



From Failure to Success in Recruitment Sales

Presenter: Bob Marshall, Founder – The Marshall Plan

Bob Marshall, founder of The Marshall Plan, has an extensive background in the recruiting industry as a Recruiter, Manager, VP, President, Consultant and Trainer. Bob started in search with a large recruitment organization and soon achieved the Pacesetter level of production; since 1980, Bob has been widely recognized as a leader in the recruitment industry. In his first office, he was named Account Executive of the Month sixteen times and he is the recipient of the Million Dollar Hall of Fame Award. In 1986, Bob founded The Bob Marshall Group, and travels the world training top recruiters.

About this Program

When we begin our recruitment careers, we are faced with three learning curves. First, we have to learn the tools of our recruiting profession. Second, we learn the lexicon of our niche specialty. And third, we learn and develop selling skills. Bob will focus on that third skill set with a goal of ensuring that your business continues to grow!

Meeting, Week 1: “From Failure to Success in Recruitment Sales” by Bob Marshall

If you are reviewing this episode with a team, start from the beginning and watch through 23:01 and use the guide below for expansion on the material shared. Resume Week 2’s meeting at 23:02 and watch through the end of the Episode.

Facilitator: Let’s start with one of the first elements that Bob discusses – that of enthusiasm. He states that enthusiasm is the biggest single factor in successful selling, but that this cannot be manufactured – it comes from product knowledge and knowing what we can do for others. Knowing that you know things about your industry is great; being able to articulate that knowledge breeds confidence and enthusiasm. Take a moment to think through some of the things you know you know that would be of value you to your hiring managers and/or candidates. You have a detailed understanding of competitors, how candidates increase their career trajectory, how to retain top performers, and a myriad of other areas. What are some specific pieces of knowledge, beyond the obvious, that you could insert into conversations with candidates and clients to demonstrate your insider’s point of view?

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(Facilitator): If the most important secret of salesmanship is to find out what the other person wants, and then help him find the best way to get it, how can we utilize this throughout our conversations with hiring managers and candidates? Take some time to think beyond the “typical” questions you are accustomed to asking, and think about the best way a recruiter could engage YOU in a conversation if they called to get to know you and your organization. What questions would they ask you to get to know what you want to accomplish and what the best way is to help you get it?

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(Facilitator): The next step, after asking great questions, is being able to close on next steps. Closes are used to structure your conversations and you should be the one driving where the conversation is going. Great closers help clients and candidates arrive at the conclusion themselves, and see that the solution you have for them is in their best interest.

How you practice is how you will play, so let’s take several minutes and role play several critical scenarios we all face. If there are others that you encounter regularly, incorporate those as well. Closing is not a grand gesture at the end of a conversation, but a series of small steps leading to a final conclusion of mutual agreement. It’s critical to be prepared for every call and every regularly anticipated situation. Role play the following scenarios:

- A candidate is open to being considered by your client and states she will send you her resume in the next few days. How do you set expectations from here?
- A new hiring manager has an interest in reviewing your candidate’s resume. How do you close for timelines and next steps?
- A prospective client has an urgent and critical need, but is only open to working with you on a contingent basis. He will review your fee agreement once you send it to him and get back to you with any questions. How do you pre-close on what will be done once you send the agreement over?
- A new client has an urgent and critical need, but wants to engage multiple recruiters to work on the search because they feel they will have better coverage and not put all their eggs in one basket. You don’t want to enter this horserace, but don’t want to lose out on this search (should they ultimately desire to engage a firm exclusively) or future business. How do you set expectations for now and the future?
- The hiring manager does not have an urgent or critical search, but is always open to adding good individuals to their team. How do you pre-close on next steps should you call back in the future with the type of candidate they claim they’d like to consider?

(Facilitator): Before we break, let's spend a few minutes brainstorming a few more questions we can add to our repertoire. Bob gave a lengthy list of what great questions are designed to do, so let's go through a few that are most relevant to the introductory dialogue we engage in with hiring managers. Dig beyond the obvious initial question and come up with some inquiries that are not asked by every other recruiter they talk to:

We ask questions can we ask to understand the broad areas hiring managers are interested in where we might be of service?

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What questions can you ask to isolate the narrow area that is our best opportunity to serve them?

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What questions can you ask to pinpoint the exact service we can render?

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What are some questions you can ask to solicit the help of a hiring manager? How can you cast them in an advisory role, without sounding unsure or uneducated?

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Meeting, Week 2: "From Failure to Success in Recruitment Sales" by Bob Marshall

Resume Week 2's meeting at 23:02 and watch through the end of the Episode.

(Facilitator): We start with a reminder that great questions are meaningless if we aren't great listeners! The good news is that this is a learnable skill – tough to master, but doable! You can learn to tune in the important and tune out the extraneous.

Think of how it feels when someone's not listening to you. You feel ignored, unimportant. Instead of liking the other person, you think he or she is rude or self-interested. Conversely, people who feel they are being heard are easier to deal with.

- Be aware of signs of not listening in others and in yourself. Wandering eyes, distractions, side conversations, boredom, doing two things at once. Practice the skill of concentrating. Work at listening. Make the subject at hand the most important subject in your mind. Above all, focus when you're on the phone; make consistent eye contact when face-to-face.
- Don't react... listen. As soon as the other person says something, you will want to say something back. An answer. A comeback. A correction. Wait, take brief notes, and resist even formulating a response until the other person is completely finished.
- Eliminate distractions. Close your office door, forward phone calls or when you are on the phone, cover up the distractions on your desk such as e-mail and your computer screen if necessary.
- Fake it. Act interested in what the other person is saying. An amazing thing happens: you actually become interested.
- Ask questions that lead to the other person talking more, not less. You will do nothing but gain information.
- Let listening be an end in itself. Sometimes, simply hearing the other side's issue may not only enable you to find a solution, it may be the solution! People want to be heard.

