SALES & MARKETING STRATEGIES FOR RECRUITERS

DEVELOP A PLAN, FORM RELATIONSHIPS & BUILD YOUR CLIENT BASE
Today’s recruiter operates under new parameters, and with talent holding the reins, your role as a recruiter has completely evolved. Winning the recruiting game in a talent-driven market means becoming increasingly savvy at customized marketing campaigns and proving your value to both the client and the candidate. Connecting clients and talent in best-fit partnerships requires keen strategy on both sides of the equation.
Understanding Sales & Marketing

Relationships
Sales and marketing is all about building relationships with your clients and potential candidates.

Relationships are established and nurtured through active listening: taking time to understand a client or candidate’s goals, values, interests, and needs via thoughtful, targeted, open-ended questions. Establishing rapport and fostering trust through active listening is foundational to an ongoing relationship.

Clients
- From questions about culture and why they – as the hiring manager – think talent stays or leaves to how they evaluate their current level of qualified staff and what their hiring plans are for the next six to twelve months, ask questions to gain a clear understanding of the company.
- Ask questions about open positions. What type of personality fits the job and the company? What are some nice-to-have skills? Necessary experience and education? What are their expectations of an ideal candidate upon hiring? At three, six, and twelve months? How do they measure success in reference to a new hire?

Candidates
- Ask questions about their career journey, from frustrations to highlights. What kind of company and culture do they want to connect with at this stage in their career? What are their short- and long-term goals? Create an authentic experience for candidates that adds a human touch to the equation.
- Discuss what candidates are seeking. What matters the most to them: compensation, benefits, flexibility, growth options, travel opportunities, philanthropy? What are their communication preferences, do they prefer a phone call or an email?

Active listening, to both clients and candidates, embraces both sides of the process. Pay attention to non-verbal signals. Ask open-ended as well as specific questions and respond affirmatively. Stay in tune with communication trends, and find out each client’s and candidate’s preference, make note of it, and use it when communicating with them.
Strategy
Now that you have established relationships and gleaning an understanding of your target audience (clients and candidates), it’s time to develop your marketing strategy. Successful sales processes fall into two categories: fact-based and story-based sales. Which one works best for you?

Fact-based Selling: Using numbers and facts to sell your services.
Fact-based selling can be a very effective way to target clients because it provides practical evidence of your capabilities as well as demonstrates where you stand in the industry.

“We were Best in Staffing Award recipients the last three years. I attribute this primarily to our high rate (90%) of client satisfaction due to retention rates of the talent we’ve placed.”

Using facts builds your credibility and helps your client see that you are honest, reliable, and professional. Know your facts and utilize graphics. For example, when marketing to clients, share specific percentages of candidates you have placed who were productive and happy in their position at the one-year mark, or even later. When targeting candidates, share the documented average percentage of salary increase you have obtained from previous applicants.

Story-based Selling: Using experiences to sell your services
Story-based selling utilizes personal stories and case studies to demonstrate that you are the recruiter for the job. Facts are also used but presented through the art of story-telling.

“We had a client who was one-week into their busiest season when they received a coveted order. It required adding a shift of skilled, experienced workers, including certified technicians and maintenance. We not only provided the required personnel but also remained in daily communication to ensure that any glitches were immediately solved. The client was able to fulfill the order and establish a continuing partnership with their new customer.”

Stories have the power to connect emotions, allowing the client to place themselves and their company in the story. Know your success stories and watch for openings to share these impactful accounts, complete with the documented facts.

HELPFUL TIP
New recruiters often struggle with story-based selling because they have not yet accumulated personal experiences. Interview staffing veterans from your group. Ask for their stories and dig up the corresponding facts. Use the “firm’s stories” until you have the opportunity to acquire your own examples.
Attract Candidates and Build Your Database

In a candidate-driven market, building an in-depth database of high-quality talent requires developing a marketing plan to capture the interest of potential candidates.

Developing Your Recruiter Brand

A vibrant, attractive brand begins with a foundational core of integrity. Be consistent and always deliver on your promises. Prove that you have what it takes to connect candidates with their ideal position and advance their career.

