

How to Network with Executive Search Professionals

Since the type of searches handled by executive search firms are not usually advertised on job boards, executives must ensure that they are visible to be considered for these opportunities.

Though it is necessary to network with search consultants, it's imperative to hold off on doing so until you have reflected on what you want to achieve in your career. Being proactive when it comes to building relationships is vital, but so is having an executive career strategy with a well-thought-out end goal. Executive search can only help you achieve your aim if you know what your aim is.

Another action you must take before you start reaching out to individual consultants is to research their interests and what you both have in common (generally a preferred practice for all networking). Whether through a phone conversation, email exchange, research into BlueSteps' International Executive Search Consultant directory, or taking a look at their LinkedIn profile, always look for the specific areas of specialization for each search consultant.

If you're a sales and marketing executive with deep experience in technology products and services, you would want to make note of any search professionals who specialize in any of these areas: sales, marketing, technology. Look even deeper for specific industry expertise – for example, telecommunications technologies or software companies – and match those to your background. The search consultants who are the best match should be on the top of your networking pile.

Remember that in the minds of executive search consultants, you are "unsolicited" if you approached them. You may or may not fit a particular need that one of their clients has right now, but that doesn't mean that something might not turn up in the future. Keeping in touch with relevant consultants makes sense both for you and for them, but do it selectively and be considerate to their time commitments on current assignments. Like most networking activities, this is not a quick fix, but a gradual and long term tool for career development.

All executive search consultants must maintain contact with the market place, understand what is happening in major companies and be aware of shifts in executive trends. One way to do this is to talk to executives like you. When talking to a search consultant about your career, remember that they may well find useful your commentary on the market, developments within particular organizations, or referrals you may be able to make concerning their current searches.

Share your knowledge and the search consultant will share theirs, and hopefully make suggestions or provide you with information that will assist your networking and career management. Your ultimate goal in these exchanges is to create an awareness of yourself, which will help when an opportunity arises for which you may be well suited.

After initial networking, executive search consultants may ask to see your executive resume/CV, executive bio and your cover letter. Make sure that you have all these documents in order and up-to-date as part of your executive career strategy. Search consultants will Google your name before contacting with you, so make sure that your web presence is consistent with your personal branding and career goals.

22 Ways to Get Noticed by Executive Search Consultants

1. Send a brief, personalized email to those who specialize in your industry, function and region.
2. Get a personal referral via friends, family, colleagues or business associates.
3. Attend industry events and seminars.
4. Update your BlueSteps profile once a year or anytime your job changes.
5. Volunteer for interviews and to be quoted in press releases.
6. Keep an up-to-date, active profile on LinkedIn and one or two relevant social media sites.
7. Keep track of places where your bio is posted online and make sure it's kept up-to-date.
8. Start a professional blog.
9. Create a professional website.
10. Google yourself and find ways to improve your ranking.
11. Be a panelist and give presentations at your company's events and relevant industry events.
12. Write a book.
13. Become a contributor to your company's blog or a relevant blog or publication.
14. Sign up for services, like HARO, that allow you to connect with journalists.
15. Serve on an advisory board.
16. Take an adjunct faculty position.
17. Moderate or panel webinars for organizations in your industry or your current company.
18. Join live discussions on social media sites, such as TweetChats.
19. Post and join in on conversations on LinkedIn.
20. Comment on relevant discussion website conversations (Reddit, Quora, etc.).
21. Join relevant professional or trade associations.
22. Start an industry or function-focused MeetUp.

This article was provided by BlueSteps. BlueSteps is the executive career management service of the Association of Executive Search Consultants (AESC). Boyden is a member of AESC. AESC's [BlueSteps](#) helps 100,000+ executives manage their careers, track their goals and elevate their visibility to the right search firms. [Get started >](#)

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