

What a Candidate Ought to Know: Candidate Primer

Welcome

Candidates ask many questions about the search process like, “How long will it take? What are the steps involved? Are my credentials competitive?” We will begin to answer these questions and others commonly asked by candidates as they enter a search. We hope it will provide a better understanding of the search process.

What is the search consultant's role in a search?

We facilitate the process and enhance the environment for thoughtful decisions for all parties. With this in mind, we generally:

- conduct an in-depth assessment of the organization and the position;
- construct with the client a position description;
- help define the search process and build a candidate pool;
- establish clear and efficient candidate communication;
- screen candidates on behalf of the client institution, including personal interviews;
- assure confidentiality;
- help design interview and decision-making processes;

- support job offer negotiations, as clients deem appropriate; and
- facilitate transition for the successful candidate and the organization.

The search consultant serves as a liaison between the organization and the candidate, and does not make decisions on behalf of either party.

How can a search firm help a candidate?

As an objective liaison, the search consultant helps a candidate by allowing him or her to explore the position before becoming an active candidate, determining the potential “fit,” and assessing compensation range. We also:

- provide information on the search process;

- assist in the logistics of interviews at the client organization;
- support negotiation of compensation and/or relocation; and
- collaborate with the organization and the successful candidate on a transition plan.

Every candidate is important to us, and we strive to treat each person in a forthright manner.

How can I build a solid and long-lasting relationship with Witt/Kieffer

Candidates for leadership roles in education and health care frequently work with Witt/Kieffer consultants to advance their own careers. As we become familiar with you and your abilities, we may

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contact you about prospective positions for which you may be qualified.

The best candidates rely on executive search consultants and build long-lasting business relationships with them. If a search consultant calls you about a position for which you lack interest, return the call anyway and offer the consultant the names of two or three colleagues or friends.

Building a relationship with a search consultant before you conduct your own job search enables the consultant to understand your career aspirations and expectations. Often, responding to a search consultant about an uninteresting position is valuable, as it enables you to learn about marketplace salaries and benefits within specific fields and positions.

Often, as you build a relationship with an executive search consultant, you will recognize the need to access Witt/Kieffer's resources for executive search assignments within your own organization. We welcome the opportunity to assist you and your organization in attracting top-quality candidates. We also encourage candidates to call us when they hear about executive position openings.

Ninety-one percent of our clients say they would recommend us to their colleagues, and two-thirds of our

clients bring us repeat business.

How is my confidentiality protected?

Confidentiality is essential in attracting, recruiting, and placing the best candidates. A candidate has the right to ask for as much confidentiality as possible. In a small number of cases, an organizational regulation or state sunshine law will impact the degree to which we and a search committee can respect any individual's confidentiality. Within both public and private organizations, you the candidate, we the consultants, and the committee are constrained to operate within parameters particular to an organization. Only you, as a candidate, can make the decision to proceed in a search. The search consultant will work to reduce your stress by providing as much clear information as possible about the process.

Does it matter how my credentials enter the search process?

No. As a retained search firm, we receive a fee from the organization regardless of who is offered the position or how he or she entered the candidate pool, whether via an advertisement, a nomination, or a personal contact by our search firm. We care only about finding the very best possible fit between candidate and organization. Our reputation is built on

our success in achieving that fit.

If your name is suggested to us by one of our sources or by nomination, you will be notified by one of our consultants. At that time, it is appropriate to ask about the process, its time line, the degree of confidentiality, and the role of our search firm in the search. It is your responsibility to ask for background information before making the decision to submit your credentials.

If you respond to an advertisement for the position or learn of it from another source and submit your credentials, you will hear directly from the organization or from us on behalf of the organization. After this initial contact, you may or may not receive further correspondence, depending on the organization's interest. If the organization is interested in pursuing your application, they or we will contact you to establish your candidacy.

If I want to be considered for a particular opportunity, what should I do?

Submit your resume or curriculum vitae and a cover letter. The content and appearance of your vitae, combined with a well-written and researched cover letter, are integral to the application process.

If you are selected for further consideration, you may be asked to participate in telephone screening by

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the consultant or the committee, a personal interview with the consultant, and a preliminary screening process.

The search process in higher education (or in health care) takes time: four to six months is not uncommon, and some high-level searches may take nine months or longer. Patience is required of candidates while an organization makes decisions. Our firm is committed to keeping candidates informed throughout the process. However, if you have a question, please call your consultant.

What about my references?

Moving through the process, we will verify your previous employment, academic degrees and professional certifications. The client may request credit and additional background checks. You should choose your references with care and notify each in advance so he or she may be as informative and helpful as possible. We recognize the sensitivity of this process and will not contact a current employer without your permission. However, finalization and a formal offer are usually made on condition of contact with a candidate’s current employer.

When do we discuss compensation?

As your candidacy progresses, you will have an opportunity to discuss compensation, benefits and family or personal issues. Such dialogue is imperative to create the right fit for both the candidate and the organization.

Sometimes there are unrealistic expectations on both sides, and we can help resolve the discrepancies between a qualified candidate’s requirements and the organization’s projected compensation. However, all offers are made by our clients, not by Witt/Kieffer.

What if I don’t move forward?

Issues of credentials, experience, personality, and scores of other elements all blend together in the final selection process to create a successful marriage of the candidate and the organization. Informing a candidate that he or she will not move forward is difficult for all involved. The decision is made by a committee or a president, and our firm merely acts as the messenger.

Not to be selected in a search is common, due to the competitive nature of the process, and it should not be taken

personally. Many past candidates consider the experience of clarifying their goals, refining their resumes, and interviewing to be useful, regardless of the outcome.

We keep track of people and have, at times, been able to include them in another search. A search firm is client driven, however, and it is unlikely we will contact you unless we have a search for which you are appropriate. Though organizations are our clients, we are concerned about candidates and strive to treat everyone with consideration and respect.

Finally, many of our candidates become clients and will ask Witt/Kieffer to assist them in enhancing their own executive team.

About Witt/Kieffer

Witt/Kieffer is the nation's leading executive search firm specializing in health care and higher education. The firm conducts executive searches on behalf of hospitals, health systems, universities and colleges, academic medical centers and medical schools, as well as associations, community service organizations and other not-for-profit institutions. Our mission is to identify outstanding leadership solutions for organizations committed to improving the quality of life. The firm's values are infused with a passion for excellence, personalized service, diversity and integrity. For more information, visit www.wittkieffer.com.

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