

Introduction

In grammar school, I was encouraged by my teachers to write stories or poems because I talked too much in class. Who could have predicted that talking too much and my love of writing would lead me to the recruiting profession, teaching and training other recruiters, and writing this book?

One of the best decisions I made many years ago was to enter the recruiting profession. I had become a single parent and knew sales was the only profession that offered unlimited earning potential. Up until then, I had been employed as a real estate broker, but with interest rates over 20 percent, homes were not selling. I decided to pursue a different sales career and had heard that employment agencies had access to jobs not advertised. It was a different time, and women were seen in four primary roles: secretary, nurse, teacher, or homemaker. It didn't help that I typed over 100 words per minute due to my piano training. As a result, I was asked by every recruiter "How fast can you type?" even though I was seeking a sales position.

I can remember how defeated I felt when I was told I had no sales ability and was destined to be a secretary. I knew I could not support my daughters on a secretarial salary and knew my ex-husband would provide no financial support. I was 28 years old and scared to death but decided to double-mortgage my home and open an employment agency. I vowed to treat everyone the way I would want to be treated, listen to understand their priorities, and treat them with respect. I also vowed I would never limit career opportunities for women to four traditional roles and worked especially hard helping single moms who found themselves in a similar situation to mine. In fact, the first three employees I hired were moms who were the sole supporters of their families.

The name of my first company was Sunshine Employment because I wanted to put "sunshine into the lives of the people I represented."

My competition were all men, and most of them had tested my typing and told me I couldn't sell. I had proven I could sell in the real estate profession, and rather than let others' opinions define me, I adopted the attitude of "just watch me." However, even though I was working long hours and putting my best efforts into my new business, I almost proved them right. I struggled for almost a year and finally realized recruiting was much different than real estate. I needed training, or I might lose my business.

I opened my business pre-internet or YouTube, and the information that I could find in books provided an overview of recruiting but didn't teach how to establish a successful recruiting firm. I reached out to other business owners in the recruiting profession, but no one was willing to mentor me. Out of desperation, I called the National Association of Personnel Services (NAPS) and asked if they provided training. They shared details of their annual conference that would be held in the fall, but I didn't know if I would still be in business by fall. Realizing I needed training before their conference, they suggested I attend a one-day training event in Chicago presented by a well-known trainer in the recruiting profession, Tony Bruno. Throughout the day of training, I realized there were recruiting and client development processes that I needed to learn. I invested in Tony's training manual and tapes, which also included scripts and forms. Hearing him in person and most importantly implementing the processes he taught turned my company around.

I made a commitment to a lifetime of learning and attended the NAPS conference every year. Ironically, years later I served on the board of directors and became the chair of the board of NAPS. I was also contracted by TechServe Alliance to create a certification program of best practices for recruiters and account executives who place IT, engineering and accounting professionals, and contractors. I speak at NAPS and TSA every year and value my affiliations with these associations.

To me, recruiting is so much more than merely a profession. Recruiting is a calling that appeals to people who are passionate about having a positive impact on the lives of others. I found it very rewarding to help companies achieve their goals and objectives by providing them with the best talent. At the same time, I helped the

candidates I represented advance their careers, which not only impacted my candidates but also the people they loved. It's extremely fulfilling to improve the quality of my life by helping others improve theirs. It became obvious early in my career that next to good health, money has the greatest impact on a person's life. Each time I helped negotiate a higher compensation package for one of my candidates, I knew it improved the quality of their life and provided them with more options. When you have money, you have choices; when you don't, your choices are limited.

I was once contacted by the Texas Association of Personnel Consultants to train in various cities. A few days before I flew to Texas a hurricane hit Houston, so instead of going to Houston first, I would fly there last. When I was driving from the airport to my hotel, I saw hundreds of people who had lost their homes sleeping outside. When I arrived at the Hyatt Hotel, there were also many families in the lobby waiting for a room. It hit me that the people who had money were waiting for a hotel room, while those who didn't were sleeping outside and had limited options. This experience made me more committed than ever to my profession. I knew I was helping people improve their incomes and live the life they deserved to live. I wanted the candidates I represented to have more options when faced with life's issues.

