

## ADD ONE PLACEMENT PER MONTH

With the possible exception of a few contrary minds, it is almost universally accepted that working with clients on an exclusive basis can lead to more business, stronger relationships, greater client loyalty, and ultimately a better return for your time, effort and resources. These facts notwithstanding, many staffing professionals have a basic fear of exclusives. This fear has three levels.

**Level One :** The fear of not knowing how or when to ask for an exclusive.

**Level Two :** The fear of not knowing what to do if the client refuses to give you an exclusive.

**Level Three :** The fear of not being confident that you can perform successfully in an exclusive relationship.

This article will address your level one fear: how and when to ask for an exclusive.

### **Remember**

**Many times the orders you do have cost you more money than the orders you don't have because they are poorly qualified orders. They do not meet the essential standards necessary to be considered properly qualified.**

One of the standards that should be met before you consider an order qualified is the status of the opening. If the client has already listed the position with several other services, has it listed on their web site, is actively advertising the position in the want ads and on the Internet, and also is considering internal candidates, it doesn't make sense for you to work the order much less to ask for an exclusive. When this situation occurs, it may be best to state:

- 2 -

*"Based on what you have done and plan to do to fill this opening(s), it appears as if you are not in a position to take full advantage of the benefits of our service. However, the next time you have an opening of this nature, it may be in your best interest to call me (us) first. Give me (us) a one week (two week) lead time before you consider other options. With this approach, you will most likely realize better results, in less time, and with far less disruption and aggravation. Does this seem reasonable to you?"*

However, if the opening does meet your criteria for a qualified order, you need to ask for an exclusive in a manner that highlights the benefits for your client. An example would be:

*"In order for us to meet your requirements in a timely manner without compromising processes or selection criteria, we need to make a mutual commitment of resources. This commitment should be in writing and include a provision for an exclusive working relationship. To proceed on any other basis would not make good business sense for either of us. Wouldn't you agree?"*

You may also wish to point out to your client that in a truly exclusive relationship, you are the only access point to the client's opportunity. Properly leveraged, this exclusivity can be a tremendous source of power for you when dealing with low-supply, high-demand candidates and recruits. It demonstrates to them that you have a strong trust relationship with your client, a relationship that could hold great value for them as well.

In many instances, these individuals can only be approached in a discreet and confidential manner by a seasoned professional; one who has earned the right to represent a select client on an exclusive basis. The perceived power you gain from this type of relationship can many times be the deciding factor in whether or not the targeted individual feels comfortable in stepping forward and investigating your client's opportunity.

The client may gain a more complete appreciation for this positioning if you share with them an example of a possible script you could utilize in recruiting on their behalf.

- 3 -

*"The priority my client places on this position is of such a nature that they have committed the search to us on an exclusive basis. The only access point to this opportunity is through us. Do you understand the potential value a relationship of this nature could hold for you?"*

Not all orders should be worked on an exclusive basis. However, when you have the opportunity to work an order that meets all the criteria of a good, qualified order, you need to determine whether or not to ask for an exclusive.

### **Remember**

**In a pure sense, asking for an exclusive is a one-way street. The primary reason for a client to grant you an exclusive is because it is in their best interest to do so. However, if they say "no" to your request for an exclusive and yet you proceed to work it on a non-exclusive basis, you are saying two things to your client. First, you are willing to work with them in a manner that is not necessarily in their best interest. Secondly, you do not believe enough in yourself or your service to turn down the order. You are willing to work in a compromised manner thereby eroding any base of power you may have had an opportunity of establishing with this client.**

Knowing how and when to ask for an exclusive will eliminate the first fear of exclusives. In our next article, we will discuss the second fear, the fear of the client saying "no" to your request. Meanwhile, if you have any comments or questions, just let me know. Your inquiries are always welcome.



*Recipient of the "2006 Harold B. Nelson Award", Terry Petra is one of our industry's leading trainers and consultants. He has successfully conducted in-house programs for hundreds of search, placement, temporary staffing firms and industry groups across the U.S., Canada, Mexico, Australia, New Zealand, Russia, England, and South Africa. To learn more about his training products and services, visit his web site at:*

*[www.tpetra.com](http://www.tpetra.com). Terry can be reached at (651) 738-8561 or e-mail him at [Terry@tpetra.com](mailto:Terry@tpetra.com).*