10 Real Answers to 10 Common Objections

Presenter: Greg Doersching, Founder – The Griffin Group

For the past 15 years, Greg Doersching has been recognized as one of the most cutting edge voices in the recruiting industry. He is an international trainer and has presented dozens of workshops and keynote addresses for recruiting association events. He is consistently rated as one of the top presenters for each conference. Greg is Managing Partner and Founder of The Griffin Search Group, a national search firm working in the direct hire placement industry. He is an active recruiter who still runs a highly productive desk; he is in the trenches day-to-day, just like the rest of us. He is also developer and chief architect of the highly successful Bullseye Recruiting Process.

About This Segment
In this presentation, Greg shares his guide for how to manage the common resistance we hear in recruiting. He takes us through the three most common categories of resistance including: client development objections, “working together resistance”, and candidate resistance. Greg provides numerous ideas, talking points, and actual scripts to use to manage resistance and close more business.

Meeting, Week 1: “10 Real Answers to 10 Constant Objections” by Greg Doersching

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: In this first segment, Greg looked through a critical lens at five of the most common forms of client development resistance encountered on a phone call. Before we discuss and role play each of those pieces of resistance, let’s talk first about his opening statement – what can you actually overcome?

Take a moment to list out ten of the typical statements that are made when your phone call is answered on the other end by either a candidate or client. These objections may vary from recruiter to recruiter, and be impacted by tenure, niche, and style so it’s important to create your own list to evaluate. Now, take a look at that list and engage in an open dialogue around the following:

- Can each of those statements actually be overcome?
- Remove your “recruiter hat”; what is really going on when a candidate or client raises that objection?
- What is *not* being said by the candidate or client when they raise the objection(s) listed?
- How confident, or prepared, do you feel with your current delivery when responding to each of the statements listed? Why do you not feel more comfortable; is it possibly because you could be better prepared, or is it possibly because you are attempting to overcome a concern that should not be overcome?

Facilitator: Step one, before moving forward with any client development conversation, is to find out the answer to one critical question:

DOES THIS CLIENT USE AGENCIES OR NOT?

If the answer to this question is no, anything that follows in the conversation and resistance are justifications behind why they have made this decision. Essential to realize is that if the answer is no, the odds are extremely low that they will become paying clients. There's always a chance – but move on to the next call after engaging in the following steps:

- Plant the seeds for the future; if and when they ever change their stance on agencies, set yourself up for success. Share facts about the future, make sure to send your contact information, and remind them that all client relationships started somewhere. What does "planting seeds for the future" this look like to you, and how will you implement within your marketplace?

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Greg's Script:

> *"Sally, it would be funny if you knew how many of the best clients I have today said exactly the same thing 5 years ago when I reached out to them. I realize you probably don't need me today and I'm not going to try to change your mind. I do know that special circumstances always pop up and when they do, I just want you to know who you can reach out to who can offer you a solution for that one-of-a-kind candidate your company may need one day. This is especially relevant as we head to the future; I just read an article that in 2010, for every 2.2 people who turned age 65 there was only be 1 person who turned 35. Ultimately, the way people used to be able to fill key staff positions just isn't going to be the same anymore. Let me do this; let me get you both my personal and company information and when the day comes that you <u>do</u> decide a recruiter could really be a help, you'll know how to reach me."*

Facilitator: The second objection that Greg explores is the following:

WE DON'T PAY FEES.

It's critical to recognize that the "don't" in the first statement is a very strong term, and it behooves you to clarify what the actual objection is. It is possible that never, ever in the history of the company have they ever paid a fee; however, what they are more commonly stating is that they don't use recruiters on *this type of search* or that they don't use recruiters *they don't know*, which would be you. A universal response that works for this and so many other objections is by asking, very simply, "*why*". Don't be afraid to answer a question with a question; you might actually find that it's more effective and more impactful than any well-crafted rebuttal.

Ultimately, this could still very much be a strong "non-buying" sign. If so, Greg suggests getting off the phone and starting to think about open positions you have and if any of their employees might make good candidates! During the call:

- Understand their position, educate them on the fact that the cost of an unfilled position could be greater than the cost of a fee, and close for next steps. What does this look like to you, and how do you want to handle this statement in the future?

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Greg's Script:

"Jim, I understand that if you have made a business decision not to budget for the use of a recruiter, there's nothing I can say to change your mind. I do know this one thing; there are a lot of cases where the cost of having an unfilled role is ultimately more expensive than the cost of my fees. Would you mind if I did this - let me get you my information and if the day ever comes when you decide otherwise, you'll know how to reach me."