When I travel for work, I'm often asked what I do for a living. My response is always the same: "I change lives for the better." From my response, many people assume I am employed in one of the typical helping professions, such as teaching, social work, or coaching. While most people wouldn't consider recruiting a helping profession, I think it is. In working with clients and candidates, I find myself teaching hiring authorities how to conduct a job interview, providing career advice and coaching to candidates, and even counseling clients or candidates who have run into obstacles in their search for the perfect candidate or job opportunity. I also learned how important it was to fine-tune my listening skills. Technology has dramatically changed the way people communicate, with many people choosing a text over a conversation. When I position myself as the best listener in the lives of my clients and candidates, I do a better job for them and create lifetime relationships that benefit them, as well as myself.

In my 30 years as a recruiter, I've made many mistakes. Many of those mistakes were avoidable, costly, and often limited my success. In retrospect, I see those mistakes as valuable moments of learning but don't want others in the recruiting profession to make the same mistakes. (Later in my career, I realized it's much smarter and less costly to learn from the mistakes of others!)

I wrote this book to share what I have learned throughout my career so I can help those in the recruiting or talent acquisition professions avoid pitfalls and successfully fill more requisitions with the best talent. If you're new to the recruiting profession, my hope is that this book will help you avoid some of the lessons that I learned the hard way. If you're an experienced recruiter, my hope is that this book will provide you with additional tools and techniques that can help you be more successful. If there's one thing I know for sure, things will continue to change due to technology. That is why I've personally made a lifetime commitment to learning and trying new techniques, so I can help others achieve an even greater level of success.

Like me, I'm sure you seek to keep updated on our profession by reading books about recruiting, taking online courses, or attending conferences. In preparing to write this book, I reviewed many books, articles, and courses. While there is an abundance of information about recruiting online, in books, and through other resources, I find myself often cringing at some of the content. In one article I read, the author was advising recruiters to establish "candidate and hiring authority control." Can you remember what happened the last time someone tried to control you? Or, if you're a parent, have you ever tried to control your children? The results are usually not positive. I believe we have a responsibility as recruiters to establish rapport based on trust, and trust is something you must earn by your actions. It's about consistently doing your job ethically and responsibly and being a true advocate for the candidates you represent.

I was also surprised at how few sources address the potentially negative impact, as well as the benefits, of technology on our profession. When I entered this profession, there were no applicant tracking systems, customer relationship management systems, or social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, or LinkedIn. There were also

relatively few job boards, so all applicant searching was done by running classified ads, referrals, or cold calling. At that time, recruiting was primarily a high-touch relationship-building process. As the years went by, I witnessed recruiting become less and less high touch and more and more high tech.

While I believe the various types of technology we use in recruiting are extremely helpful, I am discouraged by the many clients and candidates who hide behind technology, using texting, voicemail, and email when a phone call or an in-person meeting would be more effective. Recruiting technologies can enhance efficiency, but they don't replace the importance of high-touch relationship building. After all, computers don't fill requisitions—people do! When a hiring process is too automated, very qualified candidates can be screened out by automated systems screening for keywords. The human touch and input are critical in the hiring process, if your goal is to present the best talent who not only get hired but will become engaged and retained employees.

How this book is organized

In a candidate-driven market, time is of the essence. In Chapter 1, I address how a company's hiring process can either help or hurt their recruiting efforts. I outline suggestions how recruiters can play a key role in helping update the five aspects of the hiring process where many companies waste the most time and energy—job requisitions, hiring parameters, performance objectives, the interview process, and candidate appraisal. I realize you may not be able to personally implement the changes, but if you position yourself as a workforce/workplace expert to individuals involved in the hiring process, you can encourage others to initiate change that will improve the hiring process.

Recruiters can present the best candidates who are the perfect fit for an opportunity, but if companies have an outdated or inefficient hiring process, those delays could result in losing the perfect candidate. The best candidates know they are in demand and need only reach out to their network to identify other competing job opportunities.

An updated hiring process that is lean and efficient can help your hiring managers interview and hire the best talent. If you're a third-party recruiter, you have the added challenge of working with many clients who each have a specific hiring process. Position yourself as a workforce/workplace expert who can share facts to prove how their hiring process is hindering their efforts to attract top talent. When they experience improved results, you elevate the relationship you have with your clients.

Hiring authorities expect us to identify the best talent, not just candidates in an active job search who normally only represent about 15 percent of the global talent pool. In Chapter 2, I address how to effectively identify and communicate with the best talent. I'm always surprised to find out that many recruiters have resorted to "posting and praying" versus proactively recruiting top talent. When I'm training recruiters, I always hear the same complaint—candidates are hard to find. A candidate-driven market is very good for individuals in the recruiting profession. In fact, there has never been a better time in history to be a recruiter because of the global shortage of top talent. If it were simple to hire top talent, your services would not be needed. However, you can't only represent candidates who are answering website postings or job board ads. You must recruit the best talent who are often currently working (these are called passive candidates) but would consider a new opportunity if it represents their next career move. In fact, when I'm speaking to audiences of hiring authorities, I'm often asked "When did recruiters stop recruiting?" It's the recruited passive candidates whom hiring authorities prefer to hire.

