

# Recruiting Firm Turns To YouTube To Attract Merrill Brokers

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NEW YORK -(Dow Jones)- While Merrill Lynch & Co.'s (MER) brokers await details from Bank of America Corp. (BAC) on its retention package, one recruiting firm is using a video posted on Google Inc.'s (GOOG) YouTube to get their attention.

RJ & Makay, which has a staff of more than 200 and offices throughout North America, posted the video late Friday in an effort to reach Merrill's more than 16,000 financial advisors. Many of these brokers have been inundated with phone calls from competitors since Bank of America said it would acquire Merrill for \$50 billion, or \$29 a share.

"I know Merrill advisors are getting bombarded with recruiting calls so we wanted to do something different, something very unique," says RJ & Makay Chief Executive Darin Manis.

The video, which is under five minutes in length and displays text with a musical background, asks brokers to consider issues such as culture integration, possible new technologies, management changes and a new benefits package.

"We're getting a lot of calls from Merrill brokers who have seen the video and said that it was emailed to them from another financial advisor," Manis said.

Executives at Merrill Lynch recently started pitching Bank of America's deal to retain the firm's brokerage force, but didn't spell out details about how the two cultures would mesh, or what the retention bonus would look like.

"I wouldn't doubt that there will be a lot of people who are influenced (by the video) to make a call," said a Merrill Lynch broker in the Northeast U.S.

A spokeswoman for Merrill Lynch declined to comment on the recruiting video.

Some recruiters, however, said the video could turn off brokers who are looking for guidance from a familiar voice or face.

Mindy Diamond, president of Diamond Consultants, a New Jersey-based recruiting firm, said that "you're dealing with people who are facing a lot of difficult decisions" and that trying to attract brokers "via one webcast or in an email feels a little insensitive and impersonal."

Manis disputed that argument, saying, "The video in no way is going to replace a relationship or a conversation," and adding, "It's just a tool to help foster an initial conversation."

While Manis couldn't reveal the firms that he recruits for, Makay's Web site lists Smith Barney, a unit of Citigroup Inc. (C); Fidelity Investments; Bank of New York Mellon Corp. (BK); and Edward Jones as some primary clients.

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