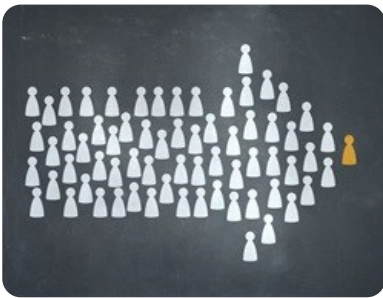


# Two biggest mistakes recruiters make - and how to fix these

In the opinion of Andy Preston - global authority on cold calling and new business sales techniques - one of the biggest mistakes recruiters make is focusing more on recruiting for positions than on attracting clients and candidates.

 By [Lia Marus](#) 17 Feb 2014



© VRD – Fotolia.com

"We've got to stop thinking about recruitment and start thinking about selling, persuading and influencing. And this is one of the biggest challenges I've seen with recruiters all-over the world. Recruiters look internally - with blinkers on," he said. The other mistake is not differentiating themselves from other recruitment providers. So are recruiters fighting a losing battle or is there something they can do to make themselves stand out?

Recruitment is one of the toughest sales jobs out there because you've got to sell on so many fronts at the same time, eg.:

- Firstly, you've got to sell the client into letting you help them to source candidates,
- The candidate must then be sold on the client, and
- Most importantly, you need to sell the client on the candidate.

## The difference between candidate-led and sales-led recruitment

A great many recruiters practise candidate-led recruitment, ie. they contact corporates with a sales pitch that goes something like this: "I've got this great candidate. Do you want to see him/her?"

In the short term, this approach is ok because it will probably get your candidate the job. However, it won't help you in the long term because if your track record with a particular company is based on the quality of candidates you provide, your track record could be superb at one time but if you happen to put forward a not-so-great candidate, your good track-record with that company suddenly means nothing.

However, if you follow a sales-led approach with your clients, and focus on the relationship you build with them rather than the quality of your candidates, a little mistake won't hurt your relationship.

## The client is more powerful than ever before

During the recruitment process, the HR department of a particular company will go to a number of recruitment providers to ask them if they would be able to provide them with the candidates they require.

However, chances are that if they don't have a preferred recruitment service provider they will approach a number of recruitment companies with the same request. This means that the HR representative is in control and is in a position to dictate costs.

## **In the future recruitment will be about differentiation**

In other words, your client will need to think that your offering is worth paying top dollar for because you provide something that all the other recruitment companies out there don't:

At a recent international recruitment conference, one of the high-profile speakers took the home pages of the websites of five recruitment companies and blanked out the header and footer so the audience couldn't identify which company was which. He then put each of these five home pages on the projector, in front of the audience, and asked them to identify each company based on the text of the home page. The result? Hardly anyone could identify the companies correctly.

## **What does this mean?**

Most recruiters' offerings are the same and as such, when they phone potential clients these individuals will say to themselves: "This company/individual doesn't offer anything different." And the next thing that will come out of their mouths is: "Give me your best price."

Andy puts it very well: "People don't value you because you have a differentiation problem: if the buyer doesn't believe that you're different there's no need to pay more for your services."

## **The buying decision is a struggle between price and relationship**

It comes down to the fact that you have to try and overcome clients' objections to price and/or your relationship with them or their relationship with another service provider to get a foot into their company.

In this risk-averse economic climate, if you present the least risky scenario in a situation people will be more inclined to go for it. So a possible solution to gaining recruitment business in this risky environment is to minimise risk.

## **How do you minimise risk?**

Andy suggests that one of the best ways of minimising risk for your clients is to get testimonials from your existing clients about the level of service that you gave them so you can put potential clients' minds at rest. But remember that the more details you have in your testimonials the better. For example: "Mrs P from Port Elizabeth" doesn't have as much of an impact as "Mrs Elaine Potgieter, HR manager at XYZ Company in Port Elizabeth" does.

To end off, he couldn't stress enough the importance of using LinkedIn in your recruitment business. This is especially true of LinkedIn testimonials. The reason why these testimonials are so much more credible is that the name of the person giving the recommendation is hyperlinked to their own profile so that, for example, you're being recommended as a writer, having one of your clients write a testimonial for you will be of more value than one of your friends because your client will be able to write a true account of the work you did for him/her - and thus what a client in a similar position will experience.

ABOUT LIA MARUS

Lia Marus is the editor of HR Pulse, which is an online HR publication published by ITWeb. She has a BA in French, Italian and Linguistics from UCT, an MA in translation from Wits and a Postgraduate Diploma in Management from the Wits Business School. She is currently studying towards her LLB through Unisa.  
View my profile and articles...

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>