

When Candidates Don't Respond

**Presenter: Scott Love, Owner, The Attorney Search Group,
a member of the Sanford Rose Associates® Network of Offices**

Scott Love is the President of The Attorney Search Group and a member of the Sanford Rose Associates network of offices. His office is a boutique legal search consultancy with a focus in placing attorney partners in the greater Washington, DC, and New York City areas. He has been called "Washington's legal power broker" and works as a sports agent for law firm partners engaged in transition from one firm to another.

Since 1995, Scott has placed key talent in legal, construction, IT and sales roles. As a professional speaker and trainer, Scott shortens the learning curve of new recruiters and sales people and helps experienced ones break through their barriers and reach their full potential. Scott is a popular keynote speaker at industry and non-industry conventions and conferences. He has authored three books, produced hundreds of video training courses, and has been quoted in the Wall Street Journal, Forbes, the Huffington Post, Selling Power Magazine, and dozens of trade journals and business publications around the globe. Over 4,500 recruiting and staffing firms from over 36 countries have invested in his tools and systems.

In this presentation, Scott shares his tips to keep candidates engaged during the recruiting process. When candidates don't respond: what does it mean and how do we manage it? In this presentation, Scott shares his tips to keep candidates engaged during the recruiting process.

Meeting: "When Candidates Don't Respond" by Scott Love

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

(Facilitator): Let's start with the glaringly obvious reason a candidate doesn't respond after an interview – they weren't interested! The client failed. This might require us to consider educating our hiring managers on how the hiring game has changed in recent years. A recent article penned for Inc by Suzanne Lucas made the bold statement: "*Dear Hiring Manager, Perhaps You Should Write the Thank You Note.*" She continues: "*The traditional thank you note is from candidate to hiring manager. That's wrong... Just what are you exactly thanking the manager for? Taking the time to talk with you and consider your application for the job, right? But, what were you really doing? You were taking your time out of your day (and often using vacation time from your current job to do so) to try and solve a problem for the hiring manager.*"

At first glance, most recruiters would think "*thank goodness this wasn't a candidate I had interview; seems quite entitled.*" However inverted of a perspective this author seems to hold from standard interviewing protocol, there is an underlying message communicated by her article.

It may be time to help our clients evaluate their hiring processes through a new lens.

If we assume it is the candidate's responsibility to pen the thank-you note, doesn't that inherently mean that we also assume it's the candidate's responsibility to be thankful for being granted an interview to begin with?

Questions to consider asking your hiring manager:

- How much time do you expect a candidate to prepare for the interview with you? How much time do *you* spend preparing for that same interview?

- You likely have asked the question “so why should we hire you” without batting an eye – how receptive are you when a candidate questions “why should I come to work here?”
- Checking candidate references from past employers is a probable interviewing step; candidates volunteer these regularly. What would your reaction be if a candidate asked to check references from those who had worked under your supervision in the past but were no longer with the firm?

These are just a few scenarios to help challenge your paradigm. Lucas ultimately summarizes this mental shift: *“When we think of all the things we demand of job candidates, we should realize that they are the ones doing the hiring managers big favors. You need that position filled, and these people are graciously helping you to do so.”*

(Facilitator): Let’s move on to Scott’s second portion of his video, which is to pay attention to behavior. Remember how people behave at the beginning of the process; it tells you how they will behave at the end. What was their response time in the beginning? How thorough was their communication in the beginning versus now?

Things to keep in mind:

- Give them the benefit of the doubt, and approach it cautiously. Don’t assume that they are all lying.
- Keep reaching out, but pay attention to nuance.
- Use your client’s motivation to drive it. *“Immediately after your meeting, (hiring manager) called me to discuss his level of interest. I’ve found that they start to question that interest if hours or days go by without any response from you. If you want to keep this door open, give me a call so I can share with them that the process might need to take a little longer but it is not a reflection of your interest (or lack thereof) in their opportunity.”*
- Give them an exit: *“When you come out of any conversations, call me within an hour. I give you full permission to pull the plug at any time during this process – you won’t hurt my feelings or let me down. My intent is to simply open doors for you and you choose if you want to walk through any of them – but if at any point you don’t want me to open any more doors, I need you to tell me that in a timely and professional manner.”*
- Give them alternative times to talk.
- Use scarcity (schedules and limited dates to prompt interest).
- If you are asking for an answer and still no response – that’s your answer. (Dr Robert Cialdini) *“Haven’t heard from you; my client is very interested. I don’t want to keep pestering, so if I don’t hear back from you by (date) I’ll assume the timing doesn’t work for you at this point and I’ll convey that respectfully back to my client. He holds you in high regard. But I believe at some point, maybe this might be worth it for us to continue the dialogue.”*
- Remember: there are exceptions. Some people are notoriously bad at showing up for meetings. When they no-show, they owe! Don’t rule them out entirely!
- Manage your emotions; don’t hang your emotions on making placements.
- What info did I miss? What questions could I have asked earlier in the process? What warning flags did I ignore?