



Picking the right recruitment supplier



Background

Would you hire someone without doing your diligence on their background and capability to perform the role you need them to do? Of course not! So why would you take less care when selecting the suppliers that are supposed to help you with this task? This is an important stage that's commonly passed over too quickly, but one that will almost inevitably end up costing, not saving time.

If you work with an external recruitment partner, you don't just need to know they've got the capability to source the right people for your hiring requirement, but you'll be relying on their judgement to assess and recommend the right people for your business as well. If you fail to do this, don't be surprised if the results don't meet your hopes and expectations!

This is our simple guide on steps to take to ensure you make the best decisions on which recruitment suppliers to partner.



Seek recommendations

If you don't personally have a tried and tested contact, use your internal and external network to seek out firms that others in relevant areas would suggest, and ideally endorse. Ask people in the relevant department what experiences they've had (good or bad) with a recruitment firm. Reach out to those in your network who you'd value the opinion of or who'll have recruited similar people. If these don't bring any outcomes, try to go beyond a google search (although it may be a necessary place to start!) and search on job boards or within trade publications to see who seems to be operating in the relevant market.

Check out their credentials

An easy way to do some background research to give a raw impression of a firm's capability is to look at their website to understand their focus. Search what kind of roles they're currently handling, the level, the location, the discipline.

It's also important to gain a sense for the person or people that the firm employs, as the quality of the consultant will arguably make the key difference. What is their experience, do they have any endorsements, are they 'experts' in a particular market, do they produce interesting market insight?





Have a screening call

A 10-minute call can give you a pretty good first sense to determine whether the supplier is one you should seriously consider. Have a precise agenda for what you need to know and be direct to obtain this information. Check the practicalities – can they service your location and the type of role (give them a very brief summary), can they meet your timeline, will they supply on a basis that you'd consider (e.g. will they insist on a retainer). What do they say is their core area of strength, and what differentiates them from competitors? Delve for their market expertise – ask them what key considerations you should be aware of for this type of hire, perhaps ask for examples of other similar recent hires they've managed for clients.

Do they have prior history with your firm/you?

Just because they're a known quantity, it doesn't automatically make them the best option to partner you for this hire. Familiarity is really important, the better a recruitment firm 'gets' you and your business, the more effective they should be. However, it's always worth lifting the bonnet to see if they're as good as they seem to be and get them to provide facts and figures on past performance. Have they been as successful as you thought, could they have done more or have they got complacent, are they like working with you!



