

## Raiders of the Lost Art (Name Gathering)

If Indiana Jones had been a recruiter, he would have certainly been great at gathering names. He saw no obstacle as impenetrable, no opponent as undefeatable and was always ready for the hunt. The most valuable characteristic of “Indy” was his constant state of readiness and capacity to think on his feet. These skills were no doubt honed by his continual involvement in seeking out every treasure versus remaining in the safe confines of his academic world. I hate snakes as much as he did and that may be where the comparisons to Indiana Jones begin.

As recruiters, we are now blessed with the recovery of our industry from a historically devastating period. We, survivors of that headhunting holocaust, are now faced with the daunting task of returning to the skills that an active market demands. The downturn we recently lived through also allowed us to become inactive in terms of the treasure hunting skills of name gathering. The at-hand presence of information technology assets in the last decade provided some recruiters with a heavy flow of potential candidate names. This was a justification for some recruiters to avoid the development of good old-fashioned name gathering. Many candidates were within the radar screens of many recruiters. Now the playing field has changed. Although the economic climate is improving and searches are increasingly available, the candidates are often outside of our immediate range of vision. This is caused by several factors.

- First, the pool of talented people has diminished during the last decade.
- Second, the mindset of the corporate candidate has become cautious and comfortable with the “devil they know.”
- Third, the corporate scandals of the past couple years have elevated their fear of changing employers. These conditions are not likely to change in the near term. Thus, we must go out there and get the “holy grail candidate” our clients seek. The good news is that the clients we serve are typically unable to serve their own needs under the conditions we face as recruiters. But we can!

So how does one do this name gathering thing? This skill set seems to be in high demand among most of my training clients. The path to names is wrought with obstacles and dead ends. It requires creative thinking and preparation. It begins at the center of the definition of the best candidate, the hiring authority. Probe deeply for the detailed definition but, do not stop short of asking from where they want this candidate? What companies do they prefer we recruit? You may encounter the feared objection of *“Don’t you know that? Aren’t you the recruiter? Isn’t that what we pay you to do?”* These objections are stated by the client who lacks a thorough understanding of your process and needs to be sold on its benefits.

The name gathering process continues with cold calls into high potential source companies. Yep, those dreaded cold calls to electronic switchboards and crusty gate guards with twenty questions in which they take great pride asking. Like good old Indy, be cool and think on your feet. Back out of a dead end path and go back in another way. Try “open” departments such as A/R, sales, customer service or investor relations. These folks are trained and accustomed to public access and being of assistance to outside callers. Exploit this fact. Call upon high potential source company vendors. Talk to their salespeople. Gain a name from them so that that gate guard allows access. Any name is a pass key to entry in most sources.

From that contact, you have the opportunity to make headway to the target candidates. The best of all worlds is one where the folks we contact in name gathering are in or among the crowd of candidates we seek. In this less than perfect world of recruiting we often miss that mark. Seek out intermediary contacts. These are the folks who are in departments and functions that are interactive with those folks you seek. Sales interfaces with customer service who interfaces with

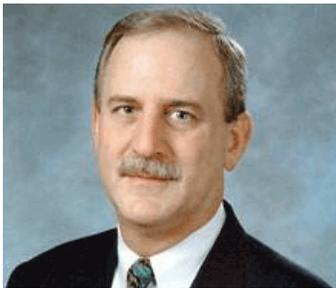


## NEXT LEVEL Exchange

shipping who interfaces with production people who interface with engineering, etc. Learn the “linkage” attached to the functional responsibilities of the candidates you seek. This is easily revealed by asking for detailed input to the question, *“Walk me through a typical day on this job. With whom will this candidate interface, why?”*

We always have access to the “files” on hand, the “net sites,” our sharing partners, etc. These resources should not be ignored but rather turned on in a concurrent manner with the effective art of name gathering. This recruiter continues to delegate these duties to a researcher while I jump into the game of recruiting. If you have not had the need to master this process as yet, it is now time to do so. If you once were good at this game but fell away for various external or internal reasons, it is now time to return to the game. The arising recruiting marketplace demands true recruiting skills in a service focused process. The clients want us to recruit the folks who are currently employed and actively involved in the accomplishments and contributions the client desires to gain by hiring these folks. Technology has provided clients with the capacity to do everything else. We can no longer polish up the “net” candidate and deliver them as a recruit. We can provide a service no other vendor can provide: Recruiting.

Many years ago I was confronted with the self-doubts we all face during our early days in this business (or after a challenging period). My confidence was permanently in place after I made my first placement from cold call to check in hand. At that point, I finally realized that all I need to make a placement is a telephone, a process and a cooperative client. This awareness can only come about as the result of doing everything from concept to completion. Name gathering skill is a foundational and non-negotiable element in the recruiting game of this new decade. In our game, as was the case with Indiana Jones, it was his confidence first that kept him in the game and out of his comfort zone.



**ABOUT THE AUTHOR:** Doug Beabout brings over thirty years of expertise in top billings, placement firm ownership and industry training. Doug works a top-producing desk every day and is uniquely qualified as a professional personnel services trainer. Having successfully thrived and survived the last three recessions, Doug knows the trenches. Doug Beabout is owner and president of Doug Beabout Group in Miramar Beach, FL. Prior, Doug was owner and president of his own personnel services firms, The Douglas Howard Group, a personnel services firm in Kent, Ohio for seven years and Douglas William Associates, for ten years in Dayton, Ohio. Doug has held the title of CPC; certified personnel consultant since 1981.