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How to Get the Best out of Your Recruiting Partner This Year

Professional staffing, search, and recruitment companies can help leaders overcome their recruitment problems by providing access to broader talent pools, industry expertise, innovative talent-sourcing techniques, employer branding, and more.

Unfortunately, many companies remain trapped in outdated partnership models with recruiters. They see their staffing experts as talent suppliers rather than collaborators. In 2025, business leaders need to view them as strategic allies to unlock the full value of a recruitment partner.

They need a strategy for fostering mutual trust and fueling long-term success. Here's how you can adjust your approach to working with recruiters in 2025 to achieve a better return on your investment.

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Understanding Recruiting Partnerships This Year

The UX/Product Design company-recruiter relationship has changed significantly in recent years. Recruiters aren't just transactional suppliers responsible for filling vacancies as quickly as possible. They're strategic partners whose expertise, insights, and skills give organizations a critical edge in a competitive talent market.

In the last few years, talent acquisition has become more complex. Even with cutting-edge tools and software to help them screen candidates, companies struggle to identify people with the right blend of skills, competencies, and traits to deliver in evolving roles.

Skilled recruiters deliver critical support in this era. They give companies access to more advanced technology to help them build a wider talent pool, and recruiters have access to market insights and sourcing strategies that ensure businesses can overcome skill shortages.

They can help business leaders understand the priorities of new candidates - what kind of benefits and company culture they're looking for, what companies can do to elevate their employer value proposition, and how to create more attractive offer packages.

Recruiters can also help businesses make more intuitive hiring decisions, focusing on a candidate's skills or abilities and their ability to enhance company culture and boost resilience.

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With their deep knowledge of your industry and the needs of candidates, your recruiter can even help you plan for evolving hiring needs and expectations. Plus, they can give you insights into competitor hiring strategies so you can find unique ways to differentiate your company from other brands and boost your chances of attracting and retaining the best talent.

Setting Your Partnership Up for Success

There's more to making the most of a UX/UI recruitment partner than choosing a company to work with and assigning them a specific task (like searching for talent). When organisations and recruiters work together as partners, the outcomes are transformative: faster time-to-hire, improved candidate quality, and stronger retention rates.

Start by choosing a recruitment partner that fits your specific needs. Look for deep industry knowledge, an understanding of cultural fit, and a broad network of candidates.

Access to Valuable Information

As a UX business leader, you need to clearly communicate your company's pain points, challenges, and goals to your staffing company. This means sharing the right information with your recruiter from day one.

Give them insights into your employer's value proposition and what makes your business appealing to talent. For example, you might offer a competitive salary and benefits package with flexible work options and ongoing development or learning opportunities.

Your employees might benefit from an exceptional company culture defined by a strong work-life balance, a commitment to well-being, or a focus on diversity, equity and inclusion.

Next, ensure your recruitment team knows the ideal candidates you want to attract. Don't just list the technical skills or credentials you want employees to have. Outline the ideal values or personality traits of a great staff member.

Clear Communication Frameworks

Strong communication is critical to any business partnership. When you partner with a UX recruitment agency, you shouldn't stop communicating after you tell the company what you need to fill your talent pipeline.

The constant back-and-forth is crucial so you can share up-to-date insights with your partner about the recruitment issues you're facing or the trends

you're noticing in the talent market. Consistent communication also means your recruiter can share valuable information about changing candidate preferences, market dynamics, or hiring practices. Agreeing on communication channels, frequency, and key points of contact ensures a seamless flow of information. Make sure you know who to contact if you have an issue and ensure your recruitment team has direct access to company decision-makers.

Transparent Expectations

Unrealistic expectations can derail even the most promising partnerships. Start by clearly defining the role's scope, the qualities of the ideal candidate, and any non-negotiables. Discuss potential challenges, such as tight timelines or niche skill requirements, and agree on realistic targets.

Remember that your expectations and needs might evolve – so ensure you have a good way to share ongoing feedback with your recruitment team.

A recruiter's ability to refine their approach depends on timely, constructive input about candidate quality and fit. Be candid about what worked and what didn't. If adjustments are needed, provide clear guidance to steer the process in the right direction.

Mastering Effective Collaboration

Truly effective UX/Product Design recruitment relationships depend on constant collaboration. Your recruiter shouldn't just be an outside party you turn to for occasional support. They should be integrated into your hiring strategy and equipped to act as an extension of your company. Focus on:

Integration into the Internal Hiring Process

A disjointed hiring process can slow recruitment, confuse candidates, and frustrate stakeholders. To avoid these pitfalls, align your recruitment partner with your internal processes. Share your recruitment workflows, decision-making protocols, and strategies. Invite your recruiter to join planning meetings and share their insights.

This integration ensures the recruiter can better understand your needs, keep candidates informed throughout the hiring process, and guide you towards success.

Market Mapping and Talent Pipelining

One of the most significant advantages of a recruitment partner is their ability to map the talent market and build robust pipelines. Specialist Product Design recruiters can help you proactively identify potential candidates even before vacancies arise. With their deep knowledge of your industry and the needs of candidates, your recruiter can even help you plan for evolving hiring needs and expectations. Plus, they can give you insights into competitor hiring strategies so you can find unique ways to differentiate your company from other brands and boost your chances of attracting and retaining the best talent.

