12 Qualities of Good Recruiters

To be a top-notch recruiter requires grit, according to James Parker, Sr. Manager, Global Talent Acquisitions at Glassdoor. “You need to be the engine that could. Optimism and hard work will help you rise above average recruiters who too often just give up.” After all, that next great candidate could be right around the corner.

We asked Parker, along with Mark Batke, Talent Acquisition Partner at Glassdoor, to describe top technical and soft skills that recruiters need to thrive in this job market. In addition to grit, here’s what they shared.

**Top-notch recruiters are:**

1. **Curious Learners.** Mastery as a recruiter requires curiosity and inquisitiveness in learning “new roles, new processes, new tools, your candidate’s needs or the intricacies of a complex offer,” according to Parker.

2. **Approachable Communicators.** Often the first human contact a candidate has with a company, the recruiter should “establish trust...by ensuring the line of communication is always open,” suggests Batke. “Whether a candidate has a question, a concern, or an unexpected turn of events in their job search, they need to know their recruiter is the person to turn to.”

3. **Understanding Trust-Builders.** “With trust comes control. In a profession with so many variables, every ounce of control goes a long way!” exclaims Parker. To build that trust, he encourages recruiters to first accrue a genuine understanding of candidates’ and hiring managers’ needs and then, “take it one step further and make them believe you understand their needs.”

4. **Proactive Empathizers.** Even the most experienced candidate will encounter stress during the job search, states Batke. “Some hide it better than others, but most everyone searching for a job could benefit from an empathetic recruiter.” Candidates will remember recruiters who, at the time of the close, overlooked stress foibles and believed the best in them.

5. **Stakeholder Partners.** “Managing relationships is the name of the game. And, we’re talking about a broad spectrum of relationships with all types of people for various durations of time,” asserts Parker.

6. **Improv Agents.** Noting the unpredictability of interactions with candidates, Batke likens recruiting to an “improv workshop.” “A good recruiter is not easily rattled by an unusual question, but rather takes it in stride, maintaining professionalism and poise along the way.”

Similarly, Parker describes on-the-fly skills necessary to pivot mid-conversation with candidates or hiring managers. “You should be able to read their mood, energy levels, body language and tone of their voice, among other data points to tailor your response or next question.”
**Investigative Journalists.** Adding to the cast of characters in this multifaceted recruiter realm is the role of journalist. “I’ve heard this called ‘leaning into the last 10%,’ meaning that most candidates will only share 90% of the truth with a recruiter on any given call,” begins Batke.

“Why did they leave their last job? What salary are they looking for? What values matter most to them? A good recruiter takes steps to delicately yet intentionally press into these truths. Knowing the last 10% of a candidate's truth may come in handy when it comes time to sell your company over the competition.”

**Creative Storytellers.** Artfully aligning the company's story to a candidate's interest is essential. Good recruiters take the initiative, asking around for stories to leverage during candidate conversations. “They resist the urge to recycle tired talk tracks and instead challenge themselves to reinvent and uncover stories that make their company shine,” exudes Batke.

Selling your value is imperative. “Every word that leaves your mouth potentially connects a candidate's interest to your role and company,” expands Parker.

**Resilient Overcomers.** External factors often limit a recruiter’s control, resulting in obstacles and innumerable “no's” from candidates and hiring managers. For this reason, “recovering quickly from difficulty is fundamental as a recruiter,” according to Parker.

**Organized Project Managers.** Multiple moving parts require a recruiter to exude project-manager’s persistence. “Knowing what is happening, when and who is involved and responsible for each part is vital to your success,” says Parker. The recruiter is able to articulate the details and milestones of the candidate hiring process at any point in time, without missing a beat to maintain the confidence of all stakeholders.

**Accountable Influencers.** As a recruiter, you are providing experiences that leave a reverberating impact on the lives of candidates, hiring managers and cross-functional partners. Everything you do is being stitched together to create your legacy. “What do you want to be known for?” asks Parker.

**Exemplary Judges.** “Your ability to assess and select the right people for the right job is quite literally the biggest component of your job,” concludes Parker. “Get it right and the other skills will help make you great. Get it wrong and the other skills won't even matter.”

Meld the above 12 traits with an overall sense of urgency and hiring process meticulousness, and you have a high-impact recruiter ready for their next assignment!