Facilitator: Let's move to the third piece of resistance that may be encountered:

WE ARE GETTING A LOT OF RESPONSE TO OUR ADS.

Greg's initial suggestion is to be careful not to come across as arrogant when responding to this statement; take a tone that makes them believe you are more concerned about them wasting their time than proving you are as good as you say you are. Obviously, as recruiters we know that passive candidates versus active candidates are two completely different candidate pools.

- Remind the client that it costs them nothing to evaluate for themselves and determine if your candidates are of a different caliber than the ones that are sourced through postings. Sifting through piles of resumes requires time they could use somewhere else, and lots of responses don't necessarily equate to lots of good candidates. What will your next steps and approach be for this objection?

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Greg's Script:

"Jim, I'm sure you get the same thing happening to you that we used to get when we ran an ad – lots of paper and very few matches. The time it takes to sift through all of that paperwork feels so counterproductive.

That's part of what makes working with an agency like ours so valuable. We free you up to work on other areas of your desk that are more important. I know you've heard some of this before Jim, but let me prove how truly different we are.

Would you mind if I did this? Let me just send you just two profiles, that's it – just two, of the very best people I can find. You can compare them to what comes in from your ad, and if one or both of my people become of interest to you after you look them over, let me know and we can talk further from there. If they're not of interest – no problem. There is absolutely no cost to you to do the comparison. Would that be ok?"

Facilitator: Greg's fourth objection is certainly a common one:

WE DON'T HAVE A NEED AT THIS TIME.

Greg states that this particular objection walks a fine line; it could be a "non-buying" sign and they are attempting to give you a polite brush-off, or it could be legitimately that they just don't have a need right now. Remember that at times, the best rebuttals come from simply continued questioning. Be prepared with a list of high-gain questions that you can ask to ascertain if, in fact, there are no openings – and if there truly aren't, what needs to happen *for there to be*.

- Greg suggests making sure to still send the client your contact information, but assess if they have any possible needs on the horizon and if they did, if they would use a recruiter to fill it. What will your next steps and approach be for this objection?

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Possible Script:

"I absolutely hear you – candidly, not all clients have needs right now – and some may have even let go of a few people. I'm not saying you should hire MANY, or even ANY new associates, but ultimately, one of three things will inevitably happen. One, a critical individual leaves the team, two, you need to replace low producing staff, or three, to infiltrate a new sector of the market that you currently don't have market share. My goal is to get to know you and your organization - what opportunities you face as well as the challenges. If I can truly get to know you and your wants and aspirations, then I will know what kind of talent you will need that will help get you there. I have yet to talk to a hiring manager that tells me they wouldn't want to consider a candidate that represented an accelerated achievement of an objective. It is easy to hit delete on your email if the people I send you are not a fit. But what kind of individual would allow you to expand into some sectors that you aren't yet currently in? Or, you agreed earlier that for the right individual, you COULD create an opportunity – what does that person look like?"

Facilitator: Before we break, let's discuss the fifth form of resistance Greg shared:

SEND ME SOME INFORMATION AND I'LL KEEP IT ON FILE.

Greg "recruiter's intuition" on this one is that this is a polite brush off. He suggests getting the client your information and moving on. An alternative suggestion could be to share with the client that you will send them your contact info, and they do not have to review anything, respond to anything, and do nothing but simply answer the phone in one month when you call them back. If you can seek agreement on that first part, don't wrap up the call without asking for an answer to the following – when you do call back in a month, what kind of information from their competitors would be good to share with them?

- Remember, hearing "no" doesn't mean that you did something wrong, it just means that they more than likely weren't ready to use you – yet. The key is to make sure that when they are, no matter when that is, it's *you* that they use. How will you work to ensure this within your marketplace?

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Possible Script:

"I am more than happy to send you our pretty, professionally printed, slick corporate dossier. I am relatively confident that it will sit in the stack of other pretty, professionally printed dossiers that you've accumulated on your desk. You and I both know that what's important isn't how our PR materials compare to other firm's PR materials – what is important is understanding your needs, your hiring process, and your strategic growth plans. The only question that you really need answered is 'can this firm get me the people I need.' I ask that you give me your most urgent and critical search, give me one week, and let me give you a better assessment of our firm than any corporate dossier ever will be able to. Fair?"

