

Courting the superstar candidate

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How does a company recruit a successful, well-educated, highly desirable individual who's satisfied in their current job? What can you do to make your company or opportunity stand out in a tight labor market? How do you stop losing your best candidates to hiring competitors? The answers to these questions are found in the three rules of recruiting: Relationship, Relationship, Relationship!

You can take the sting out of recruiting in today's job market by focusing on building a strong relationship with prospective candidates right from the start. The stronger the relationship between you, your company, and the candidate you've chosen to hire the easier it is to recruit, interview, negotiate, and successfully close an offer. A strong relationship built from the beginning of the recruiting process will also greatly reduce the threat of counter offers, and the odds that a turndown may occur.



RELATIONSHIP BUILDING BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

We've all heard the saying, "You only get one chance to make a first impression". By making the best possible first impression, you increase your chances of having a successful face-to-face interview, and lay a good foundation for closing the deal and getting a job acceptance at the end of the process. Whether it's a search for a manager, a sales person, or an engineer, put effort into the little details and make a favorable impact on every candidate. Inset 1 is a checklist of suggestions for ways to build strong relationships with your candidates, right from the start.

RELATIONSHIP BUILDING DURING THE INTERVIEW

Once you've laid the proper groundwork prior to your face-to-face meeting, your next focus is to keep the momentum going with a great interview. It's a chance for you to sell the candidate on the company, the position, and the community (if it's a relocation). But beware – the psychology of interviewing can get very complicated. Keep it simple and remember that your most important task is to continue "courting" the candidate, and

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selling him or her on the opportunity to work for your company.

“Sell” the Company

People/candidates tend to make decisions based on emotions and then defend them with logic. Think back to the last time you interviewed for a position. What information was most important to you? During the meeting, be candid and offer information that will help the candidate feel good about the position. It is also vital to allow the candidate equal time to ask questions that are important to them, and address related issues that may affect their spouse and family.

Take the time to think through the most likely questions you would expect to be asked during the interview. Be prepared to answer these following ten most commonly asked questions:

1. Why is the position open, how long has it been open, and why haven't you filled it until now?
2. How would you describe the company's stability, are you for sale, reorganizing?
3. What is the hot news on the street about your company, both positive and negative?
4. How would you describe the corporate culture and/or political landscape here?
5. Why do you like working here and where do you see yourself in 3 to 5 years?
6. Describe your background, interests, and management style.
7. What is the greatest challenge you expect the new candidate will face in this job?
8. What are the growth options in this job? Can you share any past promotional success stories?
9. How do you feel about me as a

- candidate based on my resume and this interview?
10. Where do we go from here and how quickly can you make a decision/offer?

Behavioral Interviewing Techniques

After you've done your best to "sell" the company to the candidate, now it's their turn to "sell" themselves to you.

Behavioral interviewing is the best way to determine which candidate is the best fit for the job.

Behavioral analysis is based on asking open-ended questions using who, what, when, where, why, and how. They are questions wrapped around evaluating talent, work ethic, courage, ego, persuasiveness etc... The key to making this work for your particular open position is to predetermine what behavioral traits you need for the ideal candidate and what traits you'd like to avoid. For example, a sales professional needs to be persuasive and have a lofty ego, whereas a process engineer may not. However, a process-engineering manager would need to be more persuasive than an entry-level engineer. Evaluate the open position based on the traits needed, then design and select questions that will drive the interview in that direction.

Top Interview Questions

To assess candidates on the following behavioral traits, formulate questions that ask candidates to demonstrate when they have exhibited desired traits. For example, if you want to know how creative a person is, ask a question like, "How have you been creative in your work in the last 60 days?" Or, "Describe a project you worked on with very little direction that you'd describe as a creative project?"

Send the following information to candidates in advance of the interview process:

Welcome Letter – Signed by the hiring authority, president, or the most senior level executive who'll be involved in the interview process.

Position Description – Polish it up and put it on letterhead. Put as much emphasis on selling the job and company as on describing the position.

Organizational Charts – Show where the position fits within the overall organizational structure, especially those positions directly above and below.

Annual Report – Include any financial documents you make available to the public.

Corporate Brochures – Share information that best describes the company as a whole.

Division Brochures – Showcase products and markets for this position.

Business Cards – The hiring manager's business card and any other key interview contacts.

Directions - To the site where the position is going to be based and where off-site interviews are going to take place; consider printing a color map off the Internet.

Community Information– Get this from your local Chamber of Commerce and/or a local Realtor.

Realtor Contact – Get a business card and brochure of a realtor who understands your company and community and how to sell relocating candidates on the area.

His and Her Packets – Send two of the community and realtor information packets so both the candidate and spouse have materials they can study.

Inset 1 – Pre-interview "relationship building" checklist

<p>Intelligence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analytical • Conceptual • Creative 	<p>Work Ethic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitment • Pride • Desire to lead 	<p>Get Things Done</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focused / To the point • Solutions oriented • Goal oriented
<p>Courage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Willingness to disagree • Perseverance • Stand up for belief 	<p>Ego</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self confidence • Self reliance • Presence 	<p>Persuasive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empathy • Desire to convince • Problem solver
<p>Communicator</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear and concise • Complete answers • Listing skills 	<p>Resourcefulness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creative • Flexible • Low supervision 	<p>Leadership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsibility • Team player • Proactive vs. Reactive

Inset 2

1. Invite the spouse to visit the community during the final interview, or immediately following, in order to get excited about the relocation before asking a candidate to accept an offer.
2. Offer two tickets to a sporting event, play, or a musical so the trip has a break for fun, too.
3. Take the candidate and spouse out for dinner with the hiring authority and spouse and another couple from the company.
4. Are there any employees who grew up in the same area as this candidate, went to the same college, or worked for the same company or a past company as this candidate? If so, try to work this employee into the interview process.
5. Send a follow-up e-mail or overnight express letter immediately after the final interview. Outline how things went and your planned intentions and next steps.
6. Reimburse interview expenses immediately! Want to make your company look bad? Make a candidate pay for his own interview expenses and then make him wait for the reimbursement.

Inset 3 – Post-interview "relationship building" checklist

Inset 2 lists some of the more important traits to explore in an interview and some "qualifiers" for each trait.

RELATIONSHIP BUILDING AFTER THE INTERVIEW

Making a job change is a complex decision, complicated even more so when it affects a spouse, the in-laws, children, grandparents, and close friends. After the interview phase is complete, don't forget to leave a lasting, positive impression on each candidate. The better they feel about the job, the company, and you, the easier the decision will be for them. Inset 3 is a list of suggested ways to solidify your relationship with each candidate after the interview.

If you follow the principles of building

the relationship with prospective employees before, during, and after the interview, you will be able to win over your Superstar Candidate!

For more information on any of the topics contained in this article, sample behavioral interviewing questions, or scripts for welcome/follow-up letters, contact Patrick Ropella, President & CEO at +1 850 983-4777 or visit us on the web at www.ropella.com.



About Ropella & Associates

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