In Chapter 2, I help you learn how to identify high performers, where to find them using high-tech and high-touch methods, and how to communicate with them in order to pique their interest to consider other opportunities. If you are currently just texting or emailing candidates because you believe they don't want to talk with you, this chapter is for you. I reveal how to communicate with prospective candidates so that they realize the benefit of talking to you. Part of being a good communicator is knowing when and how to listen. Listening enables you to hear what is most important to

your candidate and ask the questions that will reveal their long-term goals and motivations. Having this information will enable you to advocate for them during your recruiting efforts.

If you haven't recruited passive candidates before, I share some sample scripts for your initial conversation as well as a few scripts on how to overcome candidate objections. Early in my career, I hung up when I heard objections because I viewed them as obstacles. Later in my career, I learned objections were a request for more information or a buying sign. In order to recruit the most qualified candidates, you must be great at overcoming objections. I also provide some guidance for how you can effectively overcome the most common candidate objections.

Chapter 3 will teach you how to interview to hire or place the best possible talent. To interview well, you need to understand what information you are looking for so that you can ask the best questions. In this chapter, I outline five key objectives of interviews so that you can create structured interview questions that will surface the information that will enable you to make the best hiring decision. You first need to understand the reason why the position is available, which means finding out what problem the hiring authority is looking to solve by filling this position.

You also need to learn what is most important to the candidates you represent and if they would be a good fit for the opportunity, hiring authority, and company culture. You will also learn to eliminate emotion and bias from your interview process. I've observed recruiters screening in a candidate who was like them and screening out candidates who were not, without realizing they had any bias. Whether they screened a candidate in or out, they could justify their decision. I've also seen candidates who were phenomenal interviewers but failed miserably once hired. Let's face it, interviews are not comfortable for most people unless they have sales experience or are job-hoppers with lots of interviewing experience. Those are not necessarily the best candidates to fill your requisitions.

Throughout my entire career, I've consistently changed the way I interview to align with changes in the job market and talent pool. I outline a structured four-round interview process to help you

evaluate and compare candidates quickly and fairly. Instead of simply focusing on skills, experience, and stability, I show you an effective process to accurately identify soft and transferrable skills.

Chapter 4 focuses on the importance of time and timing in the recruiting process. I learned early in my career that recruiting is all about timing-timing-timing. It didn't take me long to realize that we have people on both sides of our process who often change their minds, priorities, and time frame. I have had candidates call me on Sunday night and tell me they decided the timing wasn't right for them to start their job the next day. I'm not sure whether it was harder knowing my candidates decided not to accept the job or sharing this disappointing news with my hiring authority.

As technology has allowed us to find candidates faster, hiring authorities have increased their expectations and expect us to find the best talent faster than at any other time in history. I reveal how to balance the challenge of aligning your candidate's timing with that of your hiring authority. This chapter will also help you anticipate other timing obstacles that can slow down your recruiting process, such as being a few months from becoming vested in a pension fund, waiting periods to become eligible for benefits, higher costs for benefits, vacation time planned, or projects that need to be completed before your candidate can leave their current job.

In Chapter 5, I teach you how to extend offers that will be accepted. A job offer for a new position is so much more than a starting salary and start date. You are asking a candidate to trust you, to take a risk on a new position with a new company. Further, you are asking them to stop pursuing other possible job opportunities. In this chapter, I help you understand and overcome the challenges that you will confront from competitors looking to hire your candidate, from the candidates themselves, and from the hiring authority. You will learn how to prevent offers from being declined along with key strategies to eliminate declined offers.

Throughout my career, I've realized the importance of creating a formal offer letter, tracking metrics, and providing candidates with resignation assistance. I provide a sample offer letter as well as a sample resignation letter that you can use to help you extend job

offers that will be accepted. You will also learn how to confirm that your candidates have in fact handed in their two-week notice to their current employer.

In Chapter 6, I help you eliminate surprises and obstacles that can limit your success. I don't know about you, but I loved surprises before I was in the recruiting profession. Unfortunately, surprises in recruiting are usually not in our favor, which is why it's important to proactively anticipate issues.