Week 2 Meeting: "10 Real Answers to 10 Constant Objections" by Greg Doersching

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 recruiting presentations and platforms. Watch through the end of the video.

Facilitator: In Week's 1 Meeting, we explored the common forms of client development resistance that are based on "non-buying" concerns. This week, we'll explore those that are forms of resistance of a more positive nature – there are objections, but they are "buying" objections! Let's dive in to Greg's first "buying sign" objection:

WE ALREADY WORK WITH AN AGENCY.

The company has already assigned value to building a professional relationship with a search firm. It's essential to reinforce that you are not asking them to end that current relationship, but instead asking for simply the opportunity to run alongside their current firm's efforts. Ultimately, every recruiting firm has hands-off clients, and there may be a few organizations that their current recruiter cannot recruit from that you can. To guarantee full coverage of the market, partner your efforts with theirs, and earn the right to future business. Greg's suggested steps including the following:

- Acknowledge to the client that this is actually a great issue to have! Confirm that you respect their other relationship, see if the other agency is struggling on a specific position, and position yourself as a backup. How do you plan to modify this for your style and discipline?

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Greg's Script:

"Jim, it's good to hear you actually appreciate the value of partnering with an agency and I completely respect when you have a good partnership in place. I also understand that there are certain positions that your current agency may not be as proficient as finding candidates for as we might be. All I'd like to do is, should you find yourself in the position that you are struggling with a certain position, reach out to me as resource to back them up. Are there any positions right now where your current agency isn't providing you enough of the quality candidates you need for a specific opening?"

Facilitator: Let's move to Greg's second "buying sign" form of resistance – the one that keeps most recruiters up at night:

YOUR FEES ARE TOO HIGH.

It's important to recognize that "too high" is certainly a relative term – and sometimes this is just the standard response to any percent that you ever quote no matter the percent. Sometimes, this can be a response that you hear if you haven't yet provided enough value in the call, or when articulating the process behind the search, to justify the cost of a higher-charging firm. Often, this client doesn't realize that there is only a few thousand dollars difference between hiring the best candidate, or firm, and hiring the least expensive candidate or firm. Greg's suggestions are as follows:

- Recruiters who take this statement as an objection are making a huge mistake; this is the beginning of a negotiation with someone who wants to buy as soon as you can come to term on price! It is not difficult to raise your prices slightly with clients who like and value the work that you do – once you prove yourself, your leverage increases significantly! Build in a guaranteed raise for doing good work *after* you prove yourself. How can you incorporate Greg's discussion points into something that works for your practice?

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Greg's Script:

> *"Jim, I'm sorry you feel that way, but for the kind of service I know other agencies provide I'm not surprised by it at all. If all I was going to do was push paper across your desk and hope I get lucky, I would also agree then my fees are too high – but that's not what I'm talking about. However, I would prefer not to argue fees with you at all, because I believe our service speaks for itself. Here's what I'll do - I'll send you a fee agreement right now that agrees to the 20% fee you're used to. Then I'll show you the kind of work we do and I'll show it to you at that price as many times as you need it this year. But on January 1, (year) my fee goes to 25% for any work we do after that date and if after a year of working with me I haven't proven to you why we are worth that fee you can walk away for me with no hard feelings. Is that fair?"*

Facilitator: Next, let's explore Greg's second example of a "buying sign" shaped in the form of resistance:

WE HAVE AN APPROVED VENDOR LIST.

He recognizes that although this is a buying signal, it's not a *quick* buying signal. If this is their process, they aren't going to change their process for you. More than likely, the primary purpose of that list is to maintain some control over who they ultimately utilize for filling their needs, and don't end up with thousands of recruiters all vying for their business. Go through the steps to begin approval, because although what we do is more akin to partnering to help companies solve higher level problems than just providing commodities for everyday use as a vendor, now is not the time to change the universal policy. Greg's thoughts around this process are as follows:

- Do find out how you get on the approved list, but prior to doing so, see if it is worth your time to even go through those steps. Certainly, it's realistic to think that not every call results in an immediate job order, and getting "approved" might just be the first step in building that future partnership. How can you incorporate Greg's discussion points into something that works for your practice?

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Greg's Script:

"Sally, I completely understand why you evaluate the search firms you work with and you're certainly not the first company who wanted some clarification on the value of the relationship before they entered into it. Let me ask you something, considering my specialty is (explain niche discipline); is that an area where you find yourself having reoccurring needs to the level that it would make sense for me to go through the approval process?"

