

What Clients Buy

Presenter: Jeff Skrentny, Owner of Jefferson Group Search and Jefferson Consulting Group

Like most of those he trains, Jeff Skrentny, CERS, never intended to create a lifelong career in the search, staffing and recruiting profession. After being fired from his university teaching position in early 1987, it was just where his business career began. It didn't start well; he was voted least likely to succeed, and his first deal was a fall off. Three years later, he was his firm's top producer. During his 22 years in search, Jeff has worked hard to perfect search best practices and then share those best practices with thousands of search and recruiting professionals from 33 nations in hundreds of training sessions. Jeff doesn't tell you what you should do; he shares with you what he actually does to close his deals.

About This Program

Often, our sales focus is based on how we are doing as it compares to our quota, our goals, or what others tell us we should be accomplishing. This session is designed to explore sales success from the most important perspective, that of our *clients and prospects*.

Week 1 Meeting: "What Clients Buy" by Jeff Skrentny

If you are reviewing this episode with a team, break this episode into two different segments. Pause the video at 34:30 in and resume the next week. After both meetings, ask the group for their key takeaways and thoughts pulled from the episode; review the following below to fill in the gaps.

Facilitator: How well do you know your best client? This test can show how they think of you as a vendor – or a partner. If clients want to work with people they like, this simple exercise can shine a spotlight on what you *think* you know versus what you *should* know! Answer the following questions as they pertain to your best client – the one that is the primary contributor to your billings and placements:

"Rate your Relationship" Quiz

- Your primary point person - how long have they been working for the client company?
- Do you know their cell phone or home phone number by memory?
- Within \$1,000, how much have you billed with that client so far this year?
- Exactly how many candidates have you placed there so far this year?
- The first names of the last 5 people that you placed to work at the company?
- What college or university did your hiring authority graduate from? If they didn't, do you know if they have any hang-ups or issues with not being a college graduate?
- Is the hiring manager married? Do they have a significant other?
- What's the spouse's name?
- Does the hiring manager has children from this, or past, relationships?

“Rate your Relationship” Quiz (con’t)

- If so, what are the names and ages of the children?
- Where did the hiring manager work immediately prior to this position?
- When you go to the hiring manager’s workspace, what’s the single, most noticeable status symbol you see in their office?
- Does your client drink alcohol? Does, or will, your client drink alcohol at lunch?
- Have you ever taken, or do you regularly take, your client out for their birthday or employment anniversary? Do you know what both of those dates are?
- When and where was the last vacation they took? Did they enjoy that vacation?

So how many answers did you get right? 14 or 15 means that your client does not view you as a vendor, but sees you as a *collaborative partner and friend* that they genuinely like doing business with. They will fight to give you their business, and see you as an integral component for their success. They will enthusiastically write you a letter of reference, they tell others about your service without you asking. This client willingly becomes a champion for your success! Don’t ever take this client for granted; constantly court them for their *future business*, and thank them regularly for past business!

12 or 13 correct answers means your client views you as a *vendor*, albeit one they still like and enjoy doing business with. They might even call you first with their business; still, because you have not taken the time or energy to really know them outside of the office, you could be vulnerable if they make contact with another recruiter who does do this. You are so close to locking this one in for the long term; what is the last component necessary to move you up to the highest relationship level?

Falling down to 10 or 11 answers means you are purely a vendor; you satisfy a business need, and you probably do it adequately. However, this client does not make referrals on your behalf, probably gives someone else their business first, or possibly even wish someone *else* completed their business instead of you when you *do* wrap up a deal with them. You are a business necessity. What are you going to do to upgrade this relationship? When?

And 9 or less? You are more than likely viewed as a necessary evil; there is little joy in doing business with you, or this relationship is at the very beginning. You should feel vulnerable, and be looking to make this a closer relationship or find another relationship to replace this one because eventually this one will be lost. If it is a new relationship, do *not* stop marketing yourself aggressively to this client contact. They don’t feel comfortable with you yet – another client visit is in order – *stat!*



The Mackay 66 Customer Profile Worksheet

Date Started: _____ By Whom: _____
 Last Updated: _____
 Update History (*who updated & when...keep all update histories*): _____

Customer/Client

1. Name _____ Nickname _____ Title _____
 2. Company name & address _____
 3. Home address _____
 4. Telephone: Business _____ Home _____ Mobile _____ Pager _____
 5. Birth date & place _____
 Hometown & State (Country) _____
 6. Height _____ Weight _____ Outstanding physical characteristics _____
 (*Examples: balding, great condition, arthritis, severe back problems, etc.*)

