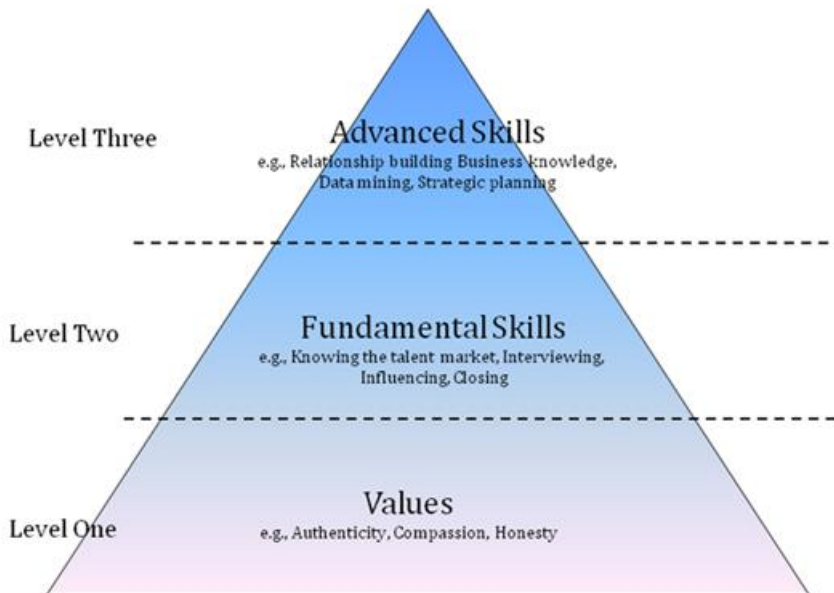


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5 New Recruiter Skills for Success

by [Kevin Wheeler](#)

Recruiter Values/Skills Hierarchy



What does a modern recruiter need to be good at? Is it all about knowing how to leverage social media, or are the traditional skills of [cold-calling](#), screening resumes, conducting [interviews](#), and closing candidates more important?

I have just been at the Australasian Talent Conference in Sydney, Australia, for the past week and what was most interesting was to listen to the issues and concerns of those recruiters who have not been laid off and whose organizations are still hiring.

They are faced with challenges that many of the ERE [writing team](#) have talked about over the past year.

First of all, many candidates are reluctant to shift jobs — or even take a job when they are unemployed — unless that organization and position fit very closely with their career objectives and values. It is not about money or security. It's about alignment with their own inner self.

Second, they are carefully looking at the interaction with the recruiter as a reflection of the organization. How I am treated and served by the recruiter is likely to be how I am treated as an employee.

And third, they are looking for work that is engaging and meaningful — not a job, but a passion.

This may sound silly or even unrealistic given the economy, but it is a real phenomena. I am not sure what is driving it. Perhaps it is the fact that Generation Y values of passion, meaningfulness, and sustainability are becoming more mainstream. Many are looking for much more than a job.

I believe this is driving a change in the skills recruiters need. A modern recruiter needs less in the way of the traditional technical skills in the mechanics of recruiting, and much more in the way of "soft" skills.

Here are five skills for recruiters. These are ones I have used before, but updated for new times. I have also inserted a simple diagram that you are free to use, modify, and add to. I am open to your opinions about what should be on this chart and your thoughts on whether this is the right set of values and skills or not.

Skill #1: Recruiters have personal values and talk about them

Do you do what you say? Do you answer their questions honestly? Are you upfront about the issues and problems they may face? Do you connect them to people who are objective about the company and the position?

Knowing yourself and what your values are about work, people, and relationships is key to being a successful recruiter. You must be authentic and convey your sincerity to candidates who will test you and probe you to see if they are really *your* values. Candidates can sense if your values and the organization's are not aligned, and that disconnect will make the best candidates much harder to close.

Skill #2: Recruiters know and can explain the talent market

The competent recruiter is able to tell the hiring manager what the talent market looks like, what the supply of talent for a particular job is likely to be in her area, and how difficult it will be to find and close on candidates. This knowledge has to be data-driven and can only be collected by vast reading, lots of discussion, the intelligent use of surveys, and other data tools. They are finding web-based tools that help them mine and understand candidate trends, likes and dislikes, and they can tell you which candidates are most likely to be good employees.

Gathering and interpreting data, making correlations between competencies and success, and measuring the impact of different marketing messages is already a skill top-notch recruiters need to have.

They also know the direction the market is moving for their client or organization. Are competitors laying people off? Is the market growing, shrinking, flat? This kind of information, combined with the ability to build relationships, can make an ineffective recruiting function very powerful.

Skill #3: Recruiters build relationships

The ability to find great people and build relationships with them should be the core competence of every recruiter. This is what all great recruiters do. Recruiters within organizations need to get out of the organization and get to know people at all levels and professions who might be useful to their firm. They need to use technology to help create the initial relationship, and then they need to leverage that by using social media including Twitter, blogs, websites, and anything else that will create authentic interaction with a potential candidate.

More than half of every recruiter's time should be used to network, build relationships, communicate, and get involved with candidates. Recruiters who can provide some career advice, listen to candidates' concerns, and provide advice on which positions might be the best fit will be recruiters who grow and thrive in this and any economy.

Skill #4: Recruiters prove their value

Competent recruiters use [metrics](#) to put together business arguments for programs they initiate or for the systems they buy. They use facts, numbers, and results to get what they want. They have a core set of metrics that show how they add value, raise quality, improve profits, or save money.

If a CFO asks for the ROI of recruiting for a position, a really modern recruiter will have data and can help a hiring manager make a business case for that position.

Skills #5: Recruiters sell and close candidates

In the end, a recruiter is as good as the number of candidates that she can close. To do this, she needs to be good at selling candidates and hiring managers. She needs to know how to overcome objections and turn negatives into positives. She needs to offer solutions, work out compromises, and in the end make the hire happen in a way that is consistent with her values and those of the organization.

Being a modern recruiter is, in some ways, easy. It's about treating candidates as you would like to be treated. It's about knowing who you are and what you believe so that you can quickly know when the direction you are headed is wrong.