

## Client and Candidate Presentations – Knowing What To Sell

One of the most critical steps in the placement process is when you present the position to the candidate and the candidate to the client. More placements are lost at this stage of the process than at any other point. The primary reason for this is the lack of carefully planned and executed presentations.

Unfortunately, for many practitioners, presenting the candidate consists of nothing more than submitting their resume to the client. In similar fashion, the presentation of the client's opportunity to the candidate may be nothing more than repeating the information reflected on the client's job description. In some instances, the practitioners actually send the job description directly to the candidates thereby all but taking themselves out of the presentation process.

Although the method of presentation referenced above may result in a limited number of interviews, as well as an occasional placement, it doesn't even resemble the process followed by the consistently top producers in our industry.

The evidence to support this lies in their presentation to interview ratios. Top producers, working in a contingency environment generally do not exceed a two to one ratio (two candidates presented for each candidate interviewed by their client). Many times their ratio is even tighter when presenting the client's opportunity to a pre-qualified candidate.

### **Remember**

There are three key performance ratios that define you as a practitioner; your presentation to interview ratio, your interview to placement ratio, and your job order/search to placement ratio.

Effective presentations result from "knowing what to sell" and, "knowing what to sell" results from properly qualifying your job orders/searches and in conducting thorough, behaviorally based, evaluation interviews.

In the immortal words of Lou Scott, one of the founding fathers of our industry,

*"If you want to sell John Brown what John Brown buys,  
you have to sell John Brown through John Brown's eyes."*

Therefore, if you want to be effective with your presentations, you have to know specifically "what" to sell to each individual client and specifically "what" to sell to each individual candidate. Note the emphasis on specifically and individual.

This is not a "cookie cutter" business. Each client and each candidate have needs that must be met and motivations that drive their decision-making process. Understanding these needs and motivations is essential to executing effective presentations.

When qualifying job orders/searches, in addition to your normal inquires, probe your clients with questions, the answers to which will clearly define their critical needs in addition to understanding their motivations when hiring.

Examples include:

- “What is the single most important quality (skill, talent, etc.) you look for in an employee?”
- “Why do you place such importance on that quality?”
- “Can you give me an example of how that quality is exhibited in your present employees?”
- “How do you measure (evaluate, define, etc) that quality in the candidates you interview?”
- “In specific terms, what was the deciding factor(s) upon which you based your last three hiring decisions?”
- “Was that factor validated through the performance of the new employees once they were on the job?” (If not, why not?)
- “On a percentage basis, how much weight do you give to each of the selection criteria we have just discussed?”
- “Thinking in terms of their impact on job performance, why do you weight them in this manner?”
- “How would you characterize your day-to-day management style?”
- “What type of employee would respond best to your style?”
- “What method do you use to identify those types of employees during your selection process?”
- “Considering your selection process from a contrary perspective, what would you rate as the single most significant knock out factor if it were present in a candidate?”
- “How do you identify that factor in your selection process?”
- “How do you maintain your objectivity while making your hiring decision?”

These questions merely represent an example of the type of questions you should be asking in order to more clearly understand “how” your client makes their hiring decision. This, together with the other pertinent information gathered while qualifying the order/search should provide you with a foundation for building properly planned sales presentations on your candidates.

However, prior to the actual interview, you want to insure your client has all the job- related, performance-based information they require on each of your candidates in order to make a proper hiring decision. In contrast, during the initial candidate presentations, your responsibility is to provide the client with the information they require in order to justify interviewing your candidates. This does not mean holding back pertinent facts. Rather, it means knowing what and how to sell “John Brown through John Brown’s eyes.”

As a comparative example, consider dating and marriage. In order to convince someone to go on a date, you generally don’t have to tell them your entire life story. However, if you want someone to marry you, then to help insure the likelihood of a positive outcome, you better be prepared for full disclosure during the dating process or as near to it as reality allows.

The same approach is valid when you are planning your presentation of the client’s opportunity to the candidate. In order to be successful you need to know “what to sell.” In specific terms, based on your knowledge of the candidate, what information do they require in order to justify interviewing with your client? Generally, this is less information than they require prior to going on the actual interview and, most certainly, it is less information than they require prior to making a decision on an offer.

If you have qualified and interested candidates and are unable to produce interviews because you have not properly planned and executed the presentations, then you have missed placement opportunities. Additionally, and ultimately of even greater importance, you have failed to properly serve both your clients and candidates. Don't let this happen.

#### **Remember**

A job order/search has no potential value unless and until you have qualified and interested candidates interviewing with your client.

The foundation for effective presentations is "knowing what to sell" to both your candidates and your clients. Concentrate on selling the "what" and you will dramatically increase your presentation to interview ratio, as well as building more placement income.

As always, if you have questions or comments about this subject, just let me know. Your calls and e-mails are always welcome.



*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).*