Recruiters, treat your role advertisements as if they were first dates

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My most recent interactions with recruiters, both from agencies and in-company, have left me slightly bemused by how they perceive the balance of the employee - recruiter relationship. I've had several experiences where this newly burgeoning relationship has felt very one sided from the very first contact and has been difficult to progress very far due to significant reluctance on the recruiters part to share any information at all.

Recognizing that their objective is to locate a candidate of sufficient quality to get into the face to face interview stage I can normally give them a little leeway in their single mindedness, but there seems to be a growing trend of only providing information pertinent to the employer, not the candidate.

So with the issue above in mind I've put this article together to explain the key elements that I think recruiters MUST include in their role advertisements to ensure that both candidates and recruiters have access to the information they need to make a reasoned, informed decision on the role. I've equated this to a dating analogy, as whilst thinking this through I found that I could draw some simple parallels between the two scenarios.

Think of the 'first date' scenario. Two different individuals meeting for the first time, each giving away small items of detail about themselves, revealing information that might make them appear more attractive to the other, but not quite revealing the entire picture. Each person is judging exactly what the best pieces of information are to reveal, what information they think will portray them in the best light, what will create additional interest, causing the other person to want to dig deeper, to create a more meaningful engagement. Each person has specific expectations from the other, there are typical subject that are normally

covered and it all normally happens within certain civilized constraints, i. e. everyone wants certain snippets of common information, but is also aware of staying away from controversial topics. This is all jockeying for position to assess compatibility.

Now lets apply that thinking to the initial conversation between a recruiter and a candidate. Recruiters are trying to ensure compatibility between their role and the candidate, yet often they only come to the table armed with the specifics of the activities of the role and little else. Its fine for them to have demands of candidates, but in my view they also need to cover the following things to ensure that they are giving confidence and assurance to candidates that they actually care about compatibility with them.

1. Business model and moral compass: What the company actually does, how it makes its money, i.e. its business model and how it sees its self in society, i.e. its moral compass. How do you judge whether it is agreeable to your own, if this is omitted from the description?

2. Company sector and product set: What types of company are they? Financial? telecoms? Marketing? What do they sell or manufacture? It's not uncommon now to find advertisements that don't actually list what type of company they are, or whether the role is specific to a certain product set.

3. Salary and benefits: Always a controversial one this, but so many advertised roles do not feature a salary figure, or even a salary range to give an indication of where it sits within the market. This is a key factor for candidates, but also a key bargaining chip for recruiters so is often the last thing they give away. The other important factor with the salary figure is that it is an extremely good marker for the role's expectations. A high figure, or something that stands out from the market is likely to include other factors that in the role that warrant that figure. No salary is too good to be true, there

will always be something in the role definition that has impacted that figure. An accurate figure also shows that the company advertising actually understands the role well themselves, and its position within the market. You have to balance this figure with the next point, the location.

4. The role location, and travelling demands: Pair this with the point above about salary and you have two key counterpoints to each other. Location obviously dictates where you base location is, but also consider travelling requirements as these can, and should have an impact on the salary. Regional locations, cities, secure sites and remote offices all play a factor in influencing both salary expectations and the level of comfort around commuting and the lifestyle impact taking the role may have on you.

To summarise, I think we need to redress the balance between recruiters and their market. If the four points above aren't covered in an advertised role then for me, it shows a lack of attention to candidates requirements, and a misunderstanding of how to create a quality engagement situation, that communicates what each party is actually looking for. If this was a first date, you wouldn't be getting a second.

As an example of this, take a look at the following role advertisements:

[Architect roles in Nationwide](#)

Solutions Architect - IT

We need: An IT Solution Architect Based at our Head Office in Swindon or in our London Office Competitive salary Permanent, full time position, 35 hours a week Nationwide is dedicated to delivering change that is cost-effective, future-proofed and aligned with our strategic objectives. To ensure that our systems, data and business processes are migrated to the target state in a robust manner, it...

Closing date: 23 October 2016

Location: Swindon Head Office
Salary: £49,838 - £66,451
Contract Type: Permanent

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