

## Big Biller Secrets

**Presenter: Chad Oakley – President and CEO at Charles Aris**

Chad Oakley is the President, Chief Operating Officer, Executive Recruiter and Practice Leader for Strategy & Business Development at Charles Aris. His areas of recruiting expertise include placing key executives in Strategy, Business Development, Finance & Accounting, Marketing, Consumer Packaged Goods, and Retail positions.

Prior to joining Charles Aris, Chad served as a Consultant and Case Team Leader in the Boston practice of Bain & Company. At Bain, Chad focused on solving strategic challenges for clients in a number of industries including software, telecommunications, optical networking, manufacturing and financial services.

### About This Segment

In his presentation - Chad shares his big biller insights including:

- The Impact of Market Mastery
- The “Most Favored Client Clause”
- The Power of Great Client Deliverables

### Meeting: “Big Biller Secrets” by Chad Oakley

**If you are reviewing this episode with a team, watch the entire video and ask the group for their key takeaways and insights.**

**CLOCKLESS:** Obvious trait of million dollar billers? Hard work. A “clockless” mentality. Here’s the problem – “hard work” is a relative term. Very few individuals watching this training would admit that they are not willing to “do whatever it takes” to experience success, so why is not every recruiter a million dollar biller? Chad quantifies “hard work” – his schedule has him on the phone a significant portion of the day with minimal distractions, leaving at 6pm, and back to work from 9pm until however late it takes. “Hard work” sounds good in theory, but few are willing to have the discipline and sacrifice that Chad does in order to accomplish what he needs to accomplish!

**VALUE OF YOUR TIME:** We treat candidates and clients how to value our time. What Chad is reminding us here is that not everything is as urgent as we might want to think that it is - even the things that actually are urgent! When you are on the phone with a prospective client and he says “*send me over a fee agreement, I’ll look over it and get back to you,*” how busy or important do they perceive you to be when you drop everything and send it immediately over?

Instead, share this: “*I’ll absolutely do that. I have several searches that are a priority for me to dedicate attention to this afternoon; is there any reason I can’t get that over to you after 9pm today?*”

First, the client will say no problem, which then frees you up to not spend 20 minutes during prime time typing out a search agreement that will have no immediate action that afternoon. Second, you have just immediately reinforced the value of your time to that client. You will actually seem *more* important to that client because you *didn’t* jump immediately after they said jump. Now, if that client is heading into a meeting in 20 minutes with the team who needs to review the agreement, go ahead and stop everything and get it over. But, to Chad’s point, you’ll find that nearly nothing is as urgent as you think it is!

**VOLUME OF WORK:** Chad shares that he has 10 to 15 retained searches he is actively working on at any given time. Remember that his world is narrowly defined and he has zeroed in on his niche – but he has consistently demonstrated to himself that if he wants to bill a million dollars a year, he can accomplish that if he has at least 10 retained searches actively working at any moment in time. How does your pipeline compare? What do you need to do to secure more clients, if your pipeline is not where you feel it should be?

Big Billers are people who execute the fundamentals of our business with excellence. As an exercise, create a list of the 10 fundamentals of our business that you would teach to a new associate joining your organization. Once you have the list, reflect – how do your actions on a daily basis compare to that list? Even the most tenured veteran can get away with shortcuts and can "wing it", but their results over time will simply not be what they otherwise could have been. Knowing something intellectually is worthless if you do not demonstrate that knowledge experientially.

**TEAMWORK:** Like recruiters, doctors and lawyers have tasks that they do repeatedly. However, those professions don't suffer the attrition rates that recruiting does. Consider that it is because those professionals have institutionalized outsourcing as well. The nurse practitioner gives exams, the nurse checks blood pressure, and the scheduling department makes appointments. The lesson that we can learn can be to consider outsourcing certain tasks to other team members; this allows not only for financial growth, but also allows greater challenges. The key is to allow you, and those around you, to experience challenges and increased responsibility at the rate that people desire and can handle.

**MOST FAVORED CLIENT CLAUSE:** Everyone wants to negotiate, and nobody wants to believe they are the sucker! If you acknowledge this fundamental truth, it provides some insight into what clients are thinking – even if they aren't articulating. Chad shares that due to this clause, they rarely have any significant pushback on their terms, and 95% of their searches are performed under the exact same terms and conditions.

