

# **Recruiting Industry Ethics**

## **(from the job-seeking executive's point of view)**

The overarching principle is .....

### **No Submission of a Resume without the Candidate's Permission**

It is unethical for a recruiter -- contingency or retainer -- to submit a candidate's resume to a prospective employer without first contacting the candidate and obtaining permission to do so.

Everyone has heard of instances in which an individual's current employment was jeopardized by a headhunter's careless handling of resumes. Not having contacted an individual for permission, the recruiter floats the person's resume to a list of potential employers. The person's current employer may be on that list. Or perhaps a differently named subsidiary of the employer, or a parent company, or an affiliate, or a business partner, or an equity investor, or an important customer, or a company with whom the candidate is already seeking or negotiating employment.

Even when a recruiter means well and tries to be careful, it is impossible to anticipate all of the parties an executive would not want to receive his or her resume. Therefore, failing to get approval prior to submission is a gross breach of ethics.

### **Blanket Permission May Be Granted, but Only if an Informed Decision Is Made**

Contingency recruiters routinely submit unsolicited candidates to substantial lists of potential employers who have not requested the submission. This is not unethical per se, but becomes so when the owner of the resume has not been asked for permission to circulate it.

### **Candidate Representation**

Many Contingency recruiters request and receive a candidate's permission to conduct an aggressive marketing campaign to as many potential employers as possible. Usually such permission is given only when the job-seeker is unemployed and eager for maximum exposure. Even then, the recruiter owes the candidate a frank upfront description of what actions will be taken. If bulk e-mailing will occur, it should be described. If the resume will be submitted to a network of several -- or even hundreds -- of other headhunting firms, that fact should be made known also. The executive should understand that he or she is giving up control of the distribution of the resume and that future distribution may be made by others than the recruiter who originally asks permission.

### **Opportunity Misrepresentation**

Candidates must not be led to believe through advertising or conversation that the recruiter is filling an opening when no such opening exists, nor that the recruiter has a client relationship to fill a particular opening when, in fact, he or she does not.

### **No Misleading Advertising**

Clearly, it is unethical to advertise opportunities that do not exist. Doing so is especially egregious because truthful advertising can attract the desired candidates. An ethical ad will describe in detail the types of openings the search firm often fills. Candidates will respond in order to be registered and immediately available when appropriate new opportunities open up.