

## The Art of Selling Search

***Presenter: Tim Tolan – Managing Director,  
Sanford Rose Associates® – The Tolan Group***

Tim Tolan is Senior Partner and Managing Director of Sanford Rose Associates® - The Tolan Group with a primary focus on placing executive level IT talent in the healthcare industry. As a premier executive search consultant, Tim is a member of the Sanford Rose Associates "President's Club" and is consistently recognized for leading one of the top-producing offices within the network. He has conducted searches for C-suite executives, leadership and management positions for large and small cap companies, as well as privately held and early-stage companies. In addition to his executive search experience, Tim has been in the healthcare technology field for over 25 years in executive-level positions for companies both public and private. He has led sales, account management and business development teams.

### **About this Presentation:**

In Tim's presentation, he shares his best practices to recruiting sales success including developing skills that translate to business value to clients, walking you through the key stages of the sales process, marketing and market development, scripts and presentations for single and multiple search engagements, and the key to set yourself apart from the competition...every time!

### **Meeting: "The Art of Selling Search" by Tim Tolan**

**If you are reviewing this episode with a team, watch the entire Episode and ask your group for their key takeaways and insights that they pulled from the Episode. Review the following below to fill in the gaps.**

**ELEVATOR PITCH:** Whether we like to admit it or not, it is natural to have some fear around the subject of selling. Even the most veteran recruiters can experience some pause or reluctance when entering new situations or boardrooms. One of the biggest fears? The fear that you will make a negative first impression. It's no secret how important a first impression is, and the fear that you will not make a good one can be intense. It may even make you avoid certain phone calls or face to face scenarios!

There is a solution, and Tim introduces a tool that can help with confidence and delivery of that first impression. What is your succinct, scripted, perfect elevator pitch? Once you get a prospect on the phone, it's essential to be "game on".

Let's first start with the prospect in mind. If you were a hiring manager or candidate, what fears would you have with a phone call from a recruiter you'd not worked with before? Put yourself in your prospect's shoes; what are your fears when taking a call from a recruiter?

- I'm worried you are going to waste my time.
- You aren't going to be able to tell me any info that I don't already know.

- Although this call may be important to you (the recruiter), it's not important at this time to me. I'm busy, have deadlines of my own I have to meet, and this call is taking me away from that.
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**Now that you've thought through some of the fears a candidate has, what proof statements can be made that would help alleviate some of those fears in the opening moments of a call?**

- Clarify how many minutes you are asking for initially of the prospect's time
- Share specific industry insights or an overview about the types of candidates or clients you work with that demonstrate knowledge of information beyond the obvious
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**Now, take those statements and wrap it into an elevator pitch that shows that you are not the recruiter to quickly dismiss.**

*"Hi Bob, my name is Tim Tolan and I'm the Senior Partner of Sanford Rose Associates – The Tolan Group and we specialize in finding great talent for healthcare technology companies. We know this space really well and have made hundreds of placements in companies just like yours. The purpose in my call today is simply to introduce myself and associate a voice with a name. I'd like to develop a relationship with you and over time earn your business by becoming a trusted business partner you can count on to find superior talent for your Company."*

*(If met with resistance): "Totally understand Bob, but there will come a time when a key member of your team leaves and you need to fill the position quickly. Recently this happened at another software company you may know ABC software. The CFO left in the middle of an audit and the CEO was desperate to find his replacement – and fast. They engaged our firm and we found a terrific experienced CFO in less than 6 weeks and the CEO and the Board are thrilled with the result. Again my goal is to develop a relationship with you and over time to build the trust with you so you'll feel comfortable calling on our firm when you need to quickly find a Director, VP or C level executive for your team."*

*I'd like to send you a brief snapshot of our firm and some recent placements we've completed with companies you will know – and then follow up with you in a couple of weeks. Thanks for your time Bob and I'll be in touch. And then I add that activity to my calendar and I do what I promised to do."*

**Second Example:**

*"Bob, I know you are busy and the chances of me catching you with your feet up on your desk just begging for a call to come in from a recruiter is as likely as (insert industry-specific or comedic comparison based on the nature of your audience). However, I'd like to share with you something*

*that would be important for me to know if I were you. My team has placed (#) of people in the last (timeframe) in your specialty. (%) of what I do is with repeat clients which means that they not only value me, but trust me to position both them and my candidates competitively time and time again within the industry. Why does that matter to you? Quite simply put, I know everything about my clients and I know what's critically important to my candidates. Even if you aren't ready to make a move now, I can almost guarantee that one day that may change. Even if you never go to work for one of my clients, I am confident that I can give you insights and information that will make you more savvy, educated, and prepared for that process. It's not the candidates with the best resumes that get the best offers, it's those who interview the best. Unless you are 100% confident that you will retire where you are, there is value in us spending just 10 minutes together. Is that now or on your commute home?"*

**TOUCH PLAN:** Tim states that one particular study showed that it takes 7 touch points to initiate a new relationship. A touch point includes a phone call, and email, a hand written note, an article you send to a prospect, a book, a white paper or some other way to communicate to your target market. Tim likes a blended approach to marketing and selling that helps support the use of the phone. What are you not yet doing that you'd like to do, or could add to the list below?