Working with Recruiters on Candidate Experience

Your recruitment partner is vital in shaping the candidate experience, a critical factor in today's talent-driven market. Collaborate on every touchpoint, from initial outreach to final onboarding, ensuring candidates feel valued and informed.

Provide your recruiter with consistent feedback on candidate interactions and work together to streamline communication. A positive candidate experience will help you attract more talent to your company and improve the impact of your employer brand.

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Improving Your Recruitment Return on Investment

Support from a high-quality recruitment team comes with a price tag, which can be higher than you might expect initially. However, the long-term value of getting support with recruitment often offsets initial expenses.

A poor hiring decision can be more expensive than you think, with costs including recruitment fees, lost productivity, and potential disruption to team dynamics. High-quality recruiters focus on identifying candidates who not only meet immediate needs but also have the potential to grow within the organisation, reducing turnover and future hiring costs.

To ensure you're getting the best return on your investment:

Define Fee Structures in Advance

Understanding the fee structures your recruitment partner offers is crucial. Some agencies work on a contingency basis, where fees are only paid upon a successful hire. Others operate on retained agreements, offering a more tailored and dedicated approach.

Retained recruiters often provide deeper market insights and consultative service, making them a better fit for strategic hires. The key is ensuring the fee structure aligns with the value being delivered. Discuss the specific services included - market mapping, psychometric testing, or employer branding support - and assess how they contribute to your hiring goals.

Take Advantage of All the Benefits Offered

Remember, the focus of a UX recruitment company might be on filling the gaps in your team, but they can offer other benefits, too. Recruiters can give you valuable access to crucial market intelligence, helping you with everything from salary benchmarking to understanding candidate needs and priorities.

These insights can help you shape your hiring strategy and remain competitive in a competitive market. A recruitment partner can also help you improve your employer brand. They can offer insights into how to promote the benefits of working with your company across digital and offline channels and write more inclusive, engaging job descriptions.

This can attract more long-term candidates to your company, reducing the time you spend searching for talent and filling future gaps.

Consider Exclusive, Long-Term Partnership

Working exclusively with one UX/Product Design recruiter can significantly boost ROI. Exclusive agreements foster a deeper partnership, allowing the recruiter to invest more time and resources into understanding your organisation and sourcing the perfect candidates.

This approach can reduce competition between agencies, leading to higher quality candidates and faster placements. Additionally, it sends a clear message of trust, motivating your partner to prioritise your hiring needs.

Take a Proactive Approach to Partnership Optimisation

Evaluating the effectiveness of your recruitment partnership is essential for ensuring it delivers value and aligns with your organisation's goals. Define clear Key Performance Indicators you can monitor to assess the partnership's outcomes.

You could track things like time to fill, cost-per-hire, or even the retention rates of placed candidates. You could also look at candidate satisfaction scores, manager satisfaction rates, or succession-based metrics (like how many placed candidates end up with a promotion).

Treat the partnership as a work in progress. Discuss lessons learnt/learned from successful and unsuccessful hires and adapt your approach accordingly. Use data from KPIs and feedback to identify areas for improvement, refine processes, and enhance collaboration.

Make the Most of Your Product Design Recruitment Partner

As talent acquisition and retention in the sector become more complex, forging and building on the right recruitment partnership is more valuable than ever. Take a step back and examine your current approach to working with staffing companies.

Do you treat recruiters as true strategic allies, communicating and collaborating with them throughout the process? Or are you just using them as transactional vendors?

Taking the steps outlined above to form the foundations of a better relationship and fully take advantage of everything your recruiter offers will improve your return on investment and make it easier for you to build and retain the team you need.

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About Us

Carson Harris Associates was founded by Simon Carson in 2004 as an executive search firm specialising in UX/UI, software engineering and app development.

Simon has over 30 years of experience in the industry, having served previously as the Sales Director of US based, Management Search International. As Managing Director of Carson Harris, Simon oversees our business development and client relationship management, and is on hand to provide one to one guidance on all aspects of the hiring process.

Our delivery teams are based in London, Dublin, and Nairobi, and our consultants have hands-on experience in their specialist fields.

With collaboration always at the heart of what we do, our partner companies now range from startups to globally recognised brands.

At Carson Harris, we've got a proven track record of consistently securing desired outcomes for the companies we work with.

Generating CVs and portfolios is the easy part of recruitment. Understanding the talent behind them is where Carson Harris excels. We give our partners solutions rather than options.

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Testimonials

"We've been using Carson Harris for over five years now, since our early startup days, and they've been an integral part of our journey. From the outset, they became our first choice for product and UX roles—two areas that are absolutely crucial to the success of our company. Their deep understanding of our needs and ability to deliver top-tier talent has been key to our team's growth"
Hemal Vaghela

"Carson Harris have been on our PSL for many years and always one of our first go to's for software devs and UX designers. They build proper relationships and the calibre of candidate they provide is always top notch. I've dealt with dozens of agencies over the years and Carson Harris will always be one of my favourites for the professionalism they provide as well as the relationships I've built with them. Could not recommend them more highly!"
Sarah Lamontagne

" I have used Carson Harris for both perm and contract placements and wholeheartedly recommend them. I always feel incredibly well taken care of and like I am their number one priority. The quality and speed of the short-listing is unmatched and the way they understand how to pitch my company and to manage the candidate flow is great. No-nonsense, refreshingly honest recruiters."
Adina Kuse