Integrity

Being authentic draws candidates. They want a recruiter who will listen to their career goals, recognize their talent, look for the best possible position while giving consistent feedback during the process, and deliver on their commitments.

Don’t:

• Entice them with a fictional position
• Suggest the possibility of a salary that’s above the client’s budget
• Commit to an unrealistic timetable
• Break their trust: for example, calling one of their colleagues for an off-the-record reference when you’ve promised the candidate confidentiality

Be who you claim to be and do what you say you’ll do with complete transparency. Losing credibility with your candidate is a fast track to failure, and a negative reputation is difficult to repair.

Dynamics

Captivate your candidate with the whole picture:

• Present your expertise, documented with facts and quantified with numbers
• Tell your stories, backed by facts and data
• Share your professional connections, supported by testimonials

Never stop learning. Candidates want to work with someone who is a knowledge leader in the industry:

• Read blog posts, white papers, books, and e-books
• Participate in webinars
• Join LinkedIn forums, groups and discussions
• Attend in-person conferences

True quality doesn’t just happen — it’s an intentional, consistent, choice.
Marketing Your Brand
Align your brand and your market. Ensure that the services you offer and the methods you use connect with the audience you are targeting. Show them how your brand will enhance their candidate experience, don’t just tell them.

Segment and Target Your Audience
Take the time to understand both active and passive candidates. While active candidates are “hot,” and ready to buy, the best talent is often passive candidates who are already working. Passive candidates make up 70 percent or more of the market.

• Understand the talent you seek: Pay attention to their interests, values, preferences, and career goals
• Listen to their pain points and generate solutions
• Learn what motivates them and inspires their commitment
• Develop a recruitment strategy that honors how candidates search

“Social media is about the people! Not about your business. Provide for the people, and the people will provide for you.”
– Matt Goulart

Reach Candidates Via Social Media
Connect on the platforms that appeal to the talent you are seeking. LinkedIn is a viable candidate source. Instagram is rising through the ranks. Twitter has its place. Learn the preferences of your market.

• Be consistent in your presentation across your website, social media platforms, and mobile apps
• Share valuable, relevant, and compelling content
• Ensure it is easy for candidates to communicate with you
• Use programs that make it easy for candidates to complete and submit documents, applications, etc.
• Respond promptly to all comments and inquiries
Build Relationships
Go past adding names to your database; nurture relationships.

• **One-to-one**: When you are “in-process” with a candidate, keep communication lines open. Be responsive. Listen. Give feedback. Be prompt and use their preferred method of communication.

• **Candidates as a group**: When communicating to the candidate market, don’t neglect the power behind content marketing via blogs and e-newsletters. Send out surveys with prize drawings for the participants, offer webinars and coaching services, etc.

The best way to keep your clients happy and coming back is to deliver a top quality “product” – the candidates that make up your database. Dedicating your time, energy, and resources to marketing talent is the only way to succeed in a candidate-driven, market.

Build Your Client Base

**Pitching Your Firm**
Your mission statement guides your business strategy, and your business strategy directs your marketing strategy and activity. So, every nuance of your marketing activity should relate to and support your mission.

When marketing to the client, upholding this “mission” entails conveying three critical points:

1. That you understand and can deliver what they need and want,
2. That you will deliver it in a more professional, confident, and personable way than the competitor and,
3. That client satisfaction is your number one priority.

In order to properly meet those three objectives, you must have a thorough understanding of your customer and their industry. Take the time to research your competitors. Stay on top of industry news and trends. Build an in-depth knowledge base of your client’s industry pain points, skill shortages, and legal compliance concerns. Develop insight into when to choose direct hire or when to seek contract workers.
Once you’ve built your detailed knowledge of a potential clients’ needs and pain points, the next step is to structure your talking points. Write them down and practice them until you know your value proposition inside and out so you can speak to them confidently. The goal is to have your voice and presentation style come across assertive and comfortable with the information rather than reciting a list of facts. This is the kind of difference that will set you apart from your competitor.

