

WORK THE RECRUITING SYSTEM:

ACHIEVE MORE IN LESS TIME

Have you ever heard of sweat equity? I have a friend who talked about it constantly while he was building his business. If a coworker was in the office (or in this case, the car dealership) until 9 p.m. five nights a week, my friend had to be there until 11 p.m. seven nights a week. I have to admit, he made a decent living. In fact, he went on to run his own dealerships and to demand this same time commitment from his top employees. But when I look at his life, his divorce, the kids' activities he missed, the friends he ignored because he didn't have time for them, I wonder if he still believes it was all worth it.

Recently I interviewed Sam Carpenter, author of *Work the System* (www.workthesystem.com), on "Talent Wins," my human capital-focused radio show (www.talentwinsonline.com). *Work the System*, due to be released this month, details how Sam found himself working 100 hours a week at his service business. But the hours weren't turning into dollars. He was on the verge of bankruptcy. He could barely make payroll. He was sleeping on a cot at his office. His business owned him.

Fast-forward two years. Sam's business is profitable, and his workweek is down from 100 hours to – are you ready for this – two hours per week! Sam turned his business and his life around by solving one problem at a time. He put into place systems that worked. And he wrote a book about it. It's a compelling story, and it made me think. Wouldn't it be nice to spend more time with your kids, your spouse, and your friends without feeling guilty? Is it possible to do more of the things we enjoy instead of feeling obligated to live at the office because we never accomplish enough?

The good news is that in executive recruiting, we can. You can get done what needs to be done in your professional life and still have time for a rewarding private life. I'm not going to tell you that, like Sam, you'll be working two hours a week. But by doing things much the same way Sam did, by solving a few problems and enacting effective systems, recruiters can attain more success in less time. Here's how.

Identify your time-wasters

Time-wasters are productivity killers. If you're struggling with a task, it can invade your workday and steal precious time. Maybe you're having trouble with your recruiting software. That could mean you're spending a lot more time than you should on this process. Or maybe you avoid this essential part of your job completely. Both can lead to failure.

Successful recruiters must be courageous enough to name their weaknesses. Whether it is learning the technology tools, marketing, closing, qualifying . . . identify your problem area. Then determine whether you can improve your performance through increased training or focus. If so, do what it takes to get better. If you can't figure out a way to substantially improve your skills, it may be time to consider outsourcing the task. Is there someone in the office who is strong in your weakest area? Can you pay or trade, partner, or barter with a colleague to handle the time-waster for you so you can focus on that which you do well – and thereby increase your own productivity?

Identify high-value activities and spend more time on them

What are the high-value activities you perform every day? In recruiting, these usually involve client or candidate communication. Period. All the rest are low-value activities.

During selling time – which is typically 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. with a noon lunch-break – successful recruiters are completely focused on high-value activities. They are not emailing friends, checking their voice mail every five minutes, talking about sports with their cubicle partner, or going to the break room 15 times a day. They are only concerned with high-value recruiting activities. To avoid the nonproductivity trap, identify necessary low-value activities and schedule them for anytime prior to 8:30 a.m., after 5 p.m., or during your lunch break. Don't let them eat away at your recruiting day.

Speaking of schedules . . .

The reason why successful people like schedules is because they work. An efficient schedule is how the world operates efficiently. In recruiting it's no different. An unplanned and unscheduled day is an unproductive day. An efficient, scheduled day yields gold. My office is run by the following basic schedule:

- 8:00 a.m. Arrive and check email and plan for the day
- 8:15 a.m. Morning meeting with entire office
- 8:45 a.m. Team meeting for individual markets
- 9:00 a.m. Hot calls (closes, interview debriefs, candidate presentations, search assignments, etc.)
- 9:30 a.m. Uninterrupted A-Player marketing calls
- 11:30 a.m. Return voice mails, read, send emails, get fee agreements sent to office support
- Noon Lunch
- 1:00 p.m. Hot calls that have developed from morning
- 1:30 p.m. Uninterrupted recruiting calls on job #1
- 3:00 p.m. Uninterrupted recruiting calls on job #2
- 4:00 p.m. Return phone calls, check email, afternoon debriefs and preps
- 4:30 p.m. Plan for next day

Note the uninterrupted call periods – your ticket to efficiency. They are essential to getting more done in less time. Safeguard them by putting your phone on “do not disturb” or having the office manager hold your calls during these periods.

