



NLE Quick Tip: Big Biller Insights (Re-Release)

Presenter: Chad Oakley – President, Charles Aris

Chad Oakley is the President of Charles Aris, a 30-person executive search firm located in North Carolina. As President, his chief responsibility is to manage the firm's Strategy and Business Development practice.

In this Quick Tip re-release of his full presentation, Charles shares the top tips that have enabled him to develop a million-dollar practice.

Meeting: "Big Biller Insights (Re-Release)" by Chad Oakley

If you are reviewing this Episode with a team, watch the entire Episode. Use the notes below to implement the best practices provided.

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 6 pm, and back to work from 9 pm until however late it takes. "Hard work" sounds good in theory, but few are willing to have the discipline and sacrifice that Chad does 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 9 pm today?*"

First, the client will say no problem, which then frees you up not to 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 ten 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 ten 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 daily compare to that list? Even the most tenured veteran can get away with shortcuts and can "wing it," but their results over time will not be what they otherwise could have been. Knowing something is worthless if you do not demonstrate that knowledge experientially.

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 found in Module 13 – Matching and Presenting.