10 TIPS TO SURVIVING THE TECHNICAL RECRUITING PROCESS

The technical recruiting process can be daunting. It can make you want to bang your head off the wall. The decision, finding the right technical consulting firm, searching for that perfect contract, negotiating that contract... It can be overwhelming. However, these ten tips will allow you to survive the technical recruiting process with your sanity intact.

1 Find an agency that works for you

Every IT recruiting agency has a different approach but you can weed out the truly successful staffing companies from your average ones.

The best realize that their success is dependent upon their consultants’ success; it’s a symbiosis that a good technical recruiting agency can’t deny.

There are a few clues as to whether or not an agency is looking out for your best interests.

Are their questions only about how you fit into their open role?

If so, they’re looking after themselves. They aren’t making even a token effort at putting your best interests first.
Are they asking you what you are looking for? The type of job? The type and size of the company?

If so, you’ve got a good recruiting company that’s looking after your best interests. Cherish them.

**Takeaway**: The technical recruiting firm you choose to work with puts a filter on the opportunities you come into contact with. Make sure that the relationship is mutually beneficial.

2. Have questions, but go with the flow

Like with any process, you’ve got a lot of questions and you want them answered NOW. Breathe for a second and accept that you won’t have all of your answers in the first five minutes. It’s okay.

You’ll learn all you need to know soon enough, even if it is over multiple phone calls.

Why?

**Takeaway**: Many IT recruiting firms have steps in their hiring process that prevent you from asking questions. While this may be frustrating, this process exists for a good reason; it allows recruiters to do what they do best (getting you a job at which you’ll succeed!). They will answer your questions when they have a better sense of who you are and where they can place you.
Don’t feel like you have to study-up

Everyone gets that panicked feeling before an interview, the nightmares about looking like a dunce.

While a night spent re-reading that 4 year old textbook may be tempting, it isn’t going to overcome the fact that you haven’t used that tech in 4 years.

**Takeaway:** Reading about technology and using it are two different things. If you haven’t used it in a while, be honest. It’ll help your recruiters find the best fit for you.

Be yourself

While we fear we sound like your parents on the first day of kindergarten, we say ‘be yourself’ and really mean it.

It’s not enough to be comfortable in the technical recruiting process, though that is important. **By being yourself, you allow the recruiter to get a better sense of who you are and what might be the best job or working environment for you.**

**Takeaway:** When you’re yourself, you are more likely to walk away with the perfect IT consulting contract.
5 Honesty

It really is the best policy. If you let your recruiter know

What you want to do
How often you want to do it
Who you want to do it with
What your skill set really is

then they will be able to help you get a role that you’ll enjoy and be successful in. You may not get ALL of your desires filled but if you don’t let your recruiter know what your desires are, it is likely that NONE will be fulfilled.

Takeaway: While you may not get all of your wishes filled – you certainly need to be willing to compromise – letting the recruiters know what you really want makes it easier for them to find you the right job.

6 Pick up the phone

While it may be easier to e-mail a recruiter about a position you’re interested in, it isn’t the most efficient way to get you that position.

In actually speaking with the recruiter, you’ll learn more about the role while the recruiters learn more about your experiences; they read very differently in person than on a resume. This allows the recruiter to have a better sense of whether this position will be a good fit for you or not.

Takeaway: Picking up the phone and talking with the recruiter means that you’ll be moving quickly with a fuller understanding of the situation.
7 Start early

If you know your contract isn’t going to be renewed or that you want to give your notice, make sure that you’re lining up your next position.

6 weeks from when you would be able to start is a good mark.

Any earlier: Your available start date is too far away to work with.

Any later: Things could get rushed and the stress will pile up.

**Takeaway**: Start looking for a contract position six weeks before your available start date for the most effective and least stressful IT recruiting process.

8 Be patient

Again, it may be cliché but it is true.

You’ll have to have extra patience when you get to interviewing with large companies. The HR department and tech teams in these places are swamped and are oftentimes buried in red tape.

**Takeaway**: It’s never easy but be patient. Something will come.
Be aware of your audience

Don’t be afraid to ask about someone’s technical background before giving them an answer.

In fact, not doing so can be dangerous.

If you’re talking to a non-technical person:

Keep it simple. They will fall asleep as they listen to you discuss solving threading issues within the JVM on Solaris.

If you’re talking to a technical person:

You can get technical. They will want to discuss those threading issues within the JVM on Solaris. Give them the meat of the answer.

Takeaway: Knowing your audience ensures that you give appropriate answers, ones that give you a better chance of being hired.
Give a simple answer

The case of “short, sweet and to the point” is no different in technical recruiting. No offense, but no one wants to hear a twenty minutes story about how you solved a simple technical problem. It’s boring and probably difficult to follow.

Give the simple answer and then ask the interviewer if s/he wants more or not.

**Takeaway:** Being succinct allows the interviewer to better follow your answer. This makes you appear better prepared, giving you a step up in the hiring process.

These ten tips will help you take some of the guesswork out of the technical recruiting process. You’re now ready to get started!

[Check out our blog](#) for more tips about considering the technical recruiting process.

Or better yet, **want to discuss current technical consulting market trends?** Sign up for a free half-hour phone consult with Base36 founder, Mike Sherwood, to discuss New England’s current technical consulting market trends.