

## Dealing with Search Firms

The UK is fortunate to have a very well developed recruitment market with a vast infrastructure of recruitment intermediaries. The UK has more than 15,000 recruitment agencies/consultancies ranging from single office companies to national organisations.

The market can be broken down into distinct sectors:

- The Temporary/Office & Admin High Street Agencies
- General Agencies - covering both temporary and permanent positions
- Niche function and sector agencies
- Search & Selection Consultancies
- Search Firms

You should only really concern yourself with the Search & Selection Consultancies and the Search Firms as these are generally the organisations that recruit at management and director level, although obviously some of the niche sector agencies will seek to fill senior posts.

The difference between 'Agencies' and 'Consultancies' is that agencies generally receive payment only when a candidate is placed in a role; consequently, they are candidate driven and will seek to find a role for candidates as well as fill vacancies. Consultancies generally work on retained projects which means that they get paid in stages to find candidates for specific roles, mainly on an exclusive basis; as a result, they are not candidate driven and do not find work for candidates. You should therefore not expect the Consultancies, who will carry the bulk of the roles you will be interested in, to be active in helping you find a new role.

## Search/Consultancy Firms

There are approximately 2000 Search & Selection/Search Firms in the UK who undertake retained management and director level recruitment projects.

A typical Consultant in a Search Firm will generally specialise in 2-3 market sectors only and have no more than 15-20 active clients. This means that they will probably only handle up to 20 assignment projects in a year, which is not many!

They will source candidates by search, advertising, internet advertising and possibly the company's database. Because of the amount of time required to source candidates for each project it is doubtful that they will have time to meet candidates that are not for a specific role and will only be interested in candidates in their specialist sectors.

## Dealing with Search & Selection Firms

Because of how they work you need to contact hundreds not just 2 or 3, making sure that you contact all of those who are in your sector. Many will just put your details on their system if they do not have a current role that you are suitable for. Unfortunately, many will not even acknowledge receipt of your details.

Check their websites regularly for vacancies that might suit and then contact them to ensure you are on their radar. We receive hundreds of CV's a week so it is easy to miss candidates!

For a list of Search & Selection Firms try the **Association of Executive Search Consultants** ([www.aesc.org](http://www.aesc.org)) and the **Recruitment & Employment Confederation** ([www.rec.uk.com](http://www.rec.uk.com)).

