The Closing Process

Presenter: Doug Beabout, President and Founder – Doug Beabout Group

Doug Beabout brings over thirty years of expertise in top billings, placement firm ownership and industry training. His reputation for training excellence has placed him repeatedly as a guest speaker and author for non-profit, private, national, regional and state recruiting associations. Doug works a top-producing desk every day and is uniquely qualified as a professional personnel services trainer. Having successfully thrived and survived the last three recessions, Doug knows the trenches. Doug Beabout is owner and president of Doug Beabout Group in Miramar Beach, FL. Prior, Doug was owner and president of his own personnel services firms, The Douglas Howard Group, a personnel services firm in Kent, Ohio for seven years and Douglas William Associates, for ten years in Dayton, Ohio. Doug has held the title of CPC; certified personnel consultant since 1981.

In This Presentation

Bringing a passive candidate and an organization together is not an event; it is the result of a process. You will master the practices of a value-based closing process when dealing with today's discriminating generation of talent. You will close more placements, deposit more fees, and become the recruiting legend you can be. In Doug's presentation, he'll show the 5 steps to closing the deal including: gaining partnership, influence, and exercising your influence as a trusted partner and advisor.

Week 1 Meeting: "The Closing Process" by Doug Beabout

If you are reviewing this episode with a team, break this episode into two different segments. Watch the entire first half, and pause the segment at intermission. Week 1's suggested viewing schedule and exercises are below.

Facilitator: Let's expand on the idea that Doug started his session with – creating a foundation of objectivity. Because of the simple fact that recruiters get paid when a candidate goes to work with their client, it can create a (often unspoken) element of distrust. Doug shares a few sentences of how he creates a strong starting point in the candidate relationship. This is not an area that's commonly scripted, but should be. Use Doug's script below to create your own; the purpose of this script is to remove the "seller vs buyer" relationship that can exist between recruiter and candidate.

> *"Let me be perfectly clear; we can focus our relationship on the immediate present or in the future. My intent is to get to know what you've done, what you've achieved, and what you'd like to achieve. Once I am fully aware of your desires and career ambitions, I would only introduce you to a company that will align with your objectives once they have brought you on board. If you ever decide not to move forward or to reject an offer, I'm perfectly comfortable with that as long as it is your best interest. If your rejection of an offer was based on something you didn't understand, or didn't have enough information about, I will act as a conduit so that you are truly making informed decisions for the future of your livelihood and career."*

Facilitator: Doug only spent a few moments on this subject, but it's one that absolutely deserves further discussion. It's been said that recruiters have two settings – *talking* and *waiting to talk*. If the best closers are the best qualifiers, how can we gain insight that creates leverage in the future? If you can't gain insight while you are talking, that means you must be listening – which is what happens when you ask great questions. What great questions are you going to ask those candidates who are open to an exploratory conversation with your client? Use the questions below to get you started, and add ones that make the most sense for your market and niche:

- When you lose business or clients, what key factors caused that to happen? Why does a client choose to go with a competitor, over your firm?
- Are there any types of projects, clients, or areas that you haven't been involved with yet that you would like to be? Does your company work in those areas?
- What are the biggest frustrations you experience with your boss? Have you shared those frustrations with him/her? (If no), why not?
- What is the biggest obstacle that is keeping you from being most effective or meeting your goals?
- What would you replicate from previous companies or departments in which you've worked?
- How do you feel your company stacks up in terms of using technology or leading edge systems?
- If you became CEO tomorrow, what is the first thing you would change? Why?

Facilitator: Let's elaborate on Doug's statement: *"You need to know this job as well as if **you** were going to be the one who was going to be doing it."* That sounds good in theory, but what if you have a client who is reluctant to spend time giving you the depth of information needed to fully embrace the role, environment, and opportunity? An example preface, to help clients understand why it's in their best interest to provide us with this information, could be:

> *"One of the ways we truly separate ourselves from other search firms is that we will be actively recruiting candidates who aren't in the job market but are receptive to considering a career enhancing opportunity. In order to do that I need to be able to paint them a picture that **yours** is the kind of opportunity they need to consider. Second, when it comes down to the final stages of the closing process, you will have selected the person you want to join your team and we need to get them on board. The most effective way I can close that individual for you is to have a level of insight that would be the equivalent of me almost performing in that role myself. Therefore, I'd like to ask you some things that will really help me attract candidates to your company. Additionally, one of the situations I know I'm going to face is candidates asking me some specific questions about your organization, especially if they are interested in you, so I'd like to go through some of the typical things they ask me."*

Once you've created your preface script, the next step is to make sure you have a strong Search Assignment Profile form. The NLE Library is packed with questions, scripts, and templates to get you started. Last, before you start making calls, send your recruiting script to your client for their feedback and approval; this is a great way to not only add additional value and differentiation, but to have the client fill in some of the weaker areas of the script to make it the best possible commercial for their opportunity.