I can vividly remember a candidate who was the perfect fit for a vice president of human resources position in Chicago. She accepted the job, sold her home, and registered her daughters in a charter school. When the moving van arrived, she told them she had changed her mind overnight and decided not to move to Chicago. She did mention to me during her interview that she had always wanted to start her own business, but as a single mom, she didn't feel she could take the risk. I obviously did not ask probing questions, or I would have known she was serious about becoming an entrepreneur. The hiring authority I was working with was extremely upset that I didn't know she would not be accepting the position. That was the day I made a commitment to listen better, address red flags head on, and never fall victim to "selective hearing." I hope you can learn from my mistake so you don't have a similar experience.

Surprises can be minimized by pre-closing, preparing, and debriefing both your candidates and hiring authorities as well as checking references. Technology will help you locate information quickly, but it's your ability to accurately pre-close, prep, and debrief your candidates and hiring authorities that will prevent you from being blindsided.

The candidate experience is more important than ever in this candidate-driven job market. Unhappy or dissatisfied candidates can reach hundreds or thousands of people in minutes on social media, which affects your ability to recruit the best talent. Paying attention to your candidates' goals and motivations goes a long way toward creating trust and rapport. Most recruiters don't do a good job of following up and nurturing candidates after they are hired or placed, which is the primary reason they don't receive referrals to other qualified candidates. In Chapter 7, I teach you how to nurture candidates

and how this helps you receive more referrals of top talent. I conduct a weekly job-seeker call for thousands of job seekers, and I always open the lines for their questions. Their questions have proven to me that most candidates feel we only care about our hiring authorities. If you place someone in a job and they never hear from you again, this perception is validated.

Because there is so much that can go wrong after candidates have handed in their two-week notice, it is important for recruiters to stay in close contact and do what they can to help nurture their candidates through their first day of employment. When starting a new role, candidates are leaving their comfort zone and embarking on a journey to the unknown. You can help them by appointing a mentor, establishing regular communications with them, and answering any questions they have after starting their new role.

We helped an HR generalist advance her career when she accepted a job as a director of HR with a Fortune 500 company. The new job represented increased responsibility and income, and most importantly, the company viewed HR as a strategic partner who could help them improve engagement and retention of talent hired. After just 45 days, during a follow-up conversation with our candidate, she asked us to find her another job because she was doing less than she had done in her generalist position at her last employer. When we reached out to the vice president of HR, she shared her recent diagnosis of cancer and admitted she was giving our candidate busywork as she focused on her health issues. We suggested that she lean on our candidate to lessen her workload and stress. Within three months, she was on medical leave, and our candidate assumed many of the responsibilities of her supervisor. In less than one year, our candidate was promoted to the vice president of HR and was grateful we had stepped in to resolve her initial frustrations. Your nurturing is critical if you want the candidates you recruit to become engaged and retained.

Nurturing your candidates will also provide you with other benefits. By nurturing your candidates and staying in touch with them, they are more likely to refer other qualified candidates to you. The reality is, if candidates you place in jobs aren't referring candidates to you, those candidates are being recruited by your competition. At

least 40 percent of the talent you represent should be referred. You will learn how to make that happen and how you benefit by obtaining referrals from your new hires. In addition, hiring authorities who are happy with their engaged employees are likely to hire you to fill other job requisitions.

Chapter 8 is focused on developing the mindset and skills necessary to be successful. As a recruiter, you will inevitably face challenges, delays, and frustrations that can make it hard for you to stay motivated and achieve balance. In my career, I have trained and managed thousands of recruiters and have found that the most successful maintain a positive attitude and mindset even during the most challenging times. It's not the recruiter who works the longest hours who succeeds, but the recruiter who has the right attitude and can learn from their mistakes. With a positive attitude, you can view challenges as opportunities to learn, handle difficult hiring authorities and candidates, and keep yourself focused on what is important so that you can better manage your time. Being focused also helps you hold yourself accountable. I show you the key metric that helps you define your success as a recruiter and hold yourself accountable and the importance of embracing change, which is a constant in this wonderful profession.

This book comes with online resources including sample offer letters, recruiting scripts, job requisitions, an interview scorecard, a listing of characteristics of best hires, and guidelines for a nine-step telephone interview process.

I'm hoping this book inspires you to make a lifetime commitment to the recruiting profession and that you spend your life also changing people's lives for the better. Share your passion about recruiting with me by connecting with me on LinkedIn. I'd love to hear your success story!

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