



## Is a Recruiter Distribution Right for My Job Search?

This is a common question at [Distinctive Career Services](#). But even though [introducing yourself and networking with recruiters](#) is a good investment for almost every job hunter, providing reassurance that a [recruiter distribution](#) will reap immediate results is far less clear cut or predictable.

Sending your résumé as an introduction to recruiters who conduct recruitment searches in your industry and/or profession can be a fast and highly effective way to jumpstart a job search. But a recruiter distribution executed as a job search strategy is NOT equally effective for everyone, especially in the short term. In other words, a recruiter distribution is more likely to result in a job opportunity for some professionals than others.

If you are trying to decide whether this is a good strategy for YOUR job search, this article will help.

## Who Are the Recruiters Included in a Distribution?

The recruiting firms in our database are typically categorized as executive search firms (both [retained executive recruiters](#) and [contingency-based recruiters](#)) and employment agencies. There are also a relatively small number of agencies that get involved in contract hires (for example, firms that contract IT professionals out for interim roles). It is important to understand that [internal \(HR\) corporate recruiters](#) are NOT included in the database.

In other words, the recruiters (aka headhunters) in the database work in firms such as Heidrick & Struggles, Russell Reynolds, and Spencer Stuart among many others, and actively work to source and place professionals and executives in companies, matching those professionals with very specific position requirements. This is an important distinction. It is the recruiters who will submit your resume to employers if they believe you are a match for a position they are working on. WE do not submit your résumé directly to specific employers.

When we assemble a contact list for a recruiter distribution, we look at the specifics of your search, including your geographic preferences, industries you are targeting, your profession specialties, the level of position you are targeting, the compensation you are hoping to achieve, and other factors. With these details in mind, we assemble a contact list of recruiters who are *most likely* to work on recruitment searches that are a match for your goals.

## Will I Land a Job from a Recruiter Distribution?

Possibly, but from a probability standpoint, probably not.

So, why would you even bother with a recruiter distribution? Let us explain:

Most professional positions are landed through word of mouth and [networking activities](#). Relatively few are landed from working with a recruiter. Even once we've distributed your résumé, you will still need to network, apply for advertised positions, [be visible on LinkedIn](#), research and [target employers](#), and take advantage every other job search tactic available.

However, recruiters have access to opportunities you would never know about from any other source. Even if the chances are slim, it makes sense to put yourself in a position to learn about these.

Additionally, recruiters are usually very well connected within the industries and professions they specialize in. For example, a recruiter who specializes in sourcing medical device sales professionals, is probably well connected with a wide range of individuals associated with the medical device industry. In this example, if you are targeting a job in the medical device industry, it would be beneficial to make yourself known to someone so well connected in the industry. Even if your initial

contact with that recruiter didn't result in an immediate job opportunity, opening a line of communication with the recruiter, may result in a *future* opportunity.

When we [distribute a résumé](#) we also provide you with a detailed contact list, so you know where we have sent it. To maximize your investment in a distribution, we advise you to cross-reference that list for every recruiter who replies to your initial introduction. Use it to learn more about the firm at which they work. Consider sending a connection request to the individual recruiter on LinkedIn. Also, follow the firm's LinkedIn page and Twitter feed if they have them, and if they advertise some sort of mailing list on their website, sign up for it. All of these activities will increase your visibility with the recruiter and will also often keep you "in the know" if and when a recruiter begins working on a search assignment that might interest you.

## How Do I Decide If This Is a Good Investment for Me?

As explained, for the relatively small investment compared to the potential benefits, it is easy to argue that most professionals should seriously consider a recruiter distribution. But it is important that you do so with realistic expectations. Consider the following questions:

