

“We are already aware of that candidate”

Rebuttal #1: *“Define ‘aware.’” (If just know of them, or perhaps even have an old resume, continue with): “There’s a lot of people in the industry who have familiarity with each other, but that doesn’t mean they are viable for your opportunity. When Chrysler reorganized back in the 80’s, they needed a new CEO. Chrysler **knew** who the other CEO’s were. Let’s be honest - the American automotive industry at the highest level is not that big of a world. Still, Chrysler retained not one, but two search firms to land the right person for them. Why? It wasn’t because they weren’t ‘aware’ of the candidate – they knew that Lee Iacocca was at Ford, and they knew that Lee Iacocca was responsible for the Mustang – but that alone does not make a candidate. They needed a conduit to ensure that not only was the right person identified, but that they were attracted and landed. What’s more important– knowing who Lee Iacocca was, or being able to get him actually in the driver’s seat at Chrysler?”*

(As an aside, Chrysler retained two firms to ensure there were no blockage issues with clients the first firm already had.)

Rebuttal #2: *“With all due respect, the idea that ‘everyone can land big talent’ can be equated to this example: if you gave 10 people fishing rods, and each rod had a fish hooked on it, you are saying that every one of those people would get the fish in the boat – and we all know that that’s just not the case. I would argue that some of those fish will be so firmly hooked that any kid out there could reel him in. But most fish require some level of skill, and the better the skill of the fishermen the better the odds are that that fish will end up in the boat. So if one of those rods has a 150-lb marlin on the end of it, wouldn’t you feel it would be worth it to have someone who does nothing but reel in 150-lb marlins on your team? That’s all I do – reel in 150-lb marlins. I go after (type of candidates) who have (type of experience) who are doing (a,b, and c) – the marlins of our world. Now, there are certain positions where you are absolutely justified in hiring them on your own – they just aren’t that hard to land. Now, maybe I’m misunderstood – do you feel that (name of candidate) is a small fish?”*

Rebuttal #3: *“Have you interviewed him?” (No) “Have you called him?” (No) “So you’ve never talked to him and you’ve never interviewed him, but you’re aware of him. I’m ‘aware’ of Brad Pitt – but I’m at about the same place with him as you are with this candidate. You are aware of him, but you’ve never talked with him, never interviewed him, but you have a friend who knows him. That’s like saying I know Brad Pitt. The difference is that I can actually **deliver** Brad Pitt to you and you can’t right now. You pay me 10% for identify the guy and pay me 90% for landing the guy. Do you want to identify him or do you want to land him?”*

Rebuttal # 4: *“I have already assumed that you knew of him. The reason I presented him to you is that I was able to get him from “yes I know those guys” to “based on what you just told me I would like to see if you could get me an interview with them”. In many cases our clients don’t necessarily want to directly go after candidates they know. This is for a few different reasons. 1. If there is a lack of interest on either side after an initial conversation, hard feelings are a probability. 2. Some clients don’t want to be perceived as ‘stealing’ their competitor’s people. 3. The ability to manage the process and get solid, candid feedback is limited when going after them yourselves. We are a great intermediary and you keep your hands clean while at the same time getting all of the information you need to determine if this person is or isn’t a good fit with you. I would compare it to making a match between two of your friends. They were both aware of each other but had no idea that their situations had changed and it now made sense for them to pursue a relationship together. What do you need from me in order to determine if you would like to have a formal interview?”*

Rebuttal #5: *“I had assumed you were aware of that person. My role is not identification of talent. I’m the person that helps you land them. If we were to go fishing in my normal spot, I can no doubt tell you not only where the 10+ pound bass are swimming. I can also tell you what the best timing may be in order to catch them. I can tell you exactly what bait to use (hot buttons) and what bait not to use. Most importantly, and this is the part that a lot of people don’t realize; I will not only help you set the hook but I help you get (and keep) them in your boat. Are you open to having me not only identify your next hire, but actually land your next hire?”*