NEXT LEVEL Exchange

Big Biller Secrets

Presenter: Rich Carter, President of R. Carter & Associates, a part of the Sanford Rose Associates® Network

Rich Carter has “lived” many lives in search – first as a candidate, then as a client/hiring manager, to search firm owner, search firm franchisee, search firm franchisor, top producing recruiter….and also recruitment trainer for a network of search professionals! Today, Rich Carter is President of R. Carter & Associates, an executive search consulting firm in the Greater Atlanta Georgia Area. In addition to his executive search expertise, Rich has over 20 years of leadership experience in large and small biotechnology and life sciences entities. After obtaining his Doctorate in Chemistry from Georgia Tech, he joined the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta. He later moved to the private sector, serving in various management positions for DuPont Medical Products and Baxter Healthcare before joining Chiron Corporation as Director of its diagnostics business unit.

Rich launched his SRA office in 1999 and by his 2nd year in the network, Rich became the biggest individual biller as well as having the highest billing office. For the next 10 years, Rich’s office continued to hold the ranking of the #1 billing office and in 2005, Rich acquired the SRA Network. As the new owner of the SRA Franchise Network, Rich restructured the training programs for owners and recruiters.

Rich has won multiple awards for leadership, training and production, and has trained an entire network of recruitment professionals. In 2012, SRAI awarded Rich with the Soaring Eagle Award recognizing his key contribution and leadership to the SRA network and its success. In this big biller episode, Rich brings his years of experience - and experiences developing big billers - to discuss the Key Factors for Success in Executive Search.

Meeting: “Big Biller Secrets” by Rich Carter

If you are reviewing this episode with a team, watch the entire Episode. Use the notes below to implement the best practices provided.

DREAMS: As Rich mentioned, the subject of goal setting is a multi-hour or multi-day subject! However, much of Rich’s success has come from a disciplined approach of being able to turn dreams into goals with deadlines. How does Rich do this? Think about his top three tips for achieving goals in all facets of your life:

- **Plan every day:** Big Billers plan every hour and over-plan those hours. How we spend our time largely dictates how much money we make. We should know what activities or results we can control that will yield the most return on the time investment. What are the top five high-income-earning objectives that you need to achieve today in service of maximizing your billing potential?

    1. ______________________________
    2. ______________________________
    3. ______________________________
    4. ______________________________
    5. ______________________________

- **Keep Focused:** Recent research shoes that multi-tasking often results in completing a job at half the desired quality and in twice the time. In short, multi-tasking is a habit that must be overcome! Eliminate distractions and clutter, work in blocks of time dedicated to specific and similar activity, and prioritize your money calls first. What is your biggest issue when it comes to staying focused, and what will you do to work to overcome that issue this week?
  - ____
    ____
- **Have fun!** We all need the balance of working hard and playing hard – but playing hard feels better when the working hard is truly complete! Create incentives for yourself – what will you do if you achieve your goals for first time face-to-face interviews this week? What reward will you give yourself if you achieve your billing commitment for the quarter? What about executing your plan through completion by the end of the day?
  - ____
  - ____
  - ____

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT: Rich mentions the subject of Kaizen, a concept that is recognized worldwide as an important pillar of an organization's long-term competitive strategy. It can be a key to your long-term competitive strategy as well, if you are deliberate about practicing continuous improvement, operating at maximum efficiency and eliminating wasted time or activities. Think of your day as a manufacturing plant – an incredibly smooth running machine. What are the things to be aware of on the assembly line?

- Throughout the entire pre-search, search and post-search process, establish defined procedures and steps to take each and every time
- Assess what went right and what went wrong with each and every search, or after each major activity. Have an honest debrief and determine what you will do differently or keep the same the next time.
- Keep raising the bar - constantly and consistently look at how you can improve your business and services. Make sure your clients can never wonder "what you have done for them lately."
- Measure so you can monitor – this is important whether it be your search business or your blood pressure! How do you know if you are improving, if you don't measure and monitor?

APPRECIATION: From someone who was in the shoes of the client, listen to Rich's advice when it comes to creating and keeping a happy customer! Rich's suggestions include sending thank you cards, a satisfaction or feedback survey, send a book that will provide value – anything that will show that you are dedicated to serving your clients! Rich suggests *How to Win Customers and Keep them for Life* by Michael LeBoeuf for more on how to get the right people on the bus and then keep them there (including clients).

