

Secrets of Big Billers

Presenter: Scott Samuels, President and CEO – Horizon Hospitality, a member of the Sanford Rose Associates® network of offices

Scott Samuels is the President and CEO of Horizon Hospitality, a member of the Sanford Rose Associates® network of offices. Founded in 1998, Horizon Hospitality specializes in recruitment for hotels, resorts, country clubs, restaurants, convention and visitor bureaus with a track record of success placing thousands of C-Level, Director, Management, Sales and Culinary Professionals nationwide. Prior to starting Horizon Hospitality, Scott enjoyed a twenty-year career with hospitality industry leaders such as ClubCorp USA, Hilton Hotel Corporation, The Levy Restaurants and Dean & DeLuca. Scott currently serves as President of the Board of Directors for the Missouri & Kansas Search and Staffing Association (MKSSA) and also serves on the Advisory Board of Directors of the Dream Factory, a prominent children's charity organization in Kansas City. In this session, Scott shares how to transition from recruiter to a trusted advisor by consistently demonstrating and showing clients that you are in business to help their company succeed.

Meeting: “Secrets of Big Billers” by Scott Samuels

If you are reviewing this episode with a team, watch the entire Episode. Use the notes below to implement the best practices provided.

Facilitator: Although it might not seem so at times, here is Scott's punch-line to becoming a trusted advisor and successful recruiter: *you can afford to be generous*. It might be scary, but one of the most important mindsets to have before engaging in communication with a client is that your business is secure. Even if it's not, you have to feel that it is! If you provide candidates that your clients cannot find or hire on their own, money will come your way. If you operate from the four principles that Scott shared, you will do well. You can afford to be generous!

Think of our own experiences with daily interactions related to this concept – when a restaurant has free drink refills, or an establishment has restrooms even if you are not a customer, or a sales rep who spends time answering every one of your questions with patience and solid insight. Comparatively, think about the bad experiences you've had. Want a side of ranch? That will be 75 cents. Don't look like a big spender? Cold shoulder. Most terrible service comes from a mindset of scarcity; it stems from managers or owners who feel they'll go out of business if they don't fiercely guard their bottom line.

How does this relate to us as recruiters? Operate from abundance. Things will go wrong, deals will fall off, candidates will go around you, and clients may choose to rescind an offer based on your input. Operate from abundance anyways. Focus on how you are fortunate, not what losses you experienced. What you focus on, you will see in through your world lens. This is a scientific fact; your brain is incapable of absorbing truly everything around you, so you have a natural focus system that only brings to attention what you focus your thoughts on. If you have a thin pipeline, don't focus on how thin it is. Focus and think about the abundance of possibilities in your industry that exist to strengthen your pipeline. You will be surprised how ideas and opportunities begin to present themselves simply by bringing them into the focus of your lens!

And remember – when you face your greatest loss, it just might contain your greatest opportunity.

Why is this all important? If you don't have an abundance mindset, it will be pretty difficult to execute Scott's **Step #1: Be prepared to lose a placement and a fee.** Let's discuss as a group for a moment.

- At what times can we remember being fearful of losing a placement in the last few weeks or months? Were we operating from a place of the best interest of the candidate and client, or did our own biased opinions sneak in?
- When are the times that we are most susceptible to put my own interests ahead of those of my candidate/client, and how can we lessen this susceptibility in the future?
- If a recruiter was representing my spouse, best friend, parent or child, what are the most important things we would expect from them in order to maintain the highest level of integrity? (that list should be our own operating paradigms)
- If we engaged a search firm to recruit recruiters to our organization, what are the most important things we would expect from them in order to exceed our expectations on that search? (same paradigms)

Let's move on to **Step #2: Offer more than just the typical sourcing, presentation and placement of a candidate.** Scott does this through background checks, behavior assessments, cognitive assessments, employment verification, education verification, drug testing, reference checks, and public records searching – all when appropriate for the client and search. From Scott's perspective, this is essential in order to be viewed not as a recruiting firm but instead as a trusted partner. With so many hurdles, it's possible that a placement is not made that otherwise would have; see Rule #1 above! What resources are we not yet providing that we could in order to enhance the client experience and our partnership?

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This brings us to **Scott's Step #3: Don't take on a search if the position doesn't offer a competitive compensation package.** How do you know what this looks like? That's where your expertise comes in! However, knowing that a problem exists and being able to solve that problem are two different things. Let's create some questions that could be asked of a hiring manager to potentially expand the unrealistic expectations:

- *Based on my experience, I am concerned that the financial package might not land the caliber of candidate you are looking for. I would like to conduct a salary survey throughout my course of recruiting calls; once I've gathered that info from, say 200 candidates, are you open to potentially adjusting your salary range accordingly?*
- *Not everyone is looking for a lateral or higher compensation move when they make a change. However, I need to have a solid understanding of the other benefits that are offered to outweigh the financial piece of making a move. What else do you think are the biggest differentiators between you and your competition?*

- *What are the strongest reasons you've seen recent hires come to work with you, outside of compensation?*
- *Which carries more weight – someone fitting into the experience and background qualifications that you are looking for, or someone fitting into the salary parameters that you have set?*
- *How many offers have you extended recently that were turned down? What can we do in the future to ensure that doesn't happen again?*
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If the client is still unrealistic, let's create a script that can share with them why we will not be taking on the search – but in a way that maintains the possibility of future business. An example is below; let's modify to create one that fits our industry and style.

“(Client name), I want to make sure that I understand that the candidate you are looking for will have (restate experience/wants/desires of the client). Is that an accurate reflection of the type of candidate you are looking for?”

“(Client name), there's no doubt that I'm looking forward to working with you, and I would love for that to be on this search. However, the reality is that based on my years of experience networking with (type of) candidates in the (type of) industry, I'm not completely confident that the candidate you are searching for truly exists. I'm going to under-promise on this because I am not sure I can over-deliver, and I am hesitant to ever take on a new client under those circumstances. I don't want you to be counting on this when I am not sure I can produce. In order for me to feel more confident in our ability to identify, attract, and land candidates for you, I think that we would need to adjust (unrealistic search parameters). Are you open to reconsidering the parameters of your search?”

The final step in this process is **Step #4: Do things that show your clients how much you appreciate them!** Scott shares several examples that will get your imagination started: face-to-face visits, recognize their special occasions, recognize the holidays, and conduct free workshops for their teams are just a few examples. Let's spend the final minutes of our time together thinking through additional gestures of appreciation we do to show our clients how much we value them:
