

# How to Stand Out to a CPG Recruiter

## Expanded guide to working with headhunters and internal talent teams in the Consumer Packaged Goods sector

### 1. Know Your Recruiter Types

- Internal talent acquisition screens first for long-term culture fit.
- External headhunters solve business problems fast and present three to five top candidates.
- Retained search firms charge upfront fees and target passive talent for VP level and above.
- Contingent firms are paid on placement, so speed and tight fit matter most.
- Boutique specialists focus on narrow functions such as shopper marketing or DTC growth.
- RPO (Recruitment Process Outsourcing) partners act as internal teams on contract—understand their metrics.

### 2. Craft a CPG-Ready Value Proposition

- Quantify impact, e.g., “Drove 14 % sales lift at Kroger through trade-spend optimisation.”
- Highlight omni-channel wins, eCommerce revenue, or Amazon DSP mastery.
- Show category knowledge: Food, Beverage, Beauty, Household. Headhunters search by category first.
- List retailer relationships (Walmart, Target, Costco, Whole Foods), even if indirect or through a broker.
- Mention system fluency—NielsenIQ, IRI Unify, syndicated data dashboards.
- Show year-over-year growth on innovation lines or distribution gains.
- Translate technical wins into customer impact, e.g., “Reduced sugar by 20 %, driving +5 % velocity at Target.”

### 3. Engage Like a Pro

- Respond within 24 hours—candidate short lists move fast.
- Return requested materials in one email: resume, compensation breakdown, target salary.
- Ask your recruiter how they prefer follow-up and stick to it.
- Keep LinkedIn messages open so internal teams can reach you directly.
- If you're not interested, decline politely and suggest a colleague, headhunters remember.
- Send a concise one-page summary deck if requested.

- Ask thoughtful questions about market dynamics to demonstrate strategic thinking.

#### **4. Prepare for the Intake Call**

- Know your numbers, volume sales, profit margin, budget managed.
- Describe leadership style with examples of coaching or cross-functional influence.
- Have two to three success stories that map to the spec.
- Ask about must-have criteria so you can tailor future answers.
- Have a clear salary narrative, base, bonus, equity, location.
- Prepare a redacted P&L or scorecard as evidence of impact (for senior roles).

#### **5. Build Your Digital Footprint**

- Optimise your LinkedIn headline with role target and category: “CPG Sales Director | eCommerce | Pet Care.”
- Add key metrics to your About section, revenue managed, team size.
- Post or comment weekly on industry trends, plant-based growth, retail media, price-pack architecture.
- Follow recruiters and hiring managers in your niche, they see who engages.
- Feature portfolio imagery or pack shots in LinkedIn Featured if you’re in brand roles.
- Use a custom banner reflecting your category to create immediate context.

## 6. Industry Trends Headhunters Watch

- Retail media rise, Amazon, Walmart Connect, Kroger Precision Marketing.
- Growth in natural and better-for-you categories, functional beverages, clean beauty.
- Pressure on trade spend, candidates who negotiate depth, not breadth, are prized.
- Sustainability claims under scrutiny, supply-chain pros with carbon-accounting chops win interviews.
- Data-driven storytelling, linking panel data to retailer margin expansion stands out.
- Dynamic pricing and revenue growth management experience is in high demand.
- Category consolidation (pet, supplements) drives need for integration project managers.

## 7. Common Deal-Breakers

- Inflated titles without clear scope.
- Job-hopping every year with no strategic rationale.
- Generic resumes blasted everywhere without custom keywords.
- Silence during reference checks, ensure former managers will speak highly of you.
- Compensation surprises late in the process.
- Social media missteps or controversial posts.
- Ghosting recruiters or hiring managers at any stage.

## 8. Follow-Up Etiquette

- Send thank-you emails within 24 hours of each interview stage.
- Keep updates concise, new numbers or availability.
- Do not bypass the recruiter to negotiate directly unless invited.
- If you accept another offer, notify all recruiters immediately.
- Confirm next steps and timeline in writing to avoid miscommunication.
- If you withdraw, give constructive feedback to maintain the relationship.

## 9. Quick Checklist

- LinkedIn headline and summary include CPG keywords.
- Resume shows quantifiable wins in the current decade.
- References know your recent achievements.
- Response time under 24 hours.
- You can articulate your unique selling proposition in 30 seconds.
- Resume and LinkedIn keywords align with ATS ranking criteria.
- Elevator pitch matches the job's top three priorities.