

Strategic Selling

Presenter: Margaret Graziano – Owner, KeenAlignment

Margaret Graziano, CEO of KeenAlignment, is a leading talent management expert, keynote speaker, and author of *The Wealth of Talent* with over 20 year of real-world, hands-on experience in hiring strategy and talent development.

She brings neuroscience to hiring, learning and development, and employee engagement. A pioneer in her field, she has developed a talent strategy system that gives business leaders the actionable steps they need to align their corporate strategy with their people strategy and thereby maximize employee effectiveness and engagement and develop high-performing teams who consistently elevate the customer experience.

A Certified Co-Active Executive Coach, Certified Employee Retention Specialist and Trainer, and an Organizational Development and Talent Architect, Margaret has been a guest speaker at conferences and seminars where she's captivated audiences with her presentations on Conscious Hiring, Leadership Effectiveness, and Workforce Optimization.

In this session, Margaret talks about leveraging your power with strategic selling for the 21st century search professional. She'll share an overview of a sales process that shifted her career from contingency recruiting to executive search and management consulting.

Meeting: “Strategic Selling” by Margaret Graziano

If you are reviewing this episode with a team, watch the entire Episode and use the expanded talking points below to create a plan for implementation.

Facilitator: Margaret starts with reminder to step outside our current paradigm; abandon “what works for you” or “how you typically handle a client situation.” Instead, recognize that if you want to solve (or improve a solution) to a problem, you cannot solve it with the same mind frame that it was created in. Think about the needs of your clients from a new perspective or context. Let's first start from the very beginning; how do our clients perceive us?

What is it that companies say about our industry as a whole? If all the hiring managers, and business leaders were at lunch with their best friend venting about recruitment what would they say? _____

What would they be upset by? _____

What are reoccurring frustrations about recruiting? _____

What are their pervasive concerns? _____

Facilitator: Having a well-defined target market is more important than ever. Although you can try, particularly in the beginning of a career, to be all things to all people, it is imperative to narrow down and envision your desired future state. Instead of your target being “anyone who has a need in my area and will pay my fees,” focus on who you would *want* to do business with instead of who you would *have* to do business with. This doesn’t mean you will immediately reject all clients who are not ideal, but if you do not know what you are looking for, you’ll never know once you have found it. This will also serve to confront your current clients who are drags on your energy, and force you to analyze how and with whom you spend your time.

Who is your ideal customer? What makes them ideal? _____

What does your ideal customer want and need from you? What are all the expectations, in detail, they would have of their ideal recruiter? What would make them come back for more, and refer their friends and colleagues? _____

Facilitator: Let’s talk about asking great questions. One of the better ways to differentiate yourself isn’t with a universal script that fits for every occasion and every client – it’s by asking great questions that in and of themselves differentiate you. They also give you the answers that you need to be able to create a specific solution-oriented value proposition for each client individually. Let’s create a list of questions that are high-level, big picture questions that go beyond a current need.

Examples:

- Big picture - what keeps you up at night?
- Imagine that you wake up tomorrow and you guys are immediately in a new sector of the business. Barring any barriers to entry – what would that be?
- How would the loss of your (biggest customer/vice president of _____/your patent/biggest producer) impact your business over the next 12 months? What’s your contingency plan?
- What is the biggest threat to your business over the next 24 months?
- What are the things that frustrate you in your recruiting process?
- What’s your biggest competitor doing that you wish you were?
- What is your contingency plan if your (hiring/R&D/sales/business development strategy fails?
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____



Once the door has been opened and interested has been generated, it's time to continue with questions that establish yourself as a true consulting partner. Margaret provides some to get the thoughts rolling; what would you add?

- Tell me about your company: what are you selling, who are you as an organization (yesterday, today, tomorrow)
- How large is the company? What is your organizational structure?
- Where do you see your company in 1 year? 3 years?
- What is your target market?
- Who are your customers?
- How do you get them?
- Who are your competitors?
- Describe your culture, what is the common value across employees in the company?
- What is missing with your recruitment, hiring, or talent planning the presence of which would make a difference?
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Now, time for the close. Getting the client's buy-in that they are not hiring a resume, but instead hiring an individual's behaviors, attitudes, beliefs and competencies is a skill worth developing. To Margaret's point, the reason clients crave working with a recruiter is because their plans for growth are stifled due to employees being stuck in inertia, they keep adding headcount and are not experiencing the return on staffing investment they expected, or they see a gap in their succession plan and need to be strategic in how they fill it. You've gotten this far as a collaborative partner; don't revert back to taking an order for a resume! Margaret's key areas to cover with the client:

1. How does this position directly affect the company's ability to achieve their strategic objectives?
2. What impact will this position have on the organization in the next year and what area will this position impact the most?
3. Develop the 3-4 KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) with the client or hiring manager. They should be specific, measurable, action-oriented results that are produced within a certain time-frame. *They are what the candidate will need to produce on the job to be successful.*
4. Take 20 minutes and list every task the prospective employee will be performing in this position.
5. Put each of these tasks in 3-4 categories. These categories will create the core functions of the job and *must directly affect the candidate achieving* the three Key Performance Indicators.

6. Identify the percentage of time the prospective employee will spend on each of the 3-4 core functions identified above. The total percentage should not account for more than 80% of the employee's day because people are typically not productive to account for 100% of their time.

Define Selection Criteria

1. What are the behaviors this person needs to be successful in the role?
 - a. When you look at the right person for this position, what motivations, modes of thinking, modes of acting and modes of interacting would they need to have in order to achieve the strategic objectives for the company and effectively perform the functions of job?
2. Values
3. Competencies/Skills
4. Education
5. Experience