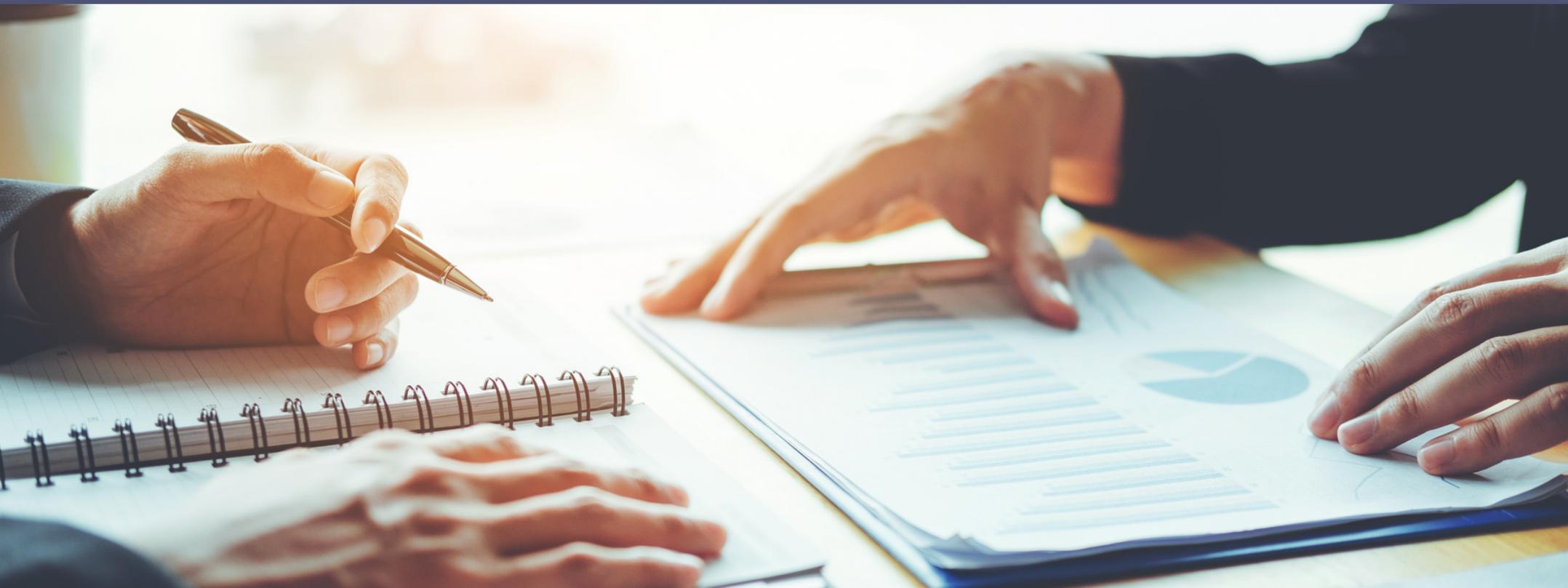


Assess their capability

We'd encourage a face-to-face meeting for this, and with the consultant(s) you'd be working with. Give them a brief for your requirement and then ask how they'd manage this assignment. Understand how they identify and attract relevant candidates (get facts and figures for how people they place are sourced), how they assess their credentials (do they meet them or test them). Try to obtain facts and figures about KPI's they use to measure their success, such as CV to interview ratio, job fill rates, repeat business rates. Get a feel for their company (size, locations, how they incentive success, how they measure client and candidate experience. Check they have capacity to prioritise your requirement – how many other clients are they dealing with, what timelines they deliver upon.

Test their market knowledge

As with the phone call, you can try to solicit their opinion on the market (industry or role type). Not only is this an ideal way for you to gain value market insight to enhance your own prospects of hiring successfully, but it's a great platform to gauge their expertise. Ask about market trends they're noticing, significant industry news (if relevant), gain their opinion about market rates, but also ask their impression of you as a business.



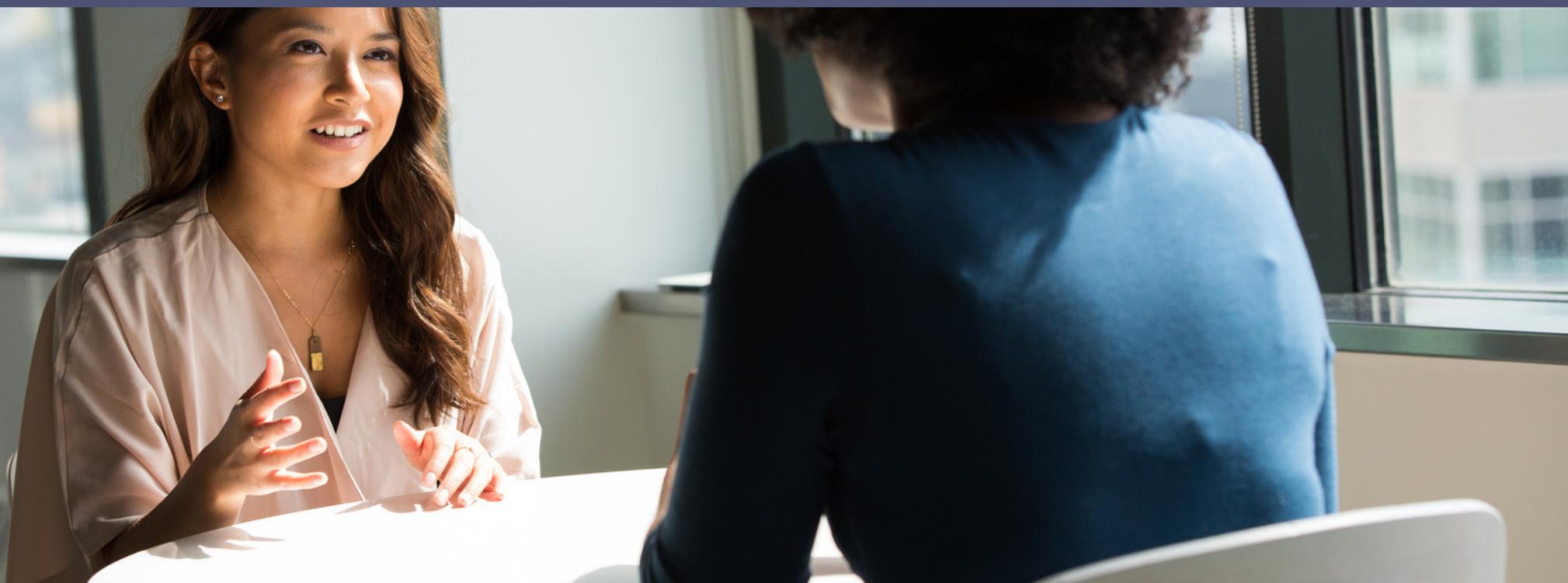


What value do they bring?

This can always be quite helpful to ask them what separates them from their competitors. Is it track record, service quality, pricing, methodology, their networks? Most firms find it hard to truly distinguish themselves on the basis of service delivery, so it can be instructive to hear what they think will be important to you as you determine who'll best represent your company brand and bring useful insight and value to your hiring process.

Final diligence

Ask for contact information of people they've worked with or look for case studies where appropriate. Check to see what experience they've had with your business before. Check the commercials fit, and that you are satisfied you've got some assurance or recourse should things not work out. Check the small print on their terms and ask for adjustments if you're not happy with them.





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