

“We have no openings” or “We are on a hiring freeze”

Rebuttal #1: *“It sounds as though you are truly proud of the team you have put together. I know a good percentage of managers that I talk with in your industry today tell me that they always want to continue improving department performance, even if they are satisfied now. This is because they never know when that key person may leave or get promoted. I’d bet that if the VP of Coke wanted to move over to Pepsi, Pepsi would figure out a way to get it done! For the right individual, would you create an opportunity?”*

Rebuttal #2: *“Nobody does right now – in fact, you probably just let go of a few people. I’m not saying you should hire like crazy, but you’re telling me that if I brought you an absolute “A” – someone that you would go through the wall to hire, no matter the economy – you don’t want to know about them or see them? It is easy to hit delete on your email if the people I send you are not a fit. Ultimately, here is the situation we are in: You have a few people that are overpaid due to the fact that you hired them in the strong, candidate driven economy. So you’ve got some “B-level candidates” running around making \$100k. In today’s economy you can find two “A-players” making \$80k each, save yourself \$40 grand, and without question increase your talent level. You don’t want to see a 5 star guy at a 2 star price?”*

Rebuttal #3: *“That’s understandable. The vast majority of companies I now work with didn’t have an opening when I called, just like the vast majority of people I recruit were not looking to change jobs. My goal is to get to know you and your organization. I want to know 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. That being said, for the right individual would you create an opportunity? If the Tiger Woods of (your industry) were to call me and express an interest in your firm, should I even pick up the phone and call you?”*

Rebuttal #4: *“With all due respect, (name), you’ve been in this business a long time and so have I. You and I both know that there is no such thing as a true hiring freeze. We all know that some hiring is done if a critical individual leaves the team, to replace low producing staff, or to infiltrate a new sector of the market that you currently don’t have market share. It just has to be for the right person. Looking at your current team and possible diversification strategies, what kind of individual would thaw out that hiring freeze – just temporarily?”*

Rebuttal #5: *“I didn’t expect you to. My business is predicated on the simple notion that the companies that have the best people are the ones that make the most money. These companies are always on the lookout for difficult-to-find talent. Is that true of you as well? (Wait for “yes”.) Tell me what type of talent is traditionally hard to find?”*

Rebuttal #6 (Continued Questioning): *“Loud and clear. No openings. When was the last time you had an opening? Have you had to lay anyone off recently due to lack of work? Are you guys in the “get work” phase as opposed to the “do work” phase? What will have to happen in order for you to have a hiring need? What’s the contingency plan if one of your staff turns in notice this afternoon? What kind of individual would help you pursue additional revenue streams/clients/sectors?”*