Feedback for Closing

Presenter: Mike LeJeune – President, Simple Leadership

Mike Lejeune is a keynote speaker, facilitator, executive coach and author, and is known for his ability to help organizations select, engage and empower top tier talent, and minimize turnover through with proven retention strategies. Mike has spent over 20 years in the middle lane between the talent and the organization as a recruiter. He has identified the major challenges and the success secrets in keeping great talent once hired. He calls his process the Power of Connectivity.

Mike Lejeune served as President of Steverson & Company, one of the leading Executive Search firms in Texas. Mike has also served on the board of directors as President of the Texas Association of Personnel Services and President of the National Speakers Association.

While some believe in the premise of the ABC's of closing Always Be Closing, the feedback stage should create a safe environment for the candidate to give you their thoughts, process the information without concern for feeling pressure. Too many times we are perceived as being interested in closing the deal instead of a resource to help evaluate and guide the decision making process. This program will take you through the four stages of feedback that pulls the candidate or client to you rather than creating an image of pushing them to an offer.

Meeting: "Feedback for Closing" by Mike LeJeune

If you are reviewing this episode with a team, watch the entire Episode and use the notes below to incorporate into your firm's best practices.

Facilitator: The fact that Mike describes the interview debrief as an "investigative process" is incredibly insightful. If you view these conversations as purely fact-finding, it allows you to truly represent them, which should be a tremendous advantage. You don't close a candidate with pressure, you close with information that addresses the emotional needs and desires that motivate them. Separate *feedback* from the *close*. Mike shares many of the questions he would suggest asking to both your candidate and your hiring manager, and the NLE Closing Form for both sides is at the end of this Facilitation Guide.

- How did it go?
- How long were you there?
- Can you get the candidate to rebuild the interview so you can see it?
- Who did you speak to?
- What happened in the interview?
- Now that you have interviewed, what is your understanding of what they need? How did it compare to the information I had given you?
- How did it compare to what we had originally discussed as to the most important elements of what you were looking for and why? (Discuss each one by one, making them think about it and providing feedback)
- What were the questions you were asked?
- Were there any questions you felt you could have answered differently or better?

- You seem to have good people skills. If the client were going to have any questions about you, what do you think they would be?
- What questions or concerns are you weighing out at this time?
- How do you see this being different from your current role?
- How does this compare with the other situations you're looking at?
- Based on what you have experienced today, is this something you want me to pursue for you? Tell me why?

Hiring Manager Debrief:

- What were your overall impressions?
- What is your assessment of candidate's communication skills? Can you see them fitting with your team?
- You mentioned you needed (someone capable of building spreadsheets for your new acquisition). How do you see candidate being able to address your needs specifically?
- You also mentioned you needed (someone to interact with distribution centers who will be transporting your product). Is candidate strong enough to handle that? Why do you say that?
- How does candidate compare to the person who is in the role now (or was in the role)?
- How does candidate compare with others you have seen? How many have you interviewed so far? At this point how would you rank him/her?
- Is there someone else who needs to speak to him/her before a decision can be made? Who are they, what is their role, what is their background?

Have you ever moved forward too fast, or in the wrong direction because you are attempting to close a deal? Sometimes placements that should happen suddenly disappear into a dark, black hole because we failed to ask enough, or the right questions.

Ask the question if you are nervous to hear the answer!

(Candidate and Client Closing Form on following pages;

review Module 15 of the Foundation Program for more on this subject)

Closing Form: Candidate

CLIENT ________________________________ HIRING MANAGER ___________________________

CANDIDATE ____________________________ INTERVIEW DATE ____________________________

Section #1: The Recap - Part of the intent with these questions is to never have more than your first candidate go to an interview without being able to share some specific insights about the hiring manager, agenda, or types of questions covered.

- *"How long did the interview last?"*
- *"I know you were slated to meet with (hiring manager or individuals) – who else did you meet with? Was there anyone you met with that we didn't plan for? Talk to me about that person and that conversation. What were your impressions of each of them?"*
- *"Walk me through your day – and since I haven't had a chance yet to step foot in their office, tell me about getting there and in the door – start from the beginning!"*
- *"What kinds of questions were asked? Were there any that caught you off-guard?"*
- *"Which of the questions that we discussed prior to your interview were asked?"*
- *"I know that to me, (hiring manager) has a (great personality) when we are on the phone – what was he like face to face? How was the tone of the meeting?"*

Section #2: The Hot Buttons - Help the candidate start to line up their initial wants and desires of a future opportunity with what they just learned about this current opportunity

- *"What most impressed you about the hiring manager? What most impressed you about the opportunity?"*
- *"I know when we first spoke, (hot buttons) were the things that were most important for you to consider when making a move. How does this opportunity compare in each of those areas?"*

- *"How well can you see yourself fitting into the team? What is most compelling about being able to work alongside (boss/manager)?"*

- *"What does this allow you to do, that you currently don't have the opportunity to do?"*

- *"What concerns do you have about what you saw or heard? What concerns about the commute or location? What concerns about the initial expectations in the role?"*

- *"What other areas do you still need more information? Are there some subjects or questions that could use some clarification or expansion?"*

Section #3: The Ego Check Regardless of if you have a huge ego to reel in, or a modest candidate, these questions will arm you with information that may be important to readdress with the client on the client debrief call.