Education

7. High school/year _____ College/year _____ Degrees _____
 8. College hours Advanced degrees _____
 9. College fraternity or sorority _____ Sports _____
 10. Extracurricular college activities _____
 11. If customer didn't attend college, is he/she sensitive about it?
 What did they do instead? _____
 12. Military service _____ Discharge rank _____
 Attitude toward being in the service _____

Family

13. Marital status _____ Spouse's name _____ First Marriage? Y N
 14. If divorced, was it acrimonious or amiable?
 15. Spouse's education _____
 16. Spouse's interests/activities/affiliations _____
 17. Wedding anniversary _____
 18. Children, if any, names and ages _____ Does client have custody?
 19. Children's education _____
 20. Children's interests (*hobbies, problems, etc.*) _____



Business Background

21. Previous employment: *(most recent first)*

Company

Location

Dates

Title

Company

Location

Dates

Title

Company

Location

Dates

Title

22. Previous position at present company: Title

Dates:

23. Any "status" symbols in office?

24. Professional or trade associations

Office or honors in them

25. Any mentors?

26. Who is their boss?

What is their relationship with their boss?

27. Are they a DECISION MAKER, or merely a decision influencer?

Are they a true decision maker hiding behind their boss as the decision maker?

28. What business relationship does he/she have with others in our company?

29. Is it a good relationship? Why?

30. What other people in our company know the customer?

31. Type of connection

Nature of relationship

32. What is client's attitude toward his/her company?

33. What is his/her immediate business objective?

34. What is his/her long-range business objective?

35. What is of greatest concern to customer at this time: the welfare of the company or his/her own personal welfare?

36. Does customer think of the present or the future?

Why?

Special Interests

37. Clubs or service clubs *(Masons, Kiwanis, Toastmasters, etc.)*

38. Politically active?

Party

Importance to customer

39. Active in community? How?

40. Religion Active?

41. Highly confidential items **NOT** to be discussed with customer (for example, divorce, member of AA, etc.)

42. On what subjects *(outside of business)* does customer have strong feelings?

Lifestyle

43. Medical history (*current condition of health*)

44. Does customer drink? If yes, what and how much

Do they drink at lunch?

45. If no, offended by others drinking?

46. Does customer smoke? If no, object to others?

47. Favorite places for lunch:

Favorite for dinner:

48. Favorite items on menu?

Any special dietary needs or preferences?

49. Does customer object to having anyone buy his/her meal?

50. Hobbies and recreational interests

What does customer like to read?

51. Vacation habits

Last vacation taken? Where? Did they enjoy it? Who did they go with?

52. Spectator-sports interests: sports and teams

Do they know I am a Cub fan? Packer fan? Do they care?

53. Cultural interests (*attends theater, opera, symphony, rock concerts or live music*)

54. Golfer?

55. Kind of car(s)

56. Conversational interests

57. Whom does customer seem anxious to impress?

58. How does he/she want to be seen by those people?

59. What adjectives would you use to describe customer?

60. What is he/she most proud of having achieved?

61. What do you feel is the customer's long-range personal objective?

62. What do you feel is the customer immediate personal goal?

Customer and You: HISTORY with CUSTOMER

63. Last time you meet with customer?

64. Last lunch or outing with customer?

65. What has the customer said they LIKE about your service/process/approach?

Can this be turned into a testimonial?

66. Do you have one or more testimonials from this buyer?

Other buyers at this company?

67. What have they said they dislike about your competitor service/process/approach?

68. Career to date billing with the customer:

69. Career to date direct hire fees:

70. Career to date staffing/contract fees:

71. Billing so far this year:

Billing last year:

Billing year before that:

Prior year billings:

72. List Candidates placed at client (*in reverse order with most recent placement on top*)

WORKING TOGETHER

73. What moral or ethical considerations are involved when you work with customer?

74. Does customer feel any obligation to you, your company, or your competition?

If so, what? Why? How long will that last?

75. Does the proposal you plan to make to him/her require customer to change a habit or take an action that is contrary to custom?

76. Is he/she primarily concerned about the opinion of others?

77. Or very self-centered? Highly ethical?

78. What are key problems as customer sees them?

79. What are the priorities of the customer's management?

Any conflicts between customer and management?

80. What are the priorities of the customer's management?

Any conflicts between customer and management?

