

Debrief Scenarios and Solutions

Situation: Release the Candidate

- Be timely in your feedback; don't keep the candidate hanging, don't avoid the candidate, and don't hold out hoping that the client will change their mind. Be timely and respectful in your feedback.
- Call the candidate instead of sending an email or leaving a voicemail; the candidate shouldn't feel unimportant simply because there is no longer a fee attached to the relationship. This is still a person, and how you deal with this candidate now will dictate whether he or she continues to partner with you in the future, and how they speak about you to peers or colleagues. Don't take shortcuts with the intent to save yourself the hassle of having to turn someone down.
- Be specific and provide constructive takeaways that will allow the candidate to understand why this wasn't the right fit, and how to possibly find a better match in the future. However, don't feel like you have to go into great detail as to why they were rejected or turned down. Remember to provide insights that may help this candidate be a better interviewer or candidate in the future. It's also important to ask the hiring manager what specific feedback they are comfortable or would like you to share with the candidate. You certainly want to remain authentic with your candidate, but still want to maintain the confidentiality that should sometimes exist with information shared by your client.
- Last, certainly keep this individual in mind for other, or future, opportunities.

Situation: Client Needs Additional Time

- Educate the candidate as to why more time is needed, in a way that maintains their interest and doesn't give the impression that they are second runner-up.
- Over-extend the timeframe for next steps, because nothing ever goes according to plan! Things always take longer, and it's better to pad the time your client needs so you don't have the candidate becoming more and more disinterested due to lack of progress. If things do progress quicker than planned, the candidate will be that much more excited, flattered, and ready to move forward.
- Have the candidate continue to work on any areas that were of potential concern to the client. For example, if the client was a little hesitant because the candidate seemed light on a certain type of experience? Have the candidate compile a list of their experience in that area, or similar areas, and send to the client as a follow-up. If the client wasn't totally sure if the candidate is serious and ready to make a move? Possibly have one of the references of the candidate send the hiring manager an email, offering to speak personally at any time to that manager as to why the candidate is a great person to consider.
- If there are others on the team that the candidate can interact with, set up an informal lunch or coffee, in order to keep the process moving forward. People like to feel like they are making progress – even small steps are steps – and candidates are much more open to being patient when they feel like they are moving forward slowly as opposed to sitting still.
- If possible or appropriate, continue to have the candidate interview with other hiring managers and prospective clients. This can serve to both keep the candidate feeling like they are making progress, as well as to protect in the situation where the original client releases the candidate from consideration.