- *"Did they give you any indication of how you compared with other candidates they were considering?"*

- *"How did they express their interest in you?"*

- *"Were there any areas of the interview that you felt you could have covered better, or any subjects that you don't feel you were able to convey your skills and abilities in sufficient detail?"*

- *"Are there any important capabilities or experiences that you have that you, in hindsight, think are important areas that should be covered with the client?"*

- *"Do you think they have any concerns? In other words, no fit is ever 100% perfect – what possible hesitations do you think the hiring manager may have?"*

- *"In your opinion, and so I can reiterate with the client when I speak with him/her, think about what you now know they are looking for in their next hire. Why do you think you are the best one for the role?"*

Section #4: The Compensation

- Although you advised both parties to stay away from this subject, you can still ask *"Did money come up? What, if anything, was covered as it pertained to compensation?"*

Section #5: The Next Steps

- *"What new things have surfaced since we last spoke? What opportunities, or conversations, have appeared?"*

- *"How did you end the interview – how did they leave it with you in terms of next steps? What was the timeframe?"*

- *"Who else would you want to meet with (within the company) that you haven't yet had the chance to meet with?"*

- *"Besides compensation, what else is important to you in this decision that we haven't yet talked about?"*

- *"This is more than likely a (quick, 30 day, 60 day) process – what else is going on personally or professionally that will possibly present a problem during that time?"*

- *"Who else do you feel needs to get involved with this decision? Spouse?"*

- *"If the company called me up and said "we want to hire you", what questions need to be answered in order for you to say "yes"?"*

Closing Form: Client

CLIENT ________________________________ HIRING MANAGER ___________________________

CANDIDATE ____________________________ INTERVIEW DATE ____________________________

Section #1: The Recap

- *"How did the interview go from your perspective?"*

Section #2: The Alignment

- Revisit the original search parameters the client originally gave, either from the Search Assignment Form or the Candidate Comparison Matrix: "*Let's quickly break down the requirements that you first described when we started this search – how does he/she compare in each of those areas?"*
  - With each area of alignment, you are reinforcing that this is the right fit
  - With each areas in which the client is unsure, you now have a list of areas to address further

- *"How does he/she compare to the other candidates you currently have in process?"*

- *"Were there any red flags in terms of his/her professional ability?"*

- *"Red flags with his/her personality fitting in with your culture?"*

- *"Red flags with his/her experience as it relates to what you were looking for?"*

- *"Red flags financially?"*

Section #3: The Continued Sell - People want what they can't have; this section is designed to remind the client that there are two sides to this decision, and the candidate isn't a sure bet when it comes to accepting an offer of employment.

- *"On a scale of 1 – 10, gauge the interest level, in your perspective, of the candidate. Why?"*
- *"Did he/she give you an indication of how your opportunity compared to others that he/she might be considering?"*
- *"In your opinion, and so that I can reiterate with him/her, why is this the best opportunity for him/her?"*
- *"In terms of selling your opportunity, is there anything that you didn't sell him/her on that you should have?"*

Section #4: Compensation

- *"Did you talk about financials? What did the candidate share with you? What did you share with the candidate?"*
- *"Let's say that you were ready to extend an offer –   in your opinion, do you feel that he/she would accept if one was extended? What else can we do to attract this candidate to your organization?"*

Section #5: The Feedback

- Share any likes or possible concerns the candidate expressed
- If the candidate needs additional information in specific areas, share with your client
- If the candidate has hesitations, put together a plan of action
- If the candidate shared thoughts on next steps, articulate those desires to your client

Section #6: The Next Steps

- *"Did he/she close you at the end of the meeting on next steps? What were those next steps?"*
- *"What is your timeframe to making a decision?"*
- *"What else needs to happen to make a decision on hiring or not moving forward?"*
- *"Are there any questions you need to have answered in order for you to finalize your decision?"*
- *"Is there anything else that we haven't yet talked about that's important to you regarding this interview and this candidate?"*
- Be clear of the timeframe for the remainder of the process so you can properly prepare your candidate as to the timeframe they will be working with