SIGMA Recruitment



A SIGMA RECRUITMENT CLIENT GUIDE · 2026

The 9 Mistakes Poor Recruiters Make

How to tell a recruitment partner from a CV-sending service. By Rhys Williams, founder and Managing Director of Sigma Recruitment.

1. Sending Too Many CVs Which Don't Meet Your Criteria

More isn't always good. A bit like visiting your grandmother who 'attempts' to feed you everything in their fridge or grocery cupboard, no matter how often you tell them you don't like tinned tangerines anymore!

On a serious note, sending an excess number of CVs is a habit that most recruiters seem to fall into and is especially common with companies who either:

- Aren't a specialist in their field.
- Aren't skilled enough to take on a proper brief.
- Don't conduct a vacancy brief at all.
- Don't have the technical skills to source candidates across multiple platforms.
- Agree to take on your role at a low fee.
- Very sales driven, it's a numbers and commission game to them.
- Believe that if they bamboozle you with a large volume of CVs, you are bound to pick one.

Many recruiting companies have a different business model. They work in multiple sectors and their model doesn't allow for time to do a thorough provide a basic service at a low fee. Therefore, search and checking of available talent on the market, and this is why you receive ten plus CVs which might fit your brief in your inbox. Here is something to consider, it's called the CV to interview ratio, and it's an essential number for all professional recruiters and should be for you too. Let's say a recruiter sends you 10 CVs for an engineering role you need to fill; how many of those CVs will lead to an interview? 7? 5? 3? 1? If you answered 5, that's pretty good; if you're regularly working with a consultative manufacturing recruiter who truly understands your business, you should be getting at least 50% on average. However, the reality is that most companies probably get something closer to 20% CV to interview

- not great numbers, considering the amount of time and money invested. ratio Recruitment companies aren't cheap; if you're paying big fees to an agency, but you still must filter through 10 or more CVs to find only a couple of relevant ones, then what are you paying for? However, the other thing to understand is that not all recruitment companies are the same.

There are recruitment agencies who operate on a volume approach, working on lots of vacancies, sending out lots of CVs and not spending much time or indeed having the knowledge to qualify and understand your requirements fully.

There are then recruitment consultancies that work closely with clients to understand and qualify the vacancy requirements before taking the time to map out an advertising and sourcing strategy to find you the right shortlist of candidates.

This naturally wastes your time screening or interviewing people who are unsuitable for the role. It also damages your brand as many of the candidates sent won't be selected for an interview and will feel disappointed. Unfortunately, they will often relate what happened to their friends and family too, and before you know your brand reputation has taken a significant dive. The best way to ensure this doesn't happen is to use a specialist in the field and work with them as you develop a comprehensive and full brief, so your recruiter knows precisely what is essential to look for in the candidates they are sourcing.

- **'Can They' & 'Will They' Do the Job**

2. Not Screening Candidates on

Visually matching the CV to the skill set of the role specification is one thing. Then interviewing the candidate to uncover whether they can and will do the job is something entirely different.

Here the devil is in the detail.

Can they do the job is about skills, qualifications and experience? The requirements should be mapped out and agreed during vacancy qualification.

A good recruiter knows this is critical to uncover during the interview process.

Does the candidate have the skills that will allow them to perform and excel in the position? For Sigma, this links to the information we have taken from you our client during the vacancy qualification.

- The client has requested, time served electrical apprenticeship, 17th Here is a classic example gramming skills with Siemens PLC's. edition and PLC pro

The next stage would be an assessment. In our case at Sigma Recruitment, we would assess a candidate's skill set by scrutinising a variety of evidence including CV review, asking open-ended questions during candidate screening and advising the client to obtain copy certificates at interview. example; Let's say you are recruiting a maintenance manager for your manufacturing plant. Another

Part of your job description highlights that the role requires the ability to oversee a planned maintenance system. It's easy for a candidate to say that they have experience in managing a preventative system. However, a specialist recruiter will be able to uncover if this is actually the case through their questioning and expertise in the market - something many inexperienced recruiters can't do. Who hasn't employed someone who, on paper, looks excellent, and yet can't deliver in the role?

