

## **ESTABLISHING MUTUAL COMMITMENTS**

Establishing mutual commitments is the key to a meaningful relationship. In our profession, recruiters enter new relationships every day between clients, candidates, and occasionally a new member of an office team. The bedrock of a meaningful relationship is trust. Trust is solidified or broken by our reliability in honoring commitments.

We have all heard expressions such as “His actions spoke so loudly, I could not hear his words” or “She says what she will do, and does what she says.” When we secure a candidate profile or a search assignment, we are entering into a professional relationship with another person. The same is true when we hire another team member, join a new team, or have a new member join our team.

In each of these situations, the key is to establish our mutual expectations and accountabilities. Candidates, clients, and coworkers do not have a rule book for correct behavior by themselves or us unless we get one from them, give them one, or co-create one. We may be upset that a candidate interviewed at another company without telling us, but when did we let the candidate know to share that with us? Did we cover it thoroughly?

We have all had a hiring manager who said he would review our candidate’s information and get back with us the next day, but after a week, we still had no feedback. Did the hiring manager break a commitment that was a meaningful one or simply think it was not a big deal? When people get married, they usually exchange vows or promises. This way each party knows what to EXPECT from the other and, of course, then knows what to fight about later!

The participants in every meaningful relationship should spend some time covering “what you can count on from me and what I need from you.” This sentence should be burned onto the hard drive of every recruiter! By covering this, both parties know what is expected from the other and what is expected of them. This can be covered verbally and/or in writing. When a person joins a search firm, what can that recruiter count on from the leader, and what must the recruiter promise to deliver? When a candidate is recruited or a search assignment taken, what should the candidate or hiring manager expect from the recruiter and vice versa?

Every firm should create a document that is covered with every member who joins the team. It could include things like expected behaviors, time in office, work ethic, policies, etc., and what will be offered to those who join. Because every firm is so different, I am hesitant to share a standard-example document and would rather suggest that every firm create its own.

With regard to clients and candidates, again there are differences in what is expected and what each recruiter is willing to offer. However, there are far more similarities. The following charts illustrate examples of what a document could look like to ensure that mutual expectations are covered. Covering it verbally or even getting every person to sign it DOES NOT guarantee acceptance, but people are far less likely to break commitments when they know what is expected of them and have agreed to it. The same is true for each of us in honoring what we say we will do!



The following charts are examples of what this could look like for candidates and clients. You may wish to cover this list verbally or get it signed. You can add, delete, or modify. The key is that you cover what people can count on from you and what you expect from them every time you enter a new professional relationship. The following lists are examples:

### **Mutual Expectations Between Client and Recruiter**

#### **What you can count on from me:**

1. Will dedicate sufficient time to generate quality candidates in a timely manner
2. Will create a detailed position profile, presentation, and search plan that can be reviewed
3. Will prequalify all candidates by phone or in person before presentation to you
4. Will provide detailed information on skills and background as well as motive for considering change and needs
5. Will share accountability for interview, make client aware of any time constraints and candidate's perspective, and coordinate visit
6. Will prepare you thoroughly for each interview with additional specifics on each candidate and cover any issues needed
7. Will provide detailed feedback from candidate and act as your agent to navigate you through any issues faced
8. Will give regular status report with detailed progress and market feedback
9. Will answer calls and emails within 24 to 48 hours unless in crunch time and then sooner, or will give you my phone number, cell, email, all contact info so you can hunt me down when needed sooner
10. Will act as your agent to secure a candidate you want to hire
11. Will work extensively with you and the candidate through the offer, acceptance, resignation, possible counter offer, and transition
12. Will maintain strict confidentiality with any information shared in confidence

#### **What I need from you:**

1. Exclusivity/financial commitment – cover greater detail in clearing fee
2. Share all information in a timely manner relevant to search (changes, new people, time frames, etc.)



3. Timeliness of response to calls and emails (24-48 hours and less when needed)
4. Know interview availability a few weeks in advance and have access to someone who can schedule your time
5. Willingness to continue interviewing even when you find one candidate you like
6. Immediate decision on interview after presentation or within 24 to 72 hours of resume review (explain candidate's feeling when no response)
7. Set time for preparation call
8. Set time for post-interview debrief call
9. Preliminary estimate of offer before interview
10. Route all other candidates through me in overall effort to produce best possible candidate with me as sole filter
11. Access to all decision makers
12. Decision on go/no go and offer within \_\_\_\_\_ time frame after final interview

### **Mutual Expectations Between Candidate and Recruiter**

#### **What I need from you:**

1. Exclusivity in working with you – if they hear of other position, then they will let you know and if you cannot help them, you will let them go on their own or through someone else
2. Have them write a commercial about themselves to ensure commitment, get sense of how they present themselves, and get good material for your client presentation about the candidate
3. Let you know every situation they currently are in, where their resume has gone or goes if exclusive, and when they hear of another open position
4. Make you aware of any changes in any situation or any new situations when they arise and give you access to all decision makers in the family
5. Agree to share any familial issues that could impact their candidacy (health of loved one, special-needs child, etc.)
6. Call you immediately after interview and give their feedback



7. Make you aware of any W-2 compensation changes, raises, promotions, etc., and to be realistic about compensation expectations
8. Alert reference to expect your call
9. Respond within certain time frame (24 hours) to voice mail or email and, perhaps, less time in crunch time
10. Reasonable availability to interview
11. Agree to give their word to never take a counter offer
12. Be a referral source of names, info, organizational charts, directories, etc.

**What you can count on from me:**

1. I will never give an offer unless it is acceptable
2. Give a thorough preparation for their interviews and cover who they will meet with, what to expect, etc.
3. Return phone calls, emails within a reasonable time frame (24 hours) – less in crunch time
4. Represent their needs to the client effectively and fairly
5. Maintain strict confidentiality with any information they share about themselves, anyone else, or anything they say is confidential
6. Give regular status reports and feedback on where they stand, good or bad
7. Get all questions answered that they have about company or position
8. Help family with any special issues, benefits from relocation to rollovers, etc.
9. Potentially make a dedicated effort to conduct a campaign on their behalf, or at least be willing to contact certain organizations to investigate potential on their behalf
10. Let them review the presentations you deliver or send to the client on their behalf
11. Provide any information on the market that they want that you can get
12. Provide general career advice even if they never leave



I recently spoke to a group representing 18 European countries and soon will be heading off to Asia to do the same there. With dozens of owners and recruiters from so many different countries, one would think that the differences in recruiting must be vast. There are a number of differences, but at the core, the global search business is more common than it is different. Simply put, people are basically the same wherever you go! People may forget what you say, but they will never forget how you make them feel, and you are more likely to be judged by your actions than your intentions.



**ABOUT THE AUTHOR:** *Jeff Kaye is President and CEO of Kaye/Bassman International and Next Level Recruiting Training. This former Management Recruiter National Recruiter of the year has helped build the largest single site search firm in the country with annual search revenue in excess of \$18M. His firm has won national awards for philanthropy and workplace flexibility as well as having been named the best company to work for in the state of Texas in 2005, 2006 & 2007. Kaye/Bassman has retained over 30 search professionals whose annual production exceeds \$400k. The same training that helped build this successful firm is now available through Next Level Recruiting Training.*

*They have recently introduced new distance based learning programs and an entirely new subscription based program through an innovative delivery medium called NLE TV. To learn more about these programs or their other offerings please check out [www.nlrtraining.com](http://www.nlrtraining.com) or [www.nextlevelexchange.com](http://www.nextlevelexchange.com). You can also email Jeff at [jtk@nlrtraining.com](mailto:jtk@nlrtraining.com).*