

Tactical Recruiter to Trusted Advisor

Presenter: Jon Bartos – President and CEO, Jonathan Scott International

Jon Bartos is a writer, speaker and consultant on all aspects of human capital and achievement. As president and CEO of Jonathan Scott International in Mason, Ohio, he has achieved industry-leading success. He is one of an elite group of executive recruiters who have billed over \$1 million annually. Within a 12-year period he has cashed in over \$11 million in personal production. The office has won over 17 international awards in the MRI Network, including International Billing Manager of the Year and Top 10 SC Office.

About This Segment

In this presentation, Jon talks about the pinnacle of the recruiting profession, which is to become a trusted advisor by earning the complete trust and confidence of your clients and candidates. He'll discuss the concepts of influence, gaining credibility, guiding the process, and building life-long relationships.

Week 1 and 2 Meetings: “Tactical Recruiter to Trusted Advisor” by Jon Bartos

If you are reviewing this episode with a team, watch the entire Episode in Week 1. For Week 2's meeting, use the Five Tactical Advisor Tips in this Guide to create an entire meeting designed around strategic implementation of Jon's conceptual ideas.

Facilitator: A select few, the very best of our industry, transcend the traditional role of recruiter and become a valued and trusted business advisor in the eyes of their clients. When you become a true partner with your client, you are no longer viewed as an outsider, but as an integral part of the hiring culture. You have evolved from a tactical to a strategic professional relationship. You face little if any significant competition from other recruiters and you will be granted access to everyone, including the top officers in the organization. Your emphasis will shift from making a placement to managing multiple projects. And ultimately you will encounter very little fee resistance.

Now that Jon has helped us understand all of the benefits of making that transition, how do we actually begin that transition? Let's break down each of the areas Jon discusses.

Tactical Advisor Tip #1: Establish open, honest, and frequent communication. How do you do this? It's sometimes assumed that “no news is good news” – but this shouldn't be the case with your key clients and decision makers. Create situations for them to provide you with feedback, and then be prepared to receive that feedback and make changes needed to better serve your clients. This could be after a placement, it could be at the end of each quarter, it could be once a year – but give an opportunity to open the door for feedback in specific areas.

Action Items: First, select from whom you are going to ask for open and honest communication – (i.e. all placements made, those who paid a retainer, those who gave a search assignment, those who you submitted a candidate to...): _____

Second, how often you are going to solicit feedback: _____

Third, what are you going to ask them specifically? If you ask direct questions, you will more than likely get direct answers. If you keep areas of feedback too broad, you may find that the process of responding becomes overwhelming, and you are actually being counterproductive with your outreach!

Question #1: _____

Question #2: _____

Question #3: _____

Question #4: _____

Question #5: _____

Fourth, how will you communicate ongoing progress to that select group? Nothing is more frustrating than taking the time to provide feedback, and then feeling like it fell into the “black hole” of information. How will you communicate with your audience so they feel like they were “heard”, and are open to continuing to give you open and honest feedback in the future?

Tactical Advisor Tip #2: Know what is important to your hiring manager – far beyond the kind of person they would hire should they have such a need. Learn how they are measured, learn what keeps them up at night, learn what makes them money, learn how they lose business. Learn what their next step is, learn what goals they have personally and as an organization, learn how they are separating themselves from their competition, and learn why people leave their team or company. This list can go on and on – but to take the first step, create a list of questions that will help you think like your clients think. Remove yourself from the equation – this isn’t about identifying how you can fill a position or earn a fee. It is critical for you to understand where your client is going, and how and when they plan to get there. Start by creating a list of open-ended questions that you can begin asking, in order to gain insight that will be used in the third step.

Question #1: _____

Question #2: _____

Question #3: _____

Question #4: _____

Question #5: _____

Question #6: _____

Question #7: _____

Question #8: _____

Question #9: _____

Question #10: _____

Tactical Advisor Tip #3: Now that you are gaining an understanding of what is important and valuable to your clients, the next step is to proactively seek the information from the market in a way that will allow you to add value. Think through the questions that you can ask of your candidates and other hiring managers that will allow you to help your clients avoid the obstacles other organizations have encountered, or how to improve their compensation plans, or ways they can streamline their hiring processes.

Keep this in mind – the information you share cannot always be self-serving. What that means is that your clients know you earn a living by placing candidates within their organization; that said, if your areas of insight always revolve around what needs they have or what possible positions are coming available, you will not be the most credible source to be dispensing advice if you don't deliver it the right way and from the right place. No matter how strong of a relationship you have with your client, or even if you've placed candidates with them in the past, if your market knowledge and expertise comes across as self-serving, you are damaging your ability to impact and influence this client and this relationship.

Research and resources offer tremendous insights into your market, but none as strong as the market itself! Thinking about the areas of importance that you have gathered in Tips 1 and 2, what specific questions are you going to ask on a daily basis to your candidates?

Question #1: _____

Question #2: _____

Question #3: _____

Question #4: _____

Question #5: _____

Tactical Advisor Tip #4: Diagnose before you prescribe; however, this is a commonly practiced rule of thumb in taking a solid search assignment. In order to take it to the step of earning the right of a trusted advisor, you must ask questions that go beyond the basic job specification questions. Take the initial list below and expand significantly, creating a list of questions that allow you to go in-depth and get to the root of a hiring need.

- How do you define or measure successful performance in this role? How will they know whether or not they are properly performing the critical functions?
- What outcomes, or specific accomplishments, must be achieved through this position and within what timeframe?

- If you look back on all the people who have done this role in the past, who stands out to you as being the best (title) that has ever done this role? Why?
 - What was the background of that individual?
 - Where are they now?
- What companies might your #1 candidate come from? Why do you respect those organizations? What are they doing that you would like someone to do for you?
- What will this hire accomplish in three months, six months, and one year from now in order for you to know you made a *great* hire?

Question #1: _____

Question #2: _____

Question #3: _____

Question #4: _____

Question #5: _____

Tactical Advisor Tip #5: Stay ahead of the solution! Be able to anticipate a client's talent needs before they are even articulated. When at all possible, be involved with strategic planning, helping to determine the best way to attain organizational goals and objectives. Work with clients to define areas that may require additional talent due to growth or non-performance. Know when quarterly meetings are scheduled to go over a company's forecasted critical needs.

Take the list below and continue to build:

- What hiring and staffing objectives are you trying to reach over the next twelve months?
- How will it impact your (following year)'s objectives if you don't have those hiring objectives met?
- What kind of individuals would be good to have in a 'holding pattern' if someone leaves your group unexpectedly?
- Are there any opportunities for top-grading? Any group or department that has fallen short recently?
- Are there any sectors that you aren't in right now that the right candidate could open the door for?
- Have there been strategic people who have left in the last few years that you wished wouldn't have?

Question #1: _____

Question #2: _____

Question #3: _____

As with any relationship, the good ones take work! You can make the transition to trusted advisor, but you must be willing to invest time and energy to grow the relationship from a transactional to strategic partnership. It won't happen with every client, but when it does, you will be richly rewarded - not only financially, but with life-long professional friendships based upon mutual respect.