- Send marketing letter and material
- Send hand written note
- Attend trade shows and book coffee, breakfast, lunch and dinner with the most viable targets and have a full meeting agenda between meals (send collateral later)
- Send a relevant article
- Send a case study or press release regarding a recent placement
- Send mail via overnight mail
- Send business books (that you have read)
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**Example value-added emails:**

*(Name), as a hiring manager with (Company), I know you make a conscious effort to evaluate and improve your recruiting platform and attraction strategy. These are some best practices we've seen organizations implement in order to Win the War for Talent for their own firms, and I thought it might be valuable for you to review this brief video for competitive insights: <http://www.nextlevelexchange.com/winning-the-war-for-talent-video.html>.*

*Feel free to forward to others responsible for attracting any and all levels of talent to your firm. These are just a few successful strategies for winning the war for talent; for additional ideas or to talk further about a search effort on your behalf, please click here to schedule a time on my calendar: [www.timetrade.com](http://www.timetrade.com). I look forward to connecting with you soon!*



### Another Example:

*(Name), I lead the area of (type of area). We have been recruiting in the (type of) industry for (#of) years, and in that time I have seen many changes in (type of area) recruiting and hiring. One approach has remained consistent: the one where the recruiter who knows very little about you or your organization calls you up weekly, if not daily, to tell you about the most incredible person ever without ever asking you many questions, if any, and says nothing to establish credibility to warrant you taking some time to speak with him or her.*

*If that approach sounds familiar, I will share with you that we have built our business and reputation on the exact opposite approach. With a combination of (years of experience working directly in the market) and (years of experience as an executive search consultant) in (niche), I am acutely aware that excellence in recruitment is not about an incredible candidate, but an incredible match. I have completed over (#of) searches in the past (timeframe), and the average tenure of that group is (insert statistics). Recently, I placed (type of role) for (name of client) and (type of role) for (name of client). You may know (hiring authority) at (name of client) who I've worked with for years, and he shared this about his experience with our organization:*

*"Testimonial"*

*- Hiring Manager Name, Role*

*The bottom line is that the reason my retention ratios are so high is because of the approach I take to the recruitment process. I'd like to set up an initial conversation to learn more about your firm than simply the information I've learned from talking with individuals who are currently with your organization or who are no longer there. Please click here to schedule a brief conversation and I look forward to learning enough about what is important to you in the growth of your firm so I know who in the market can help take you there.  
[www.timetrade.com](http://www.timetrade.com).*

### Another Example:

*You and I have not had the opportunity to speak yet; I am an executive recruiter with (firm) specializing in (niche) and frequently asked to write articles for industry trade journals. I wanted to see if you would be able to share some knowledge about (subject matter topic) for an article that I am writing. I would be happy to publish your name and organization if I use what you have to say, and our conversation shouldn't take more than five or ten minutes.*

*Let me know what specific time would work for us to connect and what number is best for you to be in a place you can speak freely, or you can schedule a time directly on my schedule here: [www.timetrade.com](http://www.timetrade.com). The article is time-sensitive in order to be published by (date).*

*Thank you (name) and I look forward to speaking with you.*

**OBJECTIONS:** No matter how great of an introduction, value proposition, and solution you provide to a client, it is expected that you will experience some resistance. Tim knows the most likely responses he hears from clients, as he hears them time and time again. He's taken the time to script out the responses that work best for him. What are yours to each of the following?

1. We are concerned about paying money upfront; we've been burned in the past?

*I totally understand your concern and it's something you should be concerned about. That's why all we ask for a small retainer to get started and then the balance of earning our fee is 100% performance based. We don't bill you for another dime until we present candidates that you agree to interview and our final invoice is actually due on the candidates first day of employment. By you paying the retainer it makes this engagement a shared risk arraignment but our firm is still very much at risk for the bulk of the fee and we must perform to earn it. I am that confident that we will complete this assignment. We have a very high fill rate and historically it's in the mid 90% range.*

2. We really don't want to work with a firm exclusively.

*I understand why you feel that way but quite frankly over the years I have learned that the passive candidate market is highly intelligent and as that pool shrinks the challenges of having multiple firms working on the same assignment only get more complicated. When a candidate gets 3-4 phone calls or emails during a 2-3 week period about the same job opportunity for the same company it sends the wrong message to the perfect candidate for your company. However when a candidate knows we have been engaged by you it somehow makes presenting the opportunity to the candidate much more appealing. Finally while we'd love to work with your company and believe we are the right search firm for ABC Software – we don't engage on an assignment where other firms have already been engaged. Besides I have a hard time having my recruiters work on a non-exclusive contingent search when they have multiple retained searches from companies that have engaged us. I do hope you see my point.*

3. Your fee is too high – others are giving us a retained quote at less.

*I can see how having a lower fee from a competitor appeals to you. In the end, all I can tell you is that we have been serving this market for over a decade and I have personally been in the healthcare technology business for over two decades. We know the market very well. I can send you references from multiple companies who will tell you about the service and quality of candidates they received and hired. If your issue is totally a budget issue I could also discuss a fixed fee option, which will protect you up-front and you will know exactly what to budget. It slightly changes our guarantee period but if you have budget constraints this option may work. Would you like to explore that option?*

4. What if you can't find us anyone?

*Good question. First and foremost as I mentioned earlier we have a very high fill rate in this space because we are market masters in healthcare technology and know the market in depth. Secondly we only ask that you commit to a small retainer up front and invest in the engagement. We in turn have the bulk of our fee tied specifically to our performance. If in the rare case we don't complete the search – you only pay us for our performance. Finally, our agreement states that we will continue to work on the search until you ask us to stop. We have weekly progress calls with you team to keep you apprised of our activities. You will always know exactly where things stand with our firm. Our team meetings are every Monday and assuming we can proceed with the agreement I'd like us to get started this Monday. Can we proceed and get started?*