Week 2 Meeting: "The Closing Process" by Doug Beabout

Resume the video where you left off last week (the beginning of the second half of the video), and use the Facilitation Guide to help you continue to enhance your closing process and techniques. Watch through the end of the video.

Facilitator: Doug goes through a four-step process to assist in streamlining and driving the placement process. Let's go through each of those areas and make them applicable to our candidates and placement process:

Step 1 – Create Understanding: How do you explain to a candidate what this process is going to look like? If this candidate has not worked with a recruiter, or has not worked with you, in the past, do not assume that they know your process like you do. What can you say to build trust, address hesitations, and possibly even avoid frustrations throughout the process?

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Step 2 – Anticipate Concerns: What are the issues that you know you are going to face with this placement, and how can you arm yourself with insight and information that will help address the "elephant in the room"? Discussing the elephant openly will avoid skirting the true issue; if we use the issue of relocation, let's say your opportunity is in a remote location. If you *know* that one of the biggest challenges you will have in filling this search is the relocation, consider covering relocation before the issue is raised. As an example:

> *"This opportunity is at the North Pole, and I suspect you didn't wake up this morning thinking 'how quickly could I move my family to the North Pole'. I actually had that same concern myself when I initially partnered with this client – but then I visited them and was blown away by what my perception was of the North Pole versus what I saw when I was there. The public schools are better than even the most elite private ones where we live, the cost of living is 20% less, and this company is the most respected organization in the entire area which will allow you to scale your book of business significantly."*

Recognize that in bringing this up, you maintain your control of the conversation. You could certainly wait for them to say *"I'm not interested in relocating to the North Pole",* and then talk about the schools and cost of living and opportunity, but it possibly can sound like you are trying to overcome their concerns instead of being an industry expert.

What are the biggest concerns you anticipate with your current search, and what can you do to better educate yourself on the facts and hidden opportunities?

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Step 3 – Align Benefits with Candidate Deficits: Remember, at all stages of the placement and closing process, to make sure that this opportunity truly represents a better one for your candidate. We will give examples of how this can be done in two different places in the process, but these are not the only times to make sure you are accurately matching your candidate with your client!

In the Matching and Presenting Process, make sure you have answers to the following questions. Additionally, what additions could you make to this summary that would help your matching process?

- What are the three top qualifications that your client is looking for that are matched by this candidate?
    1. ____
    2. ____
    3. ____
- Why is this candidate currently unsatisfied at their current company?
- How will this be solved by making a move to your client?
- What is at least one reason that might make you unsure of this candidate being a perfect match for this client?
- How does this candidate's current and desired salary fit within the range this client specified they were willing to pay?

In the Interview Debrief Process, make sure you ask questions that will continue to help align your candidate's desired career path with what the client has to offer:

- 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?

Doug also mentions how Step 3 can be applied to the client's needs as well. When you present a candidate, are you doing more than just sending over a resume? Are you truly lining up what the client said they were looking for, and the solution you provide? Use the template on the following page to help you do just that.

Step 4 – Stay Involved and Accessible: Remember to always follow up, close the loop, and remove yourself and your fee from the process. If you are pushing two parties together because of the good it represents for both, you will have the logical proof that may help during the emotional process of making this kind of decision. Like Doug said – nothing is going to change a candidate's mind better than their own mind. Be their most interested confidant, remember to ask questions and then listen, and engage in a series of small closes throughout the entire process.

Candidate Name:		Position:
Current Role and Responsibilities		
Years of Experience		
Degree and Certifications(s)		
Relocation Details		
Management Experience		
Recent Projects		
Lead Projects		
Motivations for Making a Change		
Availability to Interview		
Screening Question	*Describe how you prospect and develop new client relationships:*	
Screening Question	*Describe your most complicated project to date, and your role on that project:*	
Screening Question	*Describe your experience with ABC Software:*	
Current Compensation Outline:	Base Salary: Expected Bonus (Amount and Date): Previous Bonus (Amount and Date): Benefits: Vacation: Retirement/Equity/etc:	
Expected Compensation:	Base Salary: Expected Bonus (Amount and Date): Previous Bonus (Amount and Date): Benefits:	