aspects as well.

To learn more about **Lessons from a Headhunter...with Heart!**, or to order your copy, visit www.esquiregroup.com.



LESSON 37

Lessons From a Headhunter...about Headhunters

Since I'm the founder and president of a search firm, it would be remiss of me not to offer some advice on this particular avenue in the job search process. I am often asked one of three questions: (1) What are the different types of search firms out there, (2) What type of search firm should I be working with, and (3) What is the best way to work with a search consultant.

Briefly, there are basically two different types of search firms: retained and contingent. How they work will often vary accordingly, so it's a good idea to know which type of firm you're dealing with prior to making contact.

1) THE TWO TYPES OF SEARCH FIRMS

Retained search firms are hired by an employer to fill a specific position. They typically are paid a portion of the fee up-front (i.e., a "retainer," which is typically one-third of the search fee), another third of the fee after ninety days from engagement, and the balance of the fee upon successful completion of the search. Most high level searches for CEOs, CFOs, General Counsel and other key hires are conducted on an exclusive, retained basis. Many of the large, international search firms work exclusively on a retained basis.

Copyright © 2005 by Patricia A. Comeford, J.D. Reproduction in any form without the express written consent of the author is prohibited. For more information about *Lessons from a Headhunter...with Heart!* contact THE ESQUIRE GROUPSM, 15 South 5th Street, Minneapolis, MN 55402. 612.340.9068 or 800.755.7779. www.esquiregroup.com.

Conversely, contingent search firms are hired by an employer to fill a position but typically are not paid any fee upfront. They may or may not be working on a position exclusively, so it is a good idea to ask. Note that it won't hurt your candidacy to work with a firm that is not working on an exclusive basis. It is, however, important to assess how well informed they are on the position, and what their prior working relationship is with the employer, i.e., have they placed candidates there in the past, do they have access to and credibility with the decision-makers, how extensive are their networks in the fields you are looking in, etc. This is particularly important to ascertain in today's information age; the Internet has generated a whole new breed of "alleged search consultants" that simply go from company web page to company web page looking for positions to fill without being hired by the employer to do so. In short, there is no business relationship there; they are just hoping to find a candidate that will work. Again, you might find a job that way, but more often than not, I've seen candidates hurt rather than helped in such situations.

2) WHAT TYPE OF FIRM SHOULD YOU BE WORKING WITH

Why is all this important to *you*, the candidate? First and foremost, you need to recognize that with any search firm, the employer is the client as *they* are paying the fee for hiring you. This is not to say that you, the candidate, are not important to the search firm, but you are in essence the "product" that they would be presenting to the client. Second, it's important as it relates to expectations you might have. Retained firms have historically been less interested in spending a lot of time fielding calls from candidates interested in making a career move. The majority of their time is typically spent seeking out candidates that fit the individual requirements for the search. In short, don't be offended if search consultants from retained firms don't take your call or respond to your resume. It's just typically not their gig. I am not saying that you shouldn't make contact; just don't expect a response unless you fit one of the criteria for their current searches.

3) THE BEST WAY TO WORK WITH A SEARCH CONSULTANT

The following seven tips will help you maximize your chances of building a successful relationship with a headhunter.

1. Tell Them What You Want

When first meeting with a search consultant, be sure to clearly describe the ideal position for you. This includes advising them of particular employers in whom you have an interest. When a consultant has a clear understanding of what makes you happy, they can expeditiously provide you with the right career choices. If you are unsure of what you want, let them know, as they may have other resources to help you.

2. Advise Them Of Your Own Search Efforts

To ensure that the consultant does not contact employers whom you have already contacted, remember to inform them which employers and, if possible, which particular persons at each employer, you have spoken with about job opportunities.

3. Provide Them With References, Writing Samples, Transcripts and Addendums

Be prepared to provide the search consultant with a list of references and writing samples at the start. If an employer requests these materials from them (a common occurrence), they prefer to respond immediately without having to contact you again.

4. Be Accessible

If you don't already have access to a computer with e-mail and/or an answering machine, I strongly advise you to purchase them so that you may regularly check for e-mail or voice mail messages. Opportunities happen quickly and can be lost if a recruiter can't locate you quickly.

5. When Scheduling Interviews, Be Accommodating

If an employer is interested in interviewing you, do all you can to accommodate the employer's preferred interview times. Flexibility sends a positive message.

6. Debrief Them Immediately After Each Interview

After interviewing with an employer, contact the consultant immediately and give them your feedback on how the interview went. After each interview, the employer is waiting to hear from the consultant and wants to know what you thought. If the employer has questions or concerns about your interview or candidacy, the consultant can end-run any potential problems.

7. Be Open

The "ideal job" doesn't always look like it at first blush. If you are contacted for an interview, seriously consider it. I've found that once presented with an impressive candidate, an employer is often willing to amend a job description in order to make a good hire!



CAREER COMFORT

By being well informed, and having realistic expectations, I maximize my experience working with a headhunter and increase my chances of success.