81. Can you help with these problems? How?

82. Does your competitor have better answers to the above questions than you have? Why did you answer the way you did?

Week 2 Meeting: “What Clients Buy” by Jeff Skrentny

If you are reviewing this episode with a team, break this episode into two different segments. Resume the video from the stopping point the previous week, at 34:30 in, and play through the end of the video. After both meetings, ask the group for their key takeaways and thoughts pulled from the episode; review the following below to fill in the gaps.

Facilitator: There are inexpensive surveying tools available on the internet, and if you would ever like to take a poll or survey from your candidates and clients, you might find that what you thought you knew, and what the actual reality is, are two different things as it relates to what candidates or clients care about! Jeff’s survey results are below – knowing this, how should you possibly adjust your marketing script, or rebuttals to common objections, to address those primary concerns that a client has? Are you sure that Jeff’s survey results are relevant to your candidates and clients, or would it behoove you to go through the same exercise?

WHAT CLIENTS CARE ABOUT:

- Can you prove you can deliver results?
- Are you fun or interesting to work with?
- Are you able to talk about the little things that will lead to the bigger things that will lead to long-term relationships with your customers?

WHAT JEFF’S CLIENTS CARE ABOUT:

- That you, the recruiter, are providing candidates that they could not find on their own
- That when you find candidates, those individuals actually show up for the interview or for the first day of employment
- That you deliver individuals who can actually perform in the role that you are claiming they can perform in
- That you have speed in the candidate identification process

Let’s break down each of those selling areas that Jeff covered. These are numbers and statistics that someone may not necessarily know off the top of your head – but think about the fact that numbers do not lie, and they are not subjective. It gives you an advantage over other recruiters if you can speak to those areas your clients care about. Let’s go through the Sales Proposition Worksheet Jeff covered:



Sales Value Proposition Worksheet

#1 Client Concern: *Find candidates that they can't find.* Where do you get the candidates you place?

Last year, our placed candidates came from (#) of sources: _____

Referrals: _____

Direct Recruits: _____

Network (database): _____

Client/Prospect Value Proposition: _____

#2 Client Concern: *Accuracy – finding candidates who show up.*

(%) of our placed candidates since (year) have shown up for their first day of work:

(%): _____ (Year): _____

(%) of the candidates we set up on interviews with our clients make the original interview scheduled:

(%): _____

(%) of the candidates we set up on interviews complete their interviews, even if rescheduled:

(%): _____

Client/Prospect Value Proposition: _____

#3 Client Concern: *Contractors who can do the assignment (if relevant).*

(%) of our contract candidates since (year) have completed the original assignment:

(%): _____ (Year): _____

(%) of our contract candidates since (year) did so well that they were extended on their original client assignment:

(%): _____ (Year): _____

(%) of our contract candidates since (year) were valued so highly that they were offered an opportunity to be a direct hire of our client:

(%): _____ (Year): _____

Client/Prospect Value Proposition: _____



#4 Client Concern: *Speed in the candidate identification process.*

Our average search takes (timeframe):

Number of Weeks: _____

First interviews are typically scheduled by (timeframe):

Scheduled by Week: _____

Client/Prospect Value Proposition: _____

#5 Client Concern: *Accuracy with candidates who accept the offers extended.*

(%) of the offers extended to our candidates by our clients are accepted.

(%): _____

Client/Prospect Value Proposition: _____

#6 Client Concern: *The candidates we extend offers to do not accept counteroffers.*

Over the last (number of) years, we have had (#) of candidates not accept a client offer because they chose to accept a counteroffer instead.

Number of Years: _____ Number of Candidates: _____

Client/Prospect Value Proposition: _____

#7 Client Concern: *We want to only be presented with viable candidates who fit the specifications articulated when taking the search assignment.*

(%) of our candidate resume presentations result in our client setting up an interview with that candidate.

(%): _____

Client/Prospect Value Proposition: _____



#8 Client Concern: *We want candidates to stay with our organization!*

(%) of our candidates hired are still employed with our clients 1 year later.

(%): _____

(%) of our candidates hired are still employed with our clients 3 years later.

(%): _____

(%) of our candidates hired are still employed with our clients 4 years later.

(%): _____

Client/Prospect Value Proposition: _____

#9 Client Concern: *We want candidates to succeed in their role.*

(%) of our hires have had at least one promotion since being hired.

(%): _____

Client/Prospect Value Proposition: _____

#10 Client Concern: *We want someone who is an expert in our space, who can talk our language, and who knows our industry inside and out.*

Company or personal history, stories, bragging points, total number of W2s issued in a period of time, or placements over a period of time, etc: _____

Client/Prospect Value Proposition: _____
