

Bad News and Recruiting

Over the past couple of years, reading business magazines or watching the news has been kind of like going to see the Saw movies. If you don't leave in the middle, you'll probably lose a little of your humanity by the end.

We are constantly bombarded with news about unemployment, looming inflation, and stock market crashes. Reflecting all that fear, your wedding ring is now probably worth as much your car. What does all the bad news really mean?

Staffing executives and leading employers follow the unemployment rate closely as an indicator of the health of their market. We also regularly feature [articles about unemployment](#) and shifts in different industries. But here's the thing – if you're an individual recruiter, does it really matter to you? Does the price of coffee or the size of Wall Street Bonuses really make a difference?

Because recruiters are tied in to everybody else's jobs, there is a temptation to pay attention to everything. Read Fortune. Read the Wall Street Journal. Get educated about commodities. Read the latest technology developments. Become a social media guru. Study an article about radiology when you're hunting around for a radiology nurse. Go get an online MBA. Attend lectures in your field. Stay up to date on Washington and employment law.

Here the thing: it's endless. The education process for a recruiter and all the things that you can factor in to do your work are infinite. Focusing your energy and attention on macro-economic factors or even trying to "become one of the people for which you recruit" causes real recruiting disasters. If you spend all your time worrying about the national debt, you will most likely create your own financial disaster. Recruiters that worry about the sky high unemployment rate often face unemployment themselves.

It seems like a good idea to understand and keep abreast of all this junk – but what does it all mean? Financial disasters, mass layoffs, and looming debt crisis mean one thing to all of the media outlets that you probably rely on: ratings gold. For most recruiters, the day-to-day practical reality of their job has very little to do with all of these disasters and impending disasters.

Three quick tips to stay positive and focused on what really matters to your recruiting success:

1. **Understand one thing:** You aren't a talking head on politics nor an economic advisor. Real experts spend all of their time on one thing, their own thing, and they become tremendous resources in that one area. If you recruit technology professionals in New York, understand everything about technology employment in

New York: the companies, candidates, schools, trends, and problems. If you work at it 10 hours a day, you stand a chance of understanding one thing very well.

2. **Waste your time well:** When you have time to relax, just relax. You consider watching a sitcom a waste of time, but probably think reading Fortune is somehow categorically different (it's somehow work.) The reality is that these semi-work activities don't do much to further your career. It's entertainment like anything else. Don't feel obligated to read the Economist. If that's your cup of tea, go for it. But it probably doesn't help your recruiting any more than People Magazine.
3. **Be careful of who you spend your time with.** This sounds terrible, but recruiting success is driven a lot by your environment. You don't have time for people groaning about the economy – you need to make things happen. The next time someone starts talking about the abysmal job market, redirect the conversation to your last placement or just slide your chair over a bit... You can't afford to be dragged through psychological mud.

Unemployment, debt, inflation, deflation, etc... all that bad news matters very little to your career in comparison to the work you put into your job each and every day. Don't let bad news get you down and on your time off, don't be afraid to have some fun. The world isn't ending, unless you let it.