(If yes)

"Excellent; tell me what I need to do to get on that approved list and I will gladly provide the documentation I need to be evaluated."

Facilitator: The next objection that Greg raises is unfortunately a reality in our industry:

WE HAD A BAD EXPERIENCE WITH A PRIOR RECRUITER.

When it comes to the art of knowing when to respond to resistance, this is a great example of when 'answering later' may be in your best interest. When you are dealing with true, valid, understandable objections (as many of these are), it can be advisable to empathize and then put it on the back burner. Let it go. Move on. Acknowledge their position, move on to further conversation, and ask a series of other questions. Dig into what worked with that other firm and what didn't work. Once you've gathered this information, you can bring it back together with a solution that addresses their valid concerns.

Ultimately, we can use an example that possibly many can relate to, in that we've all had bad experiences at some point or another. Just because you have a bad experience with a certain mechanic doesn't mean that you'll never take your car in again to get it fixed; it just means you won't make the mistake of going back to that same mechanic again. You still need to maintain my vehicle; you just choose wiser next time when you pick a mechanic. Greg shares his thoughts on this particular statement as well:

- Apologize for the experience, even though it had or has nothing to do with you personally. However, you now have the opportunity to customize your terms, process, and policies and prevent something like that from happening again.

They are admitting they are at least open to using a recruiter, you now have a chance to swoop in and knock it out of the park. Testimonials can be a phenomenal tool here as well. How can you incorporate Greg's discussion points into something that works for your practice?

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Greg's Script:

"Sally, I apologize that you had a bad experience. What happened that left such a bad taste in your mouth?"

As an example, if Sally responds: "We saw about a dozen resumes and only one of them was worth bringing in and the constant phone calls trying to find out why we didn't like them was so annoying."

"I can only imagine how frustrating that must have been, but let me assure you that that experience would never be repeated if you worked with us. It is a strict policy of ours that we never send you any candidate who doesn't meet at least 90% of the skills you require. They have to fit the salary range you specify, and they have to be motivated by at least one thing other than the money, or we would never send them to you. Sally, let me do this for you. Are you familiar with (name), who is Vice President of HR over at (client) or (name), Director of Recruiting at (client)? They work with us all the time and I would be glad to give you their number if you'd like to call them and see what their experience has been working with us."

Facilitator: The following objection can very easily be a polite "non-buying" response, but Greg shares a new approach for this longstanding response:

SEND ME CANDIDATES AND WE WILL DISCUSS A FEE.

To Greg's point, your policy may very well be to never send a resume without an agreement in place. However, sometimes it seems like you've got to prove you have a product before a client will take you seriously! Use this time to establish mutual commitment and buy-in; you could certainly push to confirm a pre-set interview for a date and time that can be cancelled by the hiring manager if, after reviewing the resume, they deem that candidate not suitable.

Now, before sending anyone, it's critical to know what they are looking for in those initial seconds! What the key things are they are looking for, what is the salary range, and what kind of benefits (the value proposition) they offer are all imperative elements to understand so you have a stronger chance of hitting the mark with the candidates you submit.

As an example, when a candidate submits their resume to you (the recruiter), you make a judgment in about ten seconds as to if this candidate has the desired job stability, has achieved certain quantifiable accomplishments, and perhaps has experience in certain industry specific areas. Greg weighs in with his opinion on this subject as well:

- The answer to this one is a personal business decision, but one that you certainly need to ask yourself: Are you willing to prove to someone you can actually do what you say you can do before you talk about price. Make sure that you consider if this company has needs that are in alignment with the types of candidates you are already sourcing for existing clients. Make sure that this is a company that candidates would want to join because of the reputation, benefits, leadership, vision, location, and so on. Is having another option for your candidates who are currently evaluating your other clients a good thing? If you do decide to pursue, express a willingness to make this work and ask questions that will let you test the viability of this prospective relationship. What are your thoughts on getting past clients who ask you to "send a resume first before discussing fees"?

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Greg's Script:

"Jim, no problem; I am more than willing to prove I can actually provide good candidates to you before we put a "value" on those candidates. I've actually started a lot of great client relationships that way. Tell me this – what is your most pressing need and what are you looking for in a candidate to fill that need?"

Final Point: Greg reminds us all that just because the way a partnership with a hiring manager starts does not meet your desired terms and expectations, that doesn't mean it won't be the beginning of a great relationship! Strong partnerships are built over time, and they have to start somewhere. Use Greg's discussion points, scripts, and thoughts to get started!