ALIGNMENT: How do you know a client is one that you actually want on your bus? Rich provides some questions that you can incorporate into your client development calls if you want to ensure you are spending time with prospective clients worth aligning yourself with!

- Do they value executive search and if so, do they use search firms (and have they ever paid) search fees? If so, for what types of searches and also at what level?
- Is there alignment of goals, expectations and a true commitment? Is the client responsive and collaborative?
- Do you have direct access to the hiring manager and is the hiring manager a decision maker with sufficient clout and resources?
- Is there a valued, strategic partnership and do they believe in "win/win" relationships?
- Do <u>you</u> have the competence to complete the search successfully?
- Does the company reflect well on you/your firm?
- From a financial perspective, are their payment terms reasonable and is there a profitable relationship relative to other clients?

MOTIVES: Do you understand why clients buy from you? Not why clients have a need, or will create a need – but why they will buy from *you* as opposed to anyone else! Rich reminds us that people buy from people they know, like and trust. If you establish visibility and credibility, it will lead to trust and confidence. A comprehensive and continuous marketing effort helps to create visibility; and to create credibility, it is important to become identified as a thought leader or expert in the field. Seek out opportunities to speak within the industry, create a blog, or have an active PR program. Never stop marketing!

PROOF: All search firms will claim to be the best, but what separates one firm from another are proof statements. Compile client-specific metrics and competitive data; Rich reminds us that the best recruiters and search firms have specific, tangible metrics that are important to clients and they integrate into their marketing. Think about the following:

- What is your average search assignment to start date timeline? Clients care that you have a process; be ready to explain the steps you will go through to ensure you will deliver quality candidates to your client and take them all the way through the recruiting cycle.
- What is your average search assignment to candidate presentation timeline? Clients care about how fast you can put quality individuals in front of them.
- Of the number of candidates you present, how many of them are interviewed by the client? Clients care about accuracy. Speed is important, but clients also want to see only quality candidates; prove that you are accurately matching the candidates you present to the skills the client stated they required.
- Of the offers that are accepted, what percentage of candidates show up on the first day? Clients are extremely aware of candidates finishing the process. They don't care how many good candidates you present, if none of those people accept the offers when they are extended or they don't show up for the first day!

- How long is the tenure of the candidates you place? Clients care about longevity. Once a candidate is hired through a recruiter, clients don't want to have to think about finding a replacement for that position for at least three years on a direct hire/permanent placement basis, or for the entire length of the contract if on a contractual/staffing basis.

- Of the percentage of candidates placed, how many of them were actively looking when you reached out to them? Clients care about finding new talent. This is the most important feature you have to sell! Show that you have access to people the clients don't have access to through their normal recruiting efforts.

COMPREHENSIVE CHECKLIST: Below is Rich's 'wholistic' checklist for becoming a Big Biller – select the two or three that stand out most to you, that will make the biggest difference in your career, and that you commit to implementing and following through!

- [ ] Integrate fitness and exercise into your daily regimen
- [ ] Exercise with a coach or participate in a group class
- [ ] Practice Yoga and Meditation
- [ ] Maintain a high level of activity – both work and personal life
- [ ] Get out and about: networking, in person meetings, social activities, special interests – stay active!
- [ ] Plan/Over-plan your day
- [ ] Invest in Yourself
- [ ] Celebrate successes/have rewards and fun/smile
- [ ] Sharpen the saw and learn continuously
- [ ] Upgrade your dress code and professional attire
- [ ] Get rid of clutter (both physically and mentally)
- [ ] Eliminate one bad habit
- [ ] Practice random acts of kindness
- [ ] Participate in volunteer-related projects and things for others
- [ ] Practice generosity
- [ ] Provide rewards and accolades for others
- [ ] Play to your strengths….do what is your passion
- [ ] Deliberately choose to focus on feeling good about what we do and how we impact others' lives
- [ ] Eliminate or move quickly from negative or self-limiting thoughts
- [ ] Surround yourself with a Positive Environment – positive pictures, plants, quotes, or people
- [ ] Have a dream, purpose, and goals
- [ ] Establish integrated, "SMART" and "wholistic" goals
- [ ] Do first things first
- [ ] Focus, work in blocks of time and eliminate distractions
- [ ] Generate Client-centric and Specific Metrics