

HEADHUNTERS

Before you read

Headhunting is when executives are approached by consultants who try to persuade them to take another job. Some people think this is unethical. What do you think?

Reading

Read this interview with Nigel Parslow from the *Financial Times* and do the exercises that follow.

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LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY ● ● ○

Candidates in some sectors need a little coercing

Interview with Nigel Parslow, UK Managing Director, Executive Search, Harvey Nash plc

.....?1
The appeal lies in the development of long-term relationships with clients, where they embrace you in their strategic thinking and confidence, combined with the accolades received from candidates in securing great appointments for them. As in all walks of life, it is great to be remembered, respected and seen as contributing to clients' objectives and candidates' lives.

.....?2
The best are those candidates who get a role through me and progress rapidly in the client organisation over several years. Two examples: a UK marketing manager progressed to Sales and Marketing Director and then on to running one of the client's global businesses; and a manufacturing director of a German-owned food services organisation progressed over nine years to

become the UK Managing Director and ultimately to managing its EMEA-region organisation, with more than 4,000 employees.

.....?3
Modern social and business media offer an excellent means of communication to wide groups of prospective candidates, and to an extent it has commoditised aspects of finding candidates. The best search is achieved through applying the principles of management consultancy within the search industry. This can only be done by dialogue and exchange.

.....?4
It's all in the preparation. The researcher or the search consultant should have researched the target thoroughly, assessing expertise and how the vacancy would be viewed by this candidate. There is no point

in targeting a candidate for a role which takes their career backwards or doesn't play to their expertise.

.....?5
The search industry has evolved at a different pace in different countries. In the US, it is mature, and candidates work hard to be on the radar of search consultants and are very responsive to calls. Other geographies are less so. Even in the UK, there are some functions and sectors that need more coercing in accepting a call, such as engineering and parts of the industrial sector.

.....?6
The industry is based on trust and there are no "tricks". Successful recruitment is based on working closely with the candidate and the client to ensure that the courtship is managed in a timely fashion with absolute openness and integrity.

1 Read through the whole interview and match each of these questions (a–f) to the paragraph (1–6) that answers it.

- a) Are executives in some sectors more receptive to calls than others?
- b) How do you approach the big phone call when headhunting someone?
- c) How do you persuade reluctant movers to take a post?
- d) How do you see your job?
- e) What is the most effective mode of communication?
- f) What was your best placement?

2 Look at the headline of the article. Which two questions (a–f) in Exercise 1 does it most closely relate to?

3 Find expressions in paragraph 1 that mean the following.

- a) attraction
- b) dealings with people
- c) different professions, etc.
- d) goals
- e) jobs
- f) obtaining
- g) praise
- h) warmly accept

4 Decide whether these statements about paragraphs 2 and 3 are true or false.

- a) The best placements are the ones where the candidate goes on to be promoted quickly by the recruiting organisation.
- b) The first example of a satisfying placement was of a British executive.
- c) The second example of this relates to a German executive.
- d) The manager in the second example ended up in the US.
- e) Headhunting is still a sophisticated activity that only highly trained people can do.
- f) Nigel Parslow uses the same ideas as other management consultants.
- g) He tries to impose his ideas on his clients.

5 Complete these statements using grammatically appropriate forms of expressions from paragraphs 4 and 5.

If ...

- a) you make an of a particular situation, you evaluate it.
- b) you have a particular of something, this is your opinion of it.
- c) you are an in a particular area, you have very good knowledge of it.
- d) you do a job, you do it in a complete way.
- e) you to a consultant's offer, you are willing to discuss it.
- f) you someone to do something, you force them to do it.
- g) something doesn't to something else, it doesn't correspond to it.
- h) a market sector is, a lot of people know about it, participate in it, etc.

6 In paragraphs 5 and 6, find ...

- a) a four-word expression originally referring to aircraft or shipping, used here to talk about awareness of someone.
- b) a three-word name (including *the*) for the activity of headhunters.
- c) a noun used in the plural, whose singular form is the name of a subject taught in schools.
- d) a noun that can refer to a physical area, used here to talk about a particular business activity.
- e) a plural noun referring to situations where someone is cheated or fooled.
- f) a noun that usually refers to the period before a couple are married.
- g) a noun referring to honesty.
- h) a noun referring to not hiding things.

Over to you 1

Go back to the answer you gave in *Before you read*. Would it be the same now that you have read the interview? Why? / Why not?

Over to you 2

'Modern social and business media offer an excellent means of communication to wide groups of prospective candidates, and to an extent it has commoditised aspects of finding candidates.' Nigel is here referring to sites like Facebook and LinkedIn. What other effects have sites like these had on the world of work, in your view?