

## SOURCING YOUR CLIENT

That's right. Sourcing your client for names of potentially qualified recruits or for the names of individuals who can lead you to potentially qualified recruits. This approach is not unethical or immoral; rather, it represents an appropriate utilization of the available resources.

To a lesser degree, most recruiters already do this when they ask questions similar to the following:

*"In what companies would a qualified candidate currently be employed?"*

*"Is there a specific individual(s) you would like us to recruit that, for certain reasons, you prefer not to approach on your own?"*

However, for the truly qualified search the opportunity exist for sourcing your client to a much deeper extent. This sourcing opportunity is created by the client's sense of urgency, which for many Recruiters is the first and most important search qualifier.

Once a search has been properly qualified, the next step in the recruiting process is to identify the names of potentially qualified individuals or, in lieu of that, the names of people who can identify potentially qualified individuals. All of this name gathering requires time and if the client has a true sense of urgency about hiring now, time is a commodity they have in short supply. Therefore, anything they can do to save time without compromising outcomes should logically be in their best interest.

Name gathering, aka sourcing, does not require a high degree of skill yet it serves as the foundation for any successful search. Generally speaking, the more names you can source at the beginning of the search, the greater the likelihood that two or more qualified and interested finalist will survive the process and be available for the final selection and offer. Therefore, it is in everyone's best interest to be directly involved in the sourcing effort at the beginning of the search. This can be explained to your client in a manner similar to the following:

*"All searches begin with name sourcing. Our usual resources and carefully cross-referenced network of contacts will provide us with the names of potentially qualified (appropriate position title). However, with most of our searches, additional names are generated through our client's organization. With that in mind, who in your company, in addition to yourself, would know the names of potentially qualified individuals or would know the names of people who could lead us to potentially qualified individuals. These may be members of your current team who happen to know the names of people who work for the organizations in which we have an interest."*

### **Remember**

***In almost every client's organization resides one or more individuals who know the names of people you need to contact. With the cooperation of your client, these employees can provide an additional, and most often overlooked source of valuable names in support of your search efforts.***



Do not be alarmed if new clients, who have not worked with a professional recruiter in the past, are startled by this question and respond in a manner similar to the following:

*"Are you asking us to do your job for you?"*

Or

*"If we can come up with the names, we may as well do the search ourselves."*

In many instances, these responses can be prevented by properly explaining the sequence of steps in the recruiting process to your client when you take the search. Nevertheless, you need to be prepared in advance to handle any client concerns expressed in this manner.

If they respond similar to the "Are you asking us to do your job for you?" question, it is an indicator that you have not properly positioned yourself with the client. Consequently, a good response might be:

*"What is your understanding of my job?"*

Allow them to fully answer this question, as it is a strong indicator of how they perceive your role in this process. Most clients who are unfamiliar with the recruiting process will give a fairly confused answer to this question, which provides an opportunity to properly reposition yourself and your process by emphasizing the following:

*"Name gathering is just the beginning of the search process. Until someone takes action by contacting the names, the list is useless. Given no time constraints, almost anyone who is familiar with your industry can develop an appropriate list of names. However, a name by itself is worthless until or unless someone takes action, contacts the individual and either recruits them directly or, through an indirect recruiting approach, utilizes them as a source of referrals to others who may be qualified for the position."*

*"These contacts are what we refer to as 'touch calls' because they need to be handled with just the right professional 'touch' in order to insure that a potential asset for your organization is not put off by an ineffective approach. Using the proper 'touch' is what we are trained to do and we do it every day."*

*"Next we focus on evaluating the capabilities and motivations of each contact. Throughout this evaluation phase our priority is to establish a group of finalists who are the best qualified and have the greatest interest in your opportunity."*

*"From this point on we coordinate with you those steps of the selection process that ultimately result in the hiring decision, issuance of a proper offer, its acceptance by the finalist, and the implementation of an appropriate transition strategy."*

*"Throughout this entire process our one and only objective is to insure as much as possible, that your hiring decision results in acquiring an employee who will impact in a positive fashion the performance capacity of your organization. The skills necessary to accomplish this have little to do with the initial name gathering. That is a time consuming process that can best be accomplished through the use of our collective resources."*



*"So no, we are not asking you to do our job for us because our real value to you generates from what we do after the names have been gathered."*

*"Does that answer your question?"*

Once again, wait for a response and do not proceed until you and the client have reached an understanding on exactly "what" your role will be in bringing this new employee on board with their organization. To proceed otherwise will only compromise your position throughout the entire process.

If your client responds with something similar to, *"If we can come up with the names, we may as well do the search ourselves"*, you can ask this question:

*"Perhaps you should. Once you have gathered an appropriate number of names, what will you do next?"*

Obviously, someone needs to call each name on the list. If the client identifies this as the next step, you can ask a couple of questions.

*"On average, how many names do you believe would need to be developed in order to establish a solid foundation for your search efforts?"*

Generally, they will grossly under-estimate the number or say something unrealistic like; *"It only takes one if it is the right person."*

Next question should be:

*"Who is properly trained and has the time available to make these calls?"*

This is a good time to explain the "touch call" and why it is necessary to insure they are executed in a proper manner. "Remember, this is all we do and we do it very well."

In most instances, the client will quickly understand the value you bring to the process as well as the risks they take in attempting a "do it ourselves" approach.

If the client refuses to cooperate with you in the sourcing of names, it is a clear indicator that the search is not a high priority or they are still not convinced of the value you bring to the process. If you cannot convince them otherwise, your best option may be to step away and not work the search.

Finally, you may have a client who believes if they provide you with names that you should provide them with a discount on the fee. A proper response to this situation should include the key concept of "value". Ask,

*"What do you believe justifies my fee?"*

Once again, do not say anything until the client responds. This is an instance where remaining silent is your only option. Generally, the client will make some comment about your effort in relationship to the size of your fee. This is where it's imperative for you to establish with your client the ONLY true justification for your fee. A strong statement is necessary and may resemble the following:

*"The cost of my service has little to do with the effort I expend on your behalf. Rather, the cost of my service can only be justified through the positive impact the professionals I place have on the performance capacity of your organization. Would you agree with this?"*

The only logical answer is "yes". If you do not get this response, do not proceed. You have work to do with this client before accepting their search.

Getting your clients involved in the sourcing process is the right thing to do. I learned this many years ago from one of my clients who said, "We know who they are and where they are. We need you to go get them for us." That client taught me a valuable lesson and one I continue to use to this day. Not every client will be a cornucopia of names, but almost any client can provide you with names that can serve as a starting point for your search.



*Terry Petra is available for one-on-one coaching, consulting and group training through "Petra On Call", a cost effective approach to receiving the full benefit of his expertise. For details on Terry's products and services, including "Business Appraisals", visit his web site at: [www.tpetra.com](http://www.tpetra.com). As always, if you have questions or comments about this article or wish to receive Terry's input on any other topic related to this business, your calls and e-mails are most welcome. Terry can be reached at (651) 738-8561 or e-mail him at [Terry@tpetra.com](mailto:Terry@tpetra.com).*