Don't be afraid to experiment with your schedule, customizing it for maximum results. Whether you use our office's plan or develop your own, when you stick to a daily schedule, you'll be amazed at the increase in your productivity.

Hold yourself accountable for every minute

There are only so many hours in the day, and if you don't want to live at the office, you need to make the most of every minute. That means you need to make some tough decisions. To get more accomplished in less time, prioritize. Identify that which is worth your time each day and that which is not. Throughout the day, evaluate whether or not you're staying true to your high-value activities. Hold yourself accountable by asking, "Is this the best use of my time right now?" You may be surprised by how much time you waste on low-value activities and how easy it is to turn that around quickly.

Realize what your time is worth

Time is money. When you waste an hour of selling time during the day, you are literally cheating yourself out of cash. Would you drive down the street throwing \$20 bills out the car window? A recruiter with a yearly income of \$50,000 who loses an hour a day to low-value activities might as well climb into his car and start throwing. At \$50K a year, your time is worth \$24 per hour, at \$100K it's \$48 per hour, and at \$150K it's \$72 per hour. The next time you find yourself tempted to call a buddy during selling time, picture yourself throwing away your hard-earned cash. It can keep you focused.

Make technology work for you – not against you

The last five years have seen an explosion in technology that makes our job so much easier. Today's recruiter has the potential to get more daily information faster than ever. Job aggregators, job alerts, news alerts, they are all readily available. Remember, every piece of knowledge about developments, trends, and people in your market sets you apart. Make technology work for you. Here's how:

1. Get the latest industry news. If you don't have one, open a Google or Yahoo email account to receive news alerts based on target accounts, industries, and key words.
2. Uncover potential job leads at the job aggregators, which are spider engines that go to all of the job boards (www.simplyhired.com, www.indeed.com, www.just-posted.com, www.jobster.com). If you haven't, subscribe to them and sign up for job alerts. To research available jobs from company websites, try www.hound.com.
3. Let candidates come to you automatically by setting up candidate alerts on the job boards. The candidate-alert brand for www.monster.com can be found under SmartFind. They will come to your email as often as once per day.
4. Use the social network sites to your advantage. Sites such as www.linkedin.com, www.myspace.com, and www.facebook.com are social network sites that can help you find the hidden talent in a specific market. There are social network aggregators that can search multiple sites at once – www.wink.com is a good example. The new sites can give a recruiter an edge in finding the hidden talent in the marketplace.

By taking advantage of these systems, you allow technology to work for you, saving you valuable time and resources. Once a day – during nonselling time – check the results of these systems.

Being a great recruiter is all about making the most of every minute. Yet many in our profession won't take the initiative to read this article, much less to enact these basic, but essential, timesavers and problem-solvers. These very simple systems of accountability can bring great rewards. Like my guest Sam, those of us who choose to adhere to a strict schedule and focus on high-value activities will find that it is possible to get more results in less time.



About the Author: *Jon Bartos is a premier writer, speaker and consultant on all aspects of human capital and achievement. As president and CEO of Jonathan Scott International in Mason, Ohio, he has achieved industry-leading success. He is one of an elite group of executive recruiters who bill over \$1 million annually. In 10 years Jon has billed over \$10 Million in personal desk level production. Jon has also established Jonathan Scott International as a top 10% executive search and contract staffing firm. The office has won 16 international awards in the MRI Network, including International Billing Manager of the Year and Top 10 SC Office. Jon recently launched the Magnum Program, a personal coaching venue to help business professionals reach new levels of personal and professional success. If you or your organization is ready to achieve their potential, you can reach Jon at 513-701-5904 or jon@jonathanscott.com.*

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