

## HIRING HELP: THE VIEW FROM A WIND ENERGY RECRUITER'S DESK

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*An urgent phone call ...*

“Good morning Patricia. We have an immediate need to fill a position over here! Please give this your personal attention.”

“Ready? Here goes ... Must have BS in electrical Engineering, MSEE degree preferred. MBA couldn't hurt. Ten years experience as a senior manager with a utility, with all applicable skills and knowledge, i.e., MS Project, SCADA, Arc Flash, IEC Substation, medium-large generation and transmission. A skilled negotiator and public speaker, eager to sell his home and move his family 800 or 1,000 miles. Completely familiar with all federal, state and local ordinances, right? Speaks some Latvian? Couldn't hurt. There is some travel involved but never more than 30-40 percent.

“Oh, almost forgot. We won't consider anybody without, say, 7-10 years experience in wind energy.”

*The conversation continues ...*

“I see our agreement mentions a fee ... What? Whoa! That's going to be a tough sell, but HR hasn't had any luck with this one. Let's give it shot. Oh, salary? Well, we expect to have a nice salary package in the neighborhood of \$75K or \$80K. Can you have us six or seven candidates this week? By the way, we're also calling four other recruiters.”

Exaggerated? Yes. But only slightly!

On occasion, candidate issues can be nightmarish as well. The candidate may be secretly weighing two or more other offers or prospects or be susceptible to

counter offers by his/her present employer. The “ideal” candidate on paper may be surprisingly and devastatingly ghastly in an interview. He or she may accept a job which requires a relo and then refuse the relocation. Spouses can be fully entrenched in rewarding careers of their own and are understandably resistant to the inevitable relocation.

These examples reflect a few of the challenges to both companies and recruiters that accompany present and expected growth in wind energy.

Overall, North Fork Renewables Group, the rare recruitment firm working exclusively in renewables (primarily wind and solar), sees an extremely busy and rewarding future in wind energy recruiting, because wind, despite on-again, off-again governmental support, continues to grow dramatically.

What are key issues in attracting top wind candidates? What does it take to effectively and consistently succeed in their recruitment?

Employers who wish to attract and retain experienced qualified candidates can succeed when they make the decision to work closely with recruiters.

The hiring company needs to give the recruiter extensive background information about company and what company is trying to achieve. What is the evolving “story” of the company? Ideally the candidate will be a fit with the direction of the company as well as the job opening. Why is the position open? Was the position recently created? Why have past attempts to fill the position failed? Were the positions responsibilities not being met by a former

employee?

Why would the candidate want to work for the company? Positions are difficult to sell to a candidate if the hiring manager can't describe why the company is a great place to work. Rumors to the contrary must be dealt with. If candidates have heard terrible things about the company, those issues must be addressed. Experienced recruiters wrest from hiring authorities enough information to sell the company to the candidate.

Who is involved in the hiring? It is vital for the recruiter and candidate to know who will be conducting the interviews. The hiring process can be derailed suddenly and irreparably by a final interview with the one person who had different ideas from the start. A thorough recruitment can prevent a candidate from stepping into an elevator shaft late in the interview process.

The fact is that vast numbers of job seekers very much want to work in renewables. This is a huge plus for renewable energy industries. Experienced workers who have left wind or solar in the past are attempting to return. We regularly hear from individuals employed in oil or gas who hope to cross over to wind with full knowledge of a likely reduction in salary. It is heartwarming as well that colleges and universities increasingly offer renewable energy related degrees. Overall, the view from a wind energy recruiter's desk is encouraging. ✌

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