

SUCCESS AT AN INSURANCE COMPANY

We started on a one month trial. Our objective was to make one hire. We made three. We were extended beyond a year. We were asked to add a second recruiter.

But this story is about how we did it. The client was a Los Angeles insurance company. The jobs were mostly legacy information systems positions: COBOL, DB2, CICS...the hardest of the hard to fill.

34 hires in 35 weeks with a cost per hire of 7% of salary is testimony to this: we could find the candidates. The hard part was helping a company that had not systematized recruiting get organized and get the candidates hired.

First, we got all resumes to come to us as we distributed the resumes just to the managers who needed them. We took the candidates' telephone numbers off the resumes, so interviews had to be scheduled through us. Now candidates whom several managers wanted to interview would meet everyone in one interview trip to the company, not have to come back several times, as had been the practice.

We arranged for the company to participate in two job fairs: 9 hires. The company had been running the same ad in the Los Angeles Times every other week. We put in different jobs each week, depending on the need: 17 hires. We called technical friends and asked for referrals: 8 hires. Internet candidate databases were disappointing, yielding mostly inappropriate candidates.

We helped prioritize the openings and helped create a requisition approval system, so we only worked on jobs that were actually open...saving wasted hours and reducing the cost. We also helped with the contract programmers, reducing the time and aggravation associated with managing the vendors.

DISCIPLINING THE RECRUITING PROCESS

Sometimes discipline is what makes recruiting effective and powerful. Consider a client of ours in the South Bay of Los Angeles. They manufacture secure communications devices for spacecraft.

The company is project driven. Business was booming and they had a very high sense of urgency. We were brought in to make the recruiting process work better. Our goal: streamline the system so that more hires could be made more quickly and less expensively...and then get the hires made!

The client needed candidates with security clearances, so specialized employment agencies and contract vendors were used. Our consultant negotiated the agencies to a 20% fee and the contract vendors to a 35% margin. She also reviewed agency performance, reducing those used from 15 to only 4 high producers and then established an agency management procedure, including a first-in policy to eliminate disputes about who got paid when resumes were received from multiple sources.

Our consultant recruited, too. The Los Angeles Times, a Westech job fair and calling candidates who had been referred were productive. The Internet was not.

After 29 weeks, we had helped our client hire 40 new employees and consultants. Total cost to our client: 11.9% of salary and fees.

OVERCOMING ORGANIZATION ISSUES

Our client was a small, entrepreneurial company that had recently been acquired. The incumbent management was trying to maintain their independence from the parent. We were asked to help them find a new CFO.

Our consultant discovered that the parent and subsidiary management had quite different views of the job. The parent wanted a Plant Controller and the subsidiary wanted a CFO. Local management also wanted strategic financial planning skills, but corporate did not think a strategic skill set was necessary.

Local management did not know how great the disagreement was. Once we made them aware of the problem, they stopped the search for a week and talked the issue through with corporate management. The local managers prevailed. We would find stronger candidates.

After a comprehensive search, we presented two candidates. The favorite was about to be made a very attractive offer by a dot.com company that had also been pursuing him.

But we knew this candidate wanted stability and to be needed more than he wanted stock options. Our consultant arranged for the CEO to take the candidate to dinner after a day of extensive interviewing with our client's management. The CEO pointed out the stability of the company and helped the candidate see how much his talents were needed.

We also knew that management's offer was a little low in light of the competing offer. He asked for and received the flexibility to raise the offer if he needed to. As it turns out, he did. The original offer was increased slightly...and was accepted.

The search took twelve weeks. Two candidates were interviewed. One was hired. The position was filled for 14.6% of salary. What made the search successful was our consultant paying attention to detail: he discovered the differing views of the job. He took the time to discover and understand the motivations of the candidate and to craft an appeal to them. And he knew what it would take to get an acceptance.