- 1. Are you targeting specific industries?** The more precise you can be in naming the industries of interest to you, the better. While there are some "generalist" firms that say they work across "most industries," the majority specialize in one or more industries.
  - If you tell us you are qualified for and equally interested in "any industry," we must construct the distribution using the "generalist" category and the resulting contact list won't be as robust and this will negatively impact your results. While it is okay to include the generalist category we highly encourage you to also name some specific industries of interest to you (and that you have experience in see question #2 below).
- 2. Are you trying to change industries into an industry in which you do not have experience?** If your answer is YES, understand that a recruiter distribution is far less likely to result in any solid job opportunities. The reason lies in the fact that most recruiters specialize in particular industries and the job requisitions they are trying to fill almost always REQUIRE experience in that industry. If you do not have that experience they will move on to the next candidate who does.
  - Even if you are attempting to change industries, a recruiter distribution may still be a beneficial investment from a long-term ROI perspective. Just understand that you are more likely to make a successful industry change through word of mouth and networking contacts. To maximize your investment in the distribution, treat it as a networking opportunity to build relationships with recruiters who work in the industry you are interested in, and every networking opportunity is valuable.
- 3. Are you trying to change careers/job functions?** For example, perhaps you are a sales consultant who is trying to land a position in HR. Again, if you answer YES, understand that a recruiter distribution is far less likely to result in any solid job opportunities. The reason is similar to the reason recruiters aren't the best source for changing industries. The job requisitions the recruiter may be working on will almost always require experience. If you do not have that experience, they will move on to the next candidate.
  - Even if you are attempting to [change careers/job functions](#), a recruiter distribution may still be a beneficial investment from a long-term ROI perspective. Just understand that you are more likely to make a successful career change through word of mouth and networking contacts. To maximize your investment in the distribution, treat it as a networking opportunity to build relationships with recruiters who work in the industry/industries and profession you are interested in.
  - If you are a [new graduate](#) with a relevant degree but little-to-no experience, or if you are a career changer who has recently taken coursework or earned credentials that qualify you AND you are open to starting over near the bottom of the ladder, you may find a recruiter distribution to be effective.

4. **Do you work in some obscure industry or profession?** This one is a bit more iffy. Remember what we said about recruiters and recruiting firms specializing in particular industries and/or professions? It is far more lucrative for recruiters to work in “hot” growing industries than small, unknown ones. If you work in a very small or unknown industry and/or profession, there are likely far fewer (if any) recruiters who specialize in it. Or, if they do recruit in that space, it is probably a sideline in addition to their primary specialty and there may be no way to identify this in the database. On the other hand, if you are a rare individual who has specialist skills or knowledge in an obscure profession or industry, and that knowledge is in-demand and hard to find, you may find a recruiter distribution generates some leads. Set your expectations accordingly.
5. **Are you open to relocation?** If you are open to relocation you may get better immediate results from a recruiter distribution than if you are not able to relocate or are targeting a very narrow and specific geography. Some recruiters specialize in a particular local area, but most do not. For this reason, we typically keep the geographic specifications of the contact list broad regardless of your geographic targets. However, the distribution is more likely to yield job opportunities if you are available to relocate (this is especially true for higher level and executive positions).
6. **Are there oddities or problem areas in your background?** Are there other factors about you and your qualifications that may give employers pause? For example, maybe you are returning to work after three years caring for an elderly parent or raising children. Or maybe you were fired from the job you held five years ago. While we are [experts at Distinctive Career Services in crafting résumés that will minimize problematic areas of your résumé](#) while maximizing and showcasing your strengths, we can not make these problems completely disappear. If a recruiter sees a red flag on your background that they think may be an issue with an employer, they will turn to the next candidate. This doesn’t mean you will never find a new job. It just means that other job search activities, such as networking, are likely to be more effective for you than a recruiter distribution.
7. **What is the state of the job market right now?** Even if the overall job market is good, what is the state of the job market in YOUR industry or profession? How about the job market in the geography you are targeting? These are factors beyond everyone’s control. If there are very few job opportunities in your target areas it is simply a fact that your job search will be more challenging, recruiter distribution or not.
8. **Are you pursuing board of director positions rather than an executive position?** Most board positions are filled through networking, but there are recruiters who work to fill board positions. While you should prioritize your time and put the vast majority of your effort into networking, a recruiter distribution is often a good way to expand your reach in pursuing the more lucrative public company board roles and sometimes board positions with mid-cap and larger private companies.

**The bottom line:** It does NOT make any difference how strong your qualifications are. If your qualifications are not a match for a search the recruiter is working on, the recruiter will not try to fit a round peg into a square hole. The recruiter considers the employing company to be their customer. You are “just” the candidate. They work for the employer who pays their fee, not you. But this does NOT reflect on you or your qualifications and you shouldn’t let it hurt your confidence. It is simply the way the recruiting industry works. Accept this and work other tactics into your job search strategy.

Who will have the best results with a recruiter distribution? There are no absolutes, but if your career path has been one of traditional progression, if your experience is in “hot” industries and/or professions, if the job market is healthy, and if you are either targeting a large metropolitan area with lots of opportunities or are open to relocation, you are likely to experience a stronger immediate ROI on a recruiter distribution.

We realize this “ideal” profile describes very few people. This is why we’ve provided you with the information to make an educated decision about your own unique situation.

From a long-term ROI perspective, we believe a recruiter distribution to be a good investment for most professionals and an important tactic for most job search plans. But it is important to understand that the *immediate* results will vary based on a number of variables. To maximize your investment, treat the recruiter distribution as an opportunity to expand your networking reach and incorporate it into a job search that includes other job search activities.