Will they do the job, is about the role is right for the candidate long term.

How do the salaries, benefits package, commute and prospects compare? If a recruitment consultant hasn't had this conversation ahead of sending over the CV in the first place, you will be wasting your time again. h moving organisations isn't always about money, the overall impact of a different Thoug compensation and benefits package might be.

Here is a typical example we have experienced more than once. If a candidate's current employer gives them a pension which is way above others in the area, they are unlikely to move.

Yet some recruitment consultants in other companies take their candidates through to offer stage and suddenly when the financial impact of a move suddenly dawns on the candidate, they say no.

Leaving a very frustrated candidate and client complaining about time wasting.

Questioning is so crucial when it comes to assessing a candidate's suitability for the role and their new employer.

These are some of the questions we use at Sigma Recruitment to match suitable candidates to clients:

- What is missing from your current role?
- Why do you want to leave?
- How far are you travelling to work now?
- What is your current salary and benefits package?
- What would your next position need to have to satisfy your long-term career ambitions?
- What would you do if your current company offered you more money to stay with them? If you don’t have the answers these important candidate motivators, you could be in trouble.

3. Not Seeking Commitment from Candidates Before Presenting Their CV

This happens consistently with some recruitment companies. This technique demonstrates a less than professional organisation who doesn’t understand their clients, candidates or culture fit. It’s a huge time waster too. Leading to interview dropouts, unprepared candidates at interview and or job offer declines

Hiring managers are busy enough without wasting time waiting for candidates to turn up to interview or getting ‘excited’ about a potential recruit who doesn’t want to work in your industry or have a 100-mile round trip to work.

Another lesson in choosing your recruiter wisely. At Sigma, we follow a two-step process to check candidate commitment before presenting CVs to clients.

We have tracked this data religiously over thousands of placements. After confirming interest verbally around 30% of candidate don’t complete step two which involves confirming their interest in writing by email after they have more details and have had a chance to talk to their partner about a possible interview and then move.

If we remove this step, then this candidate would more often than not withdraw from any interview requests.

4. Being To Sales Rather Than Quality of Service Driven

a recruitment consultants' role, of course, involves Every salesperson wants to make sales, and selling too.

However, recruitment is different because your consultant is matching the role, company culture of their client and the skill set of the candidate. In our experience, too many consultants try and hammer square pegs into round holes when it comes to candidates. They do this by telling both the client and the candidate what they want to hear rather than being an honest broker. won't work in practice. Sometimes what looks good on paper or at first sight just

This might sound a like a stuck record, and so far, we have shared three other mistakes recruiters make which boil down to their lack of experience either working with you, their client or the sector in general. Here it's again vital to make sure you are working with a good recruiting partner who understands your sector and to tune into your gut feeling about a candidate too.

5. Poor Adverts and Job Descriptions

Great recruitment consultants are great marketers also.

A well-known industry leader in the recruitment sector is called Greg Savage. On a recent UK tour, he shared with the audience that today's modern recruiter needs to become great at digital marketing.

You can understand why when you look at the daily searches for career and recruitment related topics. As I write this article today, I Googled 'manufacturing roles' and got access to over 8.3 million results.

Therefore, how good is your recruiter at writing compelling adverts and job descriptions?

Look at their current website and adverts. Would you be compelled to apply? If their adverts are bland and boring, it's a sign that you won't attract the talent you want.

Here is something to consider testing with your current recruiter.

- When you know, an advert has gone live for a role of yours, what is it like?
- Have they 'done' an excellent job for you?
- Does it appear on Google or the related job boards your industry uses?
- Alternatively, is it full of industry jargon that doesn't mean anything or compels anyone to click
- and apply?

6. Selling A Candidate's Strengths and Hiding Their Weaknesses

The phrase rose-tinted spectacles spring to mind here.

When it comes to building a high performing manufacturing team, every leader accepts that people are rarely the finished article, and some development will be needed.

However, if a candidate has glaring weaknesses, you need to know about them; especially if it will impact their role.