After reviewing the above suggestion points, list out the behaviors that you know you are guilty of when it comes to being a poor listener:

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Now, go back and circle - which ONE (just one!) of those behaviors do you commit to working on/stopping beginning today?

(Facilitator): Let's review the questions we created last week, and the ones we are accustomed to using in initial dialogue. Bob recommends that questions consist of a variety of who, what, where, when, why, how, and with a little perspective/opinion woven throughout. How can we continue to fine-tune our questions so we receive a comprehensive set of answers from our prospects?

- *"Knowing that this search has to pay for itself and that we're going to be held accountable, how will you track and measure the success of the placement?"*

- *“From your perspective, is it more important.....?”*
- *“I would value your insight; why do you think.....?”*
- *“Could you tell me more about....?”*
- *“When did you first notice.....?”*
- *“What seems to be the key contributing factors to.....?”*
- *“How has this affected.....?”*
- *“Have you had the chance to see what this might be costing the business in terms of.....?”*

(Facilitator): Bob provides an example script to fuse a series of small closes into a bigger overview that is meaningful to a client. There is no one-size-fits-all approach, so any script will require modification from one recruiter to the next. With that understanding, what are the pieces of Bob’s script below that could work with your approach or within your market?

Example script:

Recruiter: *“Can you talk for a few minutes now, or would you rather I call later?”*

Client: *“Go ahead”* or, *“What did you want to talk to me about?”*

Recruiter: *“You!”*

Client: *“What about me?”*

Recruiter: *“I want to know what I can do for you. I’m an executive recruiter in the commercial construction industry. I specialize in your niche. I primarily work with midsize companies doing between 50 and 400 million a year in revenue, primarily Design, Build, Negotiate and Relationship firms. I’ve worked in that industry for 17 years. I’ve placed north of 800 people in that market. I know that’s a lot, but I have. And the reason for my call today is I’ve never worked for you. I’m interested in getting to know you, introducing myself to you and seeing how I can best help you in the future. Even if today is not the day you need somebody, that’s totally fine. I still want you to know me and I want to know you.*

In order that I may show you someone at a future date that might be of value to you, would you mind if I ask you a few questions?”

“Our clients basically fall into three categories. First, those that have a tremendous urgency to fill a position (we are often paid to circumvent the time factor). Second, those that have a very difficult position to fill (we are often the ‘court of last resort’, if you will). Or third, those that want to be kept apprised of top-notch talent as those talented people surface, regardless of whether you have an opening (these candidates will either make you money (superstars) or save you money (heroes).

I do not work in the marketplace of ‘applicants’ who I consider job hoppers, job shoppers or rejects, i.e., the bottom 15% who are reading electronic or print ‘want ads’. My marketplace consists of 85% of the working population who are happy, well-appreciated, making good money, currently working and not reading want ads. Through my talent, skill and training, I motivate those people to move for better opportunities. I refer to these people as candidates. Since they are currently working, and not actively on the job market, they often will not have current resumes or CVs. Asking me for a resume for this



type of individual will often only slow down the process and possibly cause you to lose the opportunity of visiting with a top caliber individual. Resumes can always be secured at a later date.”

Additional Script (have clients write numbers down as you recite them):

“Based on studies conducted by the top business graduate schools in the US (and how many insurance companies figure their ‘Key Person’ insurance - Transamerica being one), an employee’s value to their company is usually set at some multiple of their salary. In this example let’s use 5 as the multiplier.

So, for instance, if your opening calls for a salary of \$100K, then the value that employee should bring to your company is \$500K per year. My service charge, on the other hand is only 30% of their realistic first year’s earnings, which, in this case, is only \$30K. Or, to look at it another way, my fee is only 6% of this position’s value to your company, and, that’s only for the first year! You benefit from the \$500K value year after year after year. I get my fee only one time. When you look at our fee structure in this way, we are definitely a bargain.

Conversely, if you have a position open at this level, then taking the value of this position at \$500K per year and realizing that there are 2080 work hours in a year, you are hemorrhaging \$240 of value per hour for each hour that this position remains vacant. Think about it! That’s about \$2,000 per workday, \$10,000 per workweek, etc. Three weeks with this position open will basically equal my fee, and you’ll still have that vacancy.”

(Facilitator): Let’s move to another subject Bob discussed – that of failure. He makes a great point that although all recruiters will have failures at times, it’s the learning that comes from those failures that separates the great recruiters from the pack. Let’s take a minute to examine our records. Think about the last deal that fell through. List out at least five things that weren’t covered, pre-closed, or revisited that should have been:

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Now, most important step - how can we make changes to our process, pre-closing forms, checklists, or scripts to not make the same mistakes in the future?



For those interested in Bettger's List:

Week 1: Enthusiasm

Week 2: Order: Self-Organization (Planning)

Week 3: Think In Terms of Others' Interests

Week 4: Ask Questions

Week 5: The Key Issue

Week 6: The Art of Listening

Week 7: Deserve Confidence

Week 8: Knowledge of My Business

Week 9: Appreciation and Praise

Week 10: Smile Happiness

Week 11: Remember Names and Faces

Week 12: Service and Prospecting

Week 13: Closing the Sale: Action

