

# Candidates Become More Picky

Recruitment Service Providers are often disqualified as greedy head hunters. A poor reputation that has little to do with the daily realities and routines of most sourcing firms. How qualified recruiting work is exercised in Western Europe and in the USA is explained by the adi Consult experts Helmut Berchtold of San Diego and Frankfurt-based Klaus Geissler.

Created: Mar 05, 2013 4:58 AM



Source: adi Consult



Frankfurt-based adi Consult Principal Klaus Geissler (pictured left) and Helmut Berchtold, CEO adi Consult San Diego.

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Q: Gentlemen, how would you describe the main similarities and also differences of the sourcing biz in Germany and the U.S.?

Helmut: Getting the mandate from a customer often times is the easy part. We find it more and more challenging to find suitable and qualified candidates. This is true on both sides of the pond.

Q: When comparing the situation in Germany and the U.S.: Are the individual sourcing markets currently rather driven by supplier or by demand?

Klaus: In Germany and some other parts of Europe the demand for high qualified people is still pretty strong, depending on the individual industry e.g. contract logistics and supply chain management.

Helmut: Due to the overall economic situation, customers in the U.S. have rather unrealistic expectations at times. Hence, the demand for excellent candidates here is very real for the positions that are to be filled, however, there are not as many open positions as we had a few years ago except for strong sales persons. Practically every customer has sales opening.

Klaus: To get one step closer to our candidates and to be able to proactively and directly communicate with them adi has built a set of applications for smart phones which are available for candidates to download via the Google Play Store as well as the iStore.

Q: The requirements of both, executives and employers are becoming more demanding. Which are the consequences for the practical sourcing job?

Klaus: Both, in Europe and the U.S., understanding the customers' current business and strategic position as well as their economic goals is very important as most customers require a new hire to not only be technically qualified for the position but also for them to be a match to the overall goals of the company.

On the other hand really good candidates are very picky and will not just change jobs for a higher salary anymore. Sought-after candidates are looking for positions that are a "fit" on multiple levels for their career path and personal goals.

Q: Touching the basic qualification of applicants: Are there main disparities when comparing the German and U.S. labor market?

Klaus: Traditionally in Germany Freight Forwarders and Logistics People are undergoing excellent education through apprenticeships or universities in all fields of logistics. Extremely efficient is the dual education e.g. a 3 year education incl. half time University and the other half practical training in the individual company finished with a bachelors degree.

Helmut: In the U.S. there are several programs that integrate practical and theoretical education in freight and logistics and more are coming online. The level of education and knowledge that candidates attain in Germany via an apprenticeship prepares them very well for the start of their career whereas in the U.S. in general employees learn their skills via training on the job. U.S. employers who understand the German system value the technical knowledge a German-educated person brings to the table.

Q: Many people consider the Recruitment Service Providers being tricky headhunters. What's the general image and standing of the sourcing firms on each side of the North Atlantic?

Helmut: Like in all other industries and service sectors there are the good, the bad, and the ugly ones.

Klaus: For Germany we can say that the specialization of a headhunting firm is becoming more and more a plus in competing with the generalists. Overall our standing here and elsewhere in Europe is pretty good but depends to a certain degree on the company's size. Medium sized enterprises use headhunters very selectively and mainly for high level mandates e.g. MDs or similar.

Helmut: In the U.S. we make it a priority to differentiate the Head Hunters from the truly professional Recruiting Companies. Companies that are treating the recruiting arena like a "meat market" by indiscriminately distributing resumes without even talking to, let alone qualifying candidates are giving our profession a bad name. A properly handled recruitment assignment entails communication with the client not only in regards to the open job at hand and salary offerings etc., but to gain an understanding of the soft points described above. It also means that a candidate has been properly qualified for a job opening and his or her interest in the position has been ascertained. References have been checked and vivid communication is maintained between all parties throughout the assignment.

Q: When looking at the globe: Which markets or regions do you believe offer future potential for Recruiting firms like adi Consult?

Klaus: As a region we consider Eastern Europe a potential market; likewise Turkey and China. There is still a demand for excellently trained and educated staff and executives. Latin America esp. Brazil, Mexico, and Colombia are markets that we will keep a keen eye on.

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