*"At Charles Aris we have one pricing model, and ALL of our clients pay it. We charge 30% of a candidate's first year cash compensation. We charge the first third of the projected fee up front, as an engagement fee, and the remaining two-thirds is paid once we have successfully completed the search and the candidate has started in the role. And we guarantee that the search will be completed successfully, as we will not stop working on the search until we find exactly what you want. It's very important that you understand that every last one of our clients pays this rate, and our clients are companies like the following..."*

He then shares 8 to 10 highly recognizable companies that they work with. If the prospective client then pushes back, he expands further:

*"I understand your concern, but put yourself in my shoes. For many of the companies that I just named, we conduct a minimum of four to five searches every year. I have guaranteed those clients that I won't provide a better price to another client, and therefore my hands are tied on this. But please understand, just like you, these companies have no interest in overpaying for search fees, and also just like you, they've got plenty of recruiters begging for their business for a lot less than we charge. This, of course, begs the question, why would they pay more to us when they have so many other cheaper alternatives. The answer is simple. Our clients want to land the very best talent, and they know that we won't stop working for them until we deliver just that. They pay our rates over and over again, year in and year out, because they truly believe that they are receiving world class service for a reasonable price, and I assure you, you will too."*

**ASSIGNMENT SPECIFICATION:** Within a few days following the detailed discussion of the search assignment with the client, Chad turns around and shares a summary of the search specifications and job description produced for the search. Do you have something in your process that is similar? If not, consider adding this step. It will give the client a higher level of comfort in working with you, it will allow them to course-correct or provide additional information if needed, and you may even find that they are more responsive throughout the process because they know the efforts you are putting forth on their behalf.

**WEEKLY PIPELINE STATUS REPORT:** George Bernard Shaw stated that *“the single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place.”* The weekly Pipeline Status Report that Charles Aris sends to clients ensures the successful communication of the search process. It also helps keep the recruiter moving forward on the search and staying accountable to progress! The Pipeline Status Report includes an Activity Update: key data points such as how many people have been called to date, how many of those people have been connected with, how many of those people are currently in some stage of qualifying, and how many of those people have been rejected by Charles Aris. The second area of the Pipeline Status Report includes the Productivity Update: a quick summary of each candidate that they currently have in the qualifying process, and the appropriate next steps they are conducting with that candidate.

**CANDIDATE SCORECARD:** This tool, used by Charles Aris, is similar to the one discussed in Module 13 of the Next Level Exchange Foundation Program. If you are looking to provide additional insights above and beyond those on a resume that clients can read themselves, this tool is imperative when formally presenting a candidate to a client.

In the Candidate Scorecard, they list all of the core competencies that the client shared initially they were looking for in a right-fit candidate. Charles Aris then rates how they believe that candidate matches up against each of those core competencies. Since a resume never tells the full story about a candidate, and clients can rule out good candidates based on what they saw, or didn't see, on a resume, Charles Aris effectively takes the resume risk out of the equation. Clients choose to interview about 95% of the candidates they present – how do your numbers compare?

As a template to get started, the Foundation Program's Candidate Matching Matrix can be found in Module 13 – Matching and Presenting.

**SIMPLE NEWSLETTER:** Chad shares that there has been no greater catalyst for inbound calls than a practice newsletter that is emailed every four weeks. The problem? “Newsletter” conjures up a fancy image complete with lots of colorful graphics, some flash components, and maybe even some video and sound. Instead, Chad suggests starting with a basic, simple text email. His version reads like a personal email from him directly to the recipient.

His format? Begin with two or three statements about what he is seeing and hearing within the strategy and business development marketplace, and expand with a few sentences around each of those statements. Basic information, but the kind of insight and information the people in his industry value. Second, he shares each search they are currently working, with a brief summary description of the position, a link to their website where they can learn more about that position, and the email address for the person on Chad's team that is leading the effort.

This has become a marketing machine for his practice, as it essentially sends a monthly reminder to the 7,000 individuals within Chad's defined niche. This is free, effective, and simply requires the dedication to consistently follow through once implemented.

**CANDID COMMUNICATION:** Chad shares that if you fail to mention an issue about your candidate to your client (even a small issue) and the client identifies it later? They draw one of two conclusions – either you chose not to share in hopes they wouldn't notice, or you weren't thorough enough in your evaluation to catch it yourself. Either way? Your credibility and trust is at risk. Ultimately – be okay with walking away from a prospective match.

No candidate is perfect, no client is perfect, and no match is ever without some possible red flags. Be objective; what are one or any reasons that might make you unsure as to if this is the perfect fit? Just because you are playing devil's advocate doesn't mean this candidate is ruled out – but it's important to have an objective view of the situation. List out those concerns that you may want to make the client aware of prior to agreeing to interview the candidate – that way, if these red flags appear throughout the interview process, you have prefaced the scenario with your objective pros and cons about this candidate. Make sure that you are showing your clients that the time they took to walk you through the job order was time well spent, and that you respect their time by not wasting it with candidates too far outside of their desired scope.

**POLITE PERSISTENCE:** Although it is necessary to remain persistent to remain a successful recruiter, be cognizant of how often you allow your frustration to seep through the phone. If you remain polite, it's difficult for anyone to grow overly frustrated with your persistence. Chad's scripted response is a great one to use and modify as your own:

*"(Name), great to hear from you. I really appreciate you calling me back, as I know how busy someone in your position can be. Thanks for putting up with all of my messages. Please understand that in my line of work, when I'm working on an urgent project, being persistent is critical to me delivering for my client. I hope that you've always found me to be polite?"*

Don't be afraid to be a polite "nudger"! Even if clients or candidates get frustrated from time to time, they ultimately know that you are "nudging" for all of the right reasons.