**Four Selling Points that Clients Want to Hear**

1. **Process:** What steps will you take to ensure high-quality service from start to finish? Address how your firm approaches these six critical steps in the recruitment process.
   - **Identification:** By providing an in-depth analysis of their open positions, including a diligent listing of their specific requirements, you’re providing a value-focused, results-oriented experience. This allows you to clearly state where you add value based on your recruiting experience.
   - **Research:** You successfully utilize both traditional and unique industry resources. Explain how your company employs that information to target the very best candidates.
   - **Recruiting:** Discuss your current candidate database, plus your proactive approach to seeking talent.
   - **Assessment:** Explain that your skill and personality assessments as well as your reference and background checks ensure that every candidate will possess all the required – and desired – skill sets.
   - **Interviewing:** Clarify how your process of behavioral and targeted interviewing techniques along with your honest feedback and customized advice throughout the interviewing process will safeguard a smooth and seamless onboarding.
   - **Acceptance:** Your participation in all of the aspects of the negotiation and offer process ensures that an offer gets excepted. Explain how you prevent candidate drop-out, guarantee a positive candidate experience, and prep candidates for day one of the job.

2. **Accuracy:** Clients want to know they can depend on you to present candidates who accurately portray the skills they are seeking. Only present candidates who:
   - Meet at least 90% of required skills
   - Are willing to accept salary window
   - Are motivated by more than money (such as advancement or work/life balance)

2. **Speed:** This is a critical and often touchy topic. Telling a client that you can deliver the ideal candidate inside too tight of a window insults their internal efforts and diminishes your credibility. However, on the other hand, if the process seems like it will take too long, your client may decide to use one of your competitors. Be honest and forthcoming about your expected timetable. Provide the client an idea of what could hold up the process, and always keep the lines of communication open and openly report your progress.
4. Documentation: It’s important that you’re able to share success stories, documented with facts, that support your claims. Use data to show clients:

- What’s your percentages of accepted offers/show ups?
- Do you have an average longevity of placed clients?
- Providing them a view into the depth of your talent base proves that you have access to candidates that they can’t reach
- Document how many people in your database are exclusive to you; that don’t even consider placing their names on major job boards or with your competitors
- Show that you spend time traditionally recruiting and on the phone talking to talent and vetting their abilities to do the job your client is looking to fill

Presenting Your Candidate
You’ve successfully marketed your services to a client, and you’ve found them a potential candidate. However, your job isn’t complete until the candidate signs the bottom line and shows up for work. When presenting a candidate, your submission must immediately answer the top three questions that the clients is going to ask:

1. Do they have the skills I requested?
2. Do I think we can afford them?
3. If I hire this candidate, will they stay?

Don’t send an email with an attached resume. Instead, put together an overview to summarize why the candidate is a great match for the open position. The overview will immediately inform the client of everything they need to know about your candidate and why they’re the perfect fit for the open opportunity.
Section One: Cover Page
Include the following:

- **Compensation**: Let the client know the salary your candidate is expecting, and make sure that it falls in the window they gave you.
- **Skills Match**: Give a brief overview of your candidate’s skill set, highlighting how the candidate matches the client’s top skill requirements.
- **Motivation**: Indicate the non-monetary reasons why your candidate is interested in the opportunity and why they will stay with the business long-term.
- **Availability for interview**: Include specific dates and times that your candidate is available for an interview. For example, John Smith is available for an interview Wednesday afternoon between 2:00 & 4:00 or Thursday morning between 8:00 and 10:00.

Section Two: Interview Highlights
Determine the questions that you asked during the interview process that focused on the client’s primary items of interest, and give a summary of the responses your candidate provided.

Section Three: The Candidate’s Resume
Insert your candidate’s resume here with these minor adjustments:

- Go through the resume and highlight the crucial points that show you found a candidate with the client’s skill and experience requirements. Only highlight a few words and phrases – enough to read easily; don’t overdo it or highlight whole sections
- If there are any places that you know will raise a red flag, add a note. This will ensure that the client has the right answer immediately instead of assuming the worst.

Section Four: References
Submit the completed reference forms that you received from the candidate’s list of references earlier in the process.
Conclusion

In today’s candidate-driven market, staffing companies and independent recruiters must be sales oriented. Developing a marketing strategy that considers the desires, values, goals and preferred communication channel of today’s top talent ensures your ability to make better matches. While developing a process that supports the skill requirements, pain points, and budgets of your clients will ensure your success as a recruiter.

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