For instance, the lack of attention to detail and timekeeping could impact your production significantly. if someone's teamwork abilities are weak, how hiring this person could be a disaster Alternatively, waiting to happen.

Be aware of precisely what are must have abilities for the role and ALWAYS recruit against these.

At Sigma, we provide an honest overview of the candidate's skills and experience against the criteria we have agreed with the client during vacancy qualification. Which leads me to point 7, which is pivotal to delivering a successful recruiting process.

7. Not Conducting A Detailed Vacancy Qualification

If you don't know in detail what you are looking for in a candidate, no recruiter known to man can possibly be successful.

That is why a detailed vacancy brief is critical to identifying the right hire for your organisation and the role they will occupy. Many recruiters skip this essential part of the recruiting process and either don't or won't ask you for the detail they need.

No wonder then that 10 or more unqualified CVs land in your inbox within the hour. A professional recruiter knows and understands that they need to represent you, your organisation and the opportunity out to the market.

You should expect your recruiter to request a setup call to ensure they have a full brief and can qualify the vacancy for you; this way, they can scope out a plan to deliver what you need.

This qualification process might involve:

- Understanding your business growth plans
- Your business success story
- How current employees fit in your organisation and their success stories too
- What are essential versus desirable skills for the candidate in question?
- What does good look like?

The critical point here is that for a recruiter to do their best work for you; we need the detail. many inexperienced consultants don't or won't invest the time in this critical process. Unfortunately,

8. Not Listening and Acting on Client Feedback

Though some people disagree, there is a well-known saying worth noting, and that is: “The client is always right.” Though this might not always be the case as a professional recruiting partner, it’s our job to understand what is essential to our clients and the detail and specifics of the role or working environment we might not know.

This detail can and does make a huge difference as I have highlighted above. It’s often the case that a consultant isn’t being arrogant or ignoring your request and feedback. Uncomfortable to say and some recruitment consultants don’t have the skills or experience to deliver what you want.

However, a consultative recruiter will be tapped into a specific industry in a given area; they are familiar with industry terminology and know all the key players, and they will be able to answer with authority any questions you might ask them on the subject. The adage that knowledge is power is especially true in recruitment. The more a recruiter knows about your sector, the more accurate their recommendations will be, allowing you to find the right candidate with the right skills.

They also have their finger on the pulse, especially when it comes to manufacturing recruiters. They will be actively engaged with industry leaders regularly, keeping up to date with all the latest rapidly, it’s essential for specialist news and trends. With the landscape of manufacturing changing so recruiters to keep abreast of the latest technological innovations and patterns so that they can find talent with the right sets of skills.

A consultative recruiter will also implement a consistent process too. In addition to keeping up with the recruitment trends within your industry, a consultancy should have a robust and methodical strategy in place, which they can clearly articulate to you. They will know exactly where to look for qualified candidates, with a comprehensive and current database of industry contacts and potential candidates. happening consistently with your recruitment company, it’s time to I respectfully suggest if this is NOT use another.

9. Not Understanding the Vacancies They Are Working On

This challenge sums up the context of all the mistakes we have shared today.

Two words sum it up.

Experience and understanding.

There has been a swing to specialists in the recruitment sector over the past few years. The likes of Google, LinkedIn and digital marketing has meant that we can now find specialists in our field who understand, in detail, what we need.

This has changed the face of recruitment. Therefore, many recruiters are out of their depth in specific sectors and manufacturing is one of them.

Finally...

You'll have probably noticed a theme running through these nine recruiter mistakes I have shared.

It boils down to lack of experience in recruitment and especially how the manufacturing sector work.

A question: Would you like help with your manufacturing recruitment process from a team who understands the sector in detail with 16 plus years' experience? Here at Sigma Recruitment, we have worked with hundreds of manufacturing companies and thousands of candidates.

If you would like help to develop your hiring strategy, call me on 02920 100790 or rhys@sigmarecruitment.co.uk

Best regards,

Rhys Williams

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Sigma Recruitment has recruited technical, engineering and manufacturing staff for UK employers since 2005, with every vacancy handled personally by the founder rather than a salesperson.

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