



HOW TO NET THE CANDIDATES THAT GOT AWAY

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So much time, so much effort and so much expense goes into finding the right person for the right job. Not only from a recruitment company's perspective, but equally from the client's and the candidates'.

It all seems worthwhile when the successful candidate starts his or her first day in their new job. The client's happy (position filled), the candidate's ecstatic (position found) and supplier overjoyed (commission cheque in the post). Does it have to stop there? The simple answer is no, and you can start with the ones who didn't get the role.

Without clients, recruiters wouldn't need candidates, and without candidates it's pointless having clients. So the first rule is to treat them as equals as, after all, a candidate is very often a future client in the making.

The candidate experience during the recruitment process holds great weight and should never be ignored. A supportive, genuine, proactive and interactive experience goes a long way to building loyalty, trust and, later, referral and business opportunity.

A badly communicated one, full of false hope, computer-generated responses and lack of guidance, is never forgotten and can sometimes have a detrimental effect on future business.

The candidate is king. But what can an agency do to ensure all their candidates feel this way, even the unsuccessful ones? The basic niceties and the soft skills during the application process go a long way, but what additional support can an agency provide?

First, an agency needs to identify those candidates who regularly fall at the first hurdle. It's so easy to pass this group by with a polite 'thank you, but no thank you', but you might be missing a genuine sales opportunity.

Were they unsuccessful because they lacked the relevant skills, set their expectations too high or simply presented a poorly prepared CV? A recruiter's insight could prove invaluable, so much so that they might be willing to pay for one-to-one advice and guidance.

A surprising number of candidates have not been through the interview process for years. They may possess an outdated CV or have little idea of their true worth to another organisation. Skills and expertise they have honed

over the years are sometimes taken for granted, but to a new company they could make a world of difference.

And what about the candidates who made the shortlist but just failed to make the grade? Did it go wrong at the interview, was it merely a cultural mismatch or was it the findings of the psychometrics? Either way, the fact that they made it this far suggests they have the skills, talent and experience, but not necessarily in the right combination or with the right presentation. The reasons for failure at this level are normally provided by the consultant, but offering some direction and coaching could be an option.

What would these candidates have given to enter the fray again, armed with the newly gained confidence borne from pertinent executive coaching and mentoring? Why shouldn't they look to their agency to lead them down this new career path of opportunity? They could be re-routed in a direction even better suited to their skills not considered before, which might generate an even higher fee.

This all adds up to a lot of hard work directed at the less obvious revenue-generating part of a recruiter's business. Traditionally, the greatest effort is made in identifying and winning new clients, and then to nurture and develop the relationship with value-added services later. Using these same methods on candidates can bear rich fruit. Your valuable assets have just become even more valuable.