NLE Quick Tip: Client Control

Candidate and client control is an oxymoron. In this NLE Quick Tip, Erin Bent suggests releasing the "control" and challenge yourself to "manage" the process from the beginning. Establish the type of relationship you want to have with your clients. That could be the most significant differentiator between you and the next recruiter calling to get business with your client!

Meeting: "Client Control"

(Facilitator): Although having control over another individual may be near impossible, there are certainly things we can do that will impact the influence we have with someone. If you want to focus on influence, you have to first connect with people emotionally. That may seem strange in a recruiting capacity, but it really isn't if you think about it – prospects need to truly feel connected with the benefits (both personally and professionally) that partnering with us effectively can provide. In short, we must perpetually emphasize "what's in it for them" to build trust. When you are able to link your process or professional recommendation with "what's in it for them" you are perceived as being influential.

Step 1: Go back to the beginning and review how do you begin to create the relationship that you want to have with your clients. A possible preface is below:

> *"One of the ways we are able to be as effective as we are with the searches we take on is that we will be actively recruiting candidates who aren't in the job market but are receptive to considering a career enhancing opportunity. In order to do that I need to be able to paint them a picture that this is the kind of opportunity they need to consider. I'd like to ask you some things that will truly help me attract candidates to your company, initially and throughout the entire process. That being said, the only way I can effectively work this process is if I have just as good an understanding as you do of this opportunity. You will be amazed with the type of results we get when I'm not positioned as an external recruiter, but rather a member of your internal recruiting team. What I need from you in order to exceed your expectations is a little of your time and lots of information – typically about a half hour. I can even do after hours or on the weekend if that makes it easier for you. If convenient, let's spend the time now while it's on your mind so I can get in the market."*

Step 2: Revisit your questions. Veterans are sometimes the most guilty of this, as you get on auto-pilot and sometimes forget to ask something critical. Some suggestions:

> *Let's start by putting together a picture of the ideal candidate you are looking to hire. Obviously, not all candidates who are interested in talking with you will get through my screen, but I need to make sure that when you receive a resume from me there is a one-to-one ratio of submittals to first time interviews. I can only do that if I truly understand not only what you **need** to see in someone, but also what you **want** to see in someone.*

- What are the most urgent and critical needs that you need to fill?

- How long has the position been open? And why has it been open?

- How have you attempted to fill the position?

- What is your role in the process? Is there anyone else involved in the hiring decision?

- Share with me the typical timeline of the interviewing process. When do you do reference checks? Do you prefer to do them, or have me? When do you extend the offer? Do you prefer to extend an offer, or have me?

- What information are you accustomed to receiving in regards to a particular candidate? Just a resume? What is other information essential to you?

- What is the process by which you will decide who to hire and why you will hire them over others you interview?

- What questions about your hiring process have I not asked that you think would be helpful for me to know?

Step 3: Another step in creating influence? Being vulnerable. Although that's not an obvious objective of setting mutual expectations, it is a byproduct that can be beneficial in creating a true partnership. People will perceive you as being real when you admit to weaknesses, and instead of stating them in a negative way, you are doing so by committing to avoiding those weaknesses that they have likely seen in the past from other recruiters. With each of these, make sure to expand on *why* you are asking this from the client – remember to always connect it to "what's in it for them"!

> *Based on what you've shared with me, I think we're in an excellent position to help you fill this opportunity. I've got a great understanding of what you are looking for and offering, and think that you've got a strong platform to land the caliber of candidate you're targeting. I'd like to talk about what you can expect from us moving forward, and what I'll expect from you.*

Examples from you:

- Dedicate sufficient time to generate quality candidates promptly.

- Provide detailed feedback from the candidate and act as your agent to navigate through any issued faced.

- Answer calls and emails within 24-48 hours unless in crunch time and then sooner, or I will give you my phone number, cell, email, and all contact information so that you can hunt me down when needed sooner.

Examples from the client:

- Timeliness of response of calls and e-mails (24-48 hours) and less when needed.

- Know your interview availability a few weeks in advance and access to someone that can schedule your time.

- An immediate decision on the interview "go or no-go" after being presented the resume, or within 24-72 hours of resume review.

- A decision on "go or no-go" and offer within (x hours/or days) after final interview.

Step 4: Continue what has been started through each step of the placement process! Revisit your standard operating procedure for presenting candidates in a pre-closed manner, your Interview Prep and Interview Debrief templates, your Pre-Closing template, your steps for following through after offer and acceptance, and everything in-between (all available on Next Level Exchange). The more structured your system, the less likely the frustration of client control (or influence) can be!