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4 QUESTIONS

EVERY IT PROFESSIONAL SHOULD ASK BEFORE ACCEPTING A CONTRACT ROLE

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If you're an IT professional who has been in the workforce over the last 15 years, you've seen many changes take place. Technology isn't the only thing that is changing faster than ever. In fact, the evolution of technology is enabling rapid changes to business and technology requirements for companies to maintain a competitive edge.

Over the last 30 years, the IT profession has undergone notable change, as companies have gradually moved from a traditional, full-time employee workforce to a more elastic workforce model, enabling them to hire contingent or "on-demand" labor for IT projects.

IT professionals – developers, architects, analysts, programmers, to name a few, remain in high demand across all industries. To cope with rapid changes to business requirements, companies are relying on contracted IT employees for projects that scale from short-term to longer-term enterprise engagements.

IT professionals at all experience levels are increasingly transitioning from full time jobs to contingent work positions as contracted consultants. If you're an IT professional considering this kind of move, do you know what questions you should be asking to ensure you're making the right decision that is best for you and your career?

Here are four points to consider when you're interviewing with a technology recruiting and staffing firm to make sure you ask the right questions.

1 What benefits will I have?

Benefits?! I thought contract employees didn't have access to benefits!

Typically, contracted or contingent employees aren't given any medical or other benefits that are available to traditional full-time employees. Most staffing companies that say they offer benefits usually offer baseline coverages that "meet minimal requirements." These medical benefits usually have unrealistic deductibles and the employee is responsible for 100% of the premium.

The Hiring Group is taking an entirely different approach to how we employ our consultants. Clients of The Hiring Group are in an extremely competitive talent market, so there is pressure to acquire the right technology expertise and to retain these employees for the long term. The Hiring Group is committed to helping our clients hire the right people for the job, but also making sure they are happy and thrive in their jobs throughout the lifecycle of the contract. Keep in mind some jobs we recruit can be long-term engagements, often lasting 4 or more years.

The Hiring Group pays half of the employee-only medical benefits and family plans are also available. Our medical benefits are the best in the industry. Humana Simplicity Gold is a straightforward medical copay-only plan with a \$0 deductible. Coverage starts the 1st of the month following your hire date. The Hiring Group also offers vision and dental coverage at affordable costs.

Employees of The Hiring Group repeatedly provide positive feedback to our leadership team regarding the excellent coverage provided through our plan. This level of wellness benefits far surpasses the offerings of other staffing and recruiting agencies, which is why employees of The Hiring Group love being a part of our company.



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2 Do you have a PTO policy?

Across the staffing and recruiting industry the model for granting Holiday or Paid Time Off (PTO) pay is this: Lower your rate and you can have a certain amount of time off. Most contractors choose to skip the PTO and take the original rate they agreed on, and therefore contractors are not paid for days they have to miss when life happens. If you're considering accepting a contract role with a staffing company, be sure you understand if there is a PTO policy and what the circumstances will be if you need to be absent from work. At The Hiring Group, we believe it's important for everyone to have time away without being financially penalized. All contractors of The Hiring Group are given two weeks of PTO per year, unless client specified. PTO is made available to the contractors immediately – no negotiations necessary.

3 Are there training and development opportunities?

Most contract employment roles are very limited in terms of getting additional training to grow your skills and professional development. For most staffing and recruiting agencies, there is usually a focus on "cost controls," which often prevents these companies from being able to pay for additional training for their contractors. If you're interested in taking a course or pursuing certifications, the financial burden is on the consultant.

When we founded The Hiring Group, we saw an opportunity to deliver additional value to our clients and to extend our consultants an opportunity to grow and develop. Shortly after we hired a consultant for a mechanical engineering role, she approached our leadership team to see if there was an opportunity to take a course that would help her in the role she was in at a leading manufacturing facility. We saw this as an opportunity to not only help our consultant deepen her skillset, but also provide greater value to our client's business.

At The Hiring Group, if our consultants feel that a specific course or online tutorial would be of benefit to them (and the client), we evaluate these requests on a case-by-case basis. Often, we are able to fund part or most of the costs associated with this training. We want to invest in our employees to ensure they are engaged and have the skills necessary to be the very best at their jobs.

4 When I go to work for one of your clients, will I hear from you?

It seems like an off-the-wall question, but you would be surprised at the number of candidates who have gone to work as a contractor with other staffing agencies and are completely disconnected once they walk through the client's doors. These contractors will only hear from their staffing agency if there is a problem, or unfortunately, plans change and the job role is eliminated.

From The Hiring Group's perspective, this is one of the most negative ways to treat contracted employees. Plain and simple, it sends a message loud and clear to the contractors that they are just a number and undervalued. We have seen this happen time after time, and the consequence is always the employee is only in the job for a few months (or weeks for that matter). This impacts our client's day-to-day business both operationally and financially. The costs to recruit and hire a new employee, as well as the opportunity loss attributed to attrition can potentially impede projects and impact deadlines.

As our focus is on the well-being of the consultant, when you are interviewing for a position with one of our clients, The Hiring Group assigns you a dedicated relationship manager. This relationship manager will coordinate and communicate all of the details throughout the interview process, including conducting a pre-interview meet and greet. Your relationship manager will escort you to the interview to ensure you know precisely where to go.

Once an offer is extended and accepted, the relationship manager is responsible for actively scheduling period touch points to ensure your expectations for the job are aligned to the roles and responsibilities provided during the hiring process. We believe these touchpoints are essential to keeping communication lines open and providing and receiving feedback. Open communication helps us continue to build on our success.

FINAL THOUGHTS

If you're an IT professional and considering making a move to a different contract role, now is the time! Demand for IT jobs continue to soar, and the number of IT contract positions is growing. Before you accept a position as a contractor, take some time to thoroughly research the benefits and incentives offered by your staffing and recruiting company. Don't settle for "bare minimum" requirements, because there are better companies out there.

At The Hiring Group, our motto is "Great Contractors Deserve Great Benefits." We believe that to attract, recruit and hire the top technology talent in the business, it's critical to look after our people. Nurture them. Reward them. Provide them stellar benefits and give them a generous time off policy. The result? Contractors remain in their positions for the longer-term, and our clients benefit by saving money through lower attrition and a higher return on their human capital investments. Hopefully these four questions we've outlined will provide you with the knowledge to make the best decision regarding your career and overall professional growth.

Interested in working with The Hiring Group? Let us know and a recruiter will reach out: greatbenefits@thehiringgroup.com

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