



Follow Up and Cash Flow

Most recruiters ignore the huge cash flow potential with follow up. The concept of following up gives most recruiters the impression of low-level tasks that can be delegated to a paper questionnaire. It is perceived to have no cash value because it does not contribute to cash in to the office.

Consider this: following up with candidates and clients not only gives you credibility and helps to build your brand, but it can be an easy way to get easy business. Think in terms of low hanging fruit. Make contact with those who you already know and have relationships with. Following up gives you an excuse to do just that. Following up has a prime spot on the selling tool belt.

Recently I received an email from a recruiter with Suzanne Robert's company, Accountant Profile, in St. Paul, Minnesota. The recruiter wanted to know what I've seen in the industry as far as standard follow-up forms and questionnaires, wanting to use the information as a marketing tool and also as a way to gather real data on the success of their placements. Brilliant, I thought when I received the question. The concept of following up and using that information as a marketing tool makes not just good business sense, but can help build a brand as well.

By following up with candidates (and with clients) after the placement, you show your clients and prospective clients three things:

- 1) That you actually care about the long term success of the placement.
- 2) That you have a specific "system" integrated into your search process to preserve their fee investment.
- 3) That you client feels like he or she is getting their money's worth out of the deal: long-lasting value.

Here's how to do it.

1. Develop a formula for following up after the search. I call my own follow up procedure my "Systematic Follow Up Process." I actually gave my follow-up process a fancy sounding name so that I could put it in my steps of the placement process, and I use that as a marketing tool when selling my services. I would tell prospective clients that I would follow up with candidates on the following schedule:

- a. on the day they started
- b. two weeks later
- c. on their one month anniversary
- d. every month for a quarter
- e. every quarter for a year
- f. and once a year forever.

By having a specific system in place, it gave me credibility. They assumed that I was a professional and that I had a system. Cha-ching, baby. That simple follow up system, and the fact that it is associated with my brand by having a real name that I put in my marketing materials, has won me business.

2. Compile a form or a questionnaire that will be given to candidates and clients. This is probably better to be done over a telephone call so that you can make real contact, again helping to solidify your relationship and build your brand. Start with the following questions:

Who did you most appreciate during this process?
Who were the other firms you talked with?
What impressed you most about our firm?
What impressed you the least about our firm?
What steps of the search process were most effective?
What steps were not?
What parts of our process could have been improved?
Was our feedback and response to your needs timely?
Did we expose you to the right opportunities?
Why did you choose to work with our firm?
Why did you choose to hire on with our client?
How could we have served you better?

And finally:

On a scale of one to ten, ten being the highest, where would you rate our effectiveness in managing the search process and meeting your needs as the selected candidate in this process?

You can modify these questions for clients and customize them to the needs of a client.

3. Keep records. Keep the information in your files to tabulate and measure against your searches. Out of 100 placements, what percentage of satisfied candidates did you have? How many were happy they made the move? This will then become a critical marketing tool. This measured data of your outcomes will give third party credibility to your prospective clients on how effective you are at managing the search process. You will then be able to transition from a "selling" mode to a "telling" mode. "Let me tell

you about what 98% of our placement candidates said about our search process." "Let me tell you why 99% of our clients said they would choose to work with us again." Prospects will only believe most of what you tell them about yourself. They'll believe almost everything of what others tell them about you.

With this concrete irrefutable track record of data, you can develop a "triple win" to following up:

1. Your client is happy. They are happy that you are preserving their fee investment.
2. The candidate is happy. They perceive that you care about them.
3. You're happy. You're building relationships with warm contacts, having a business "excuse" to keep in touch with people, and assembling data that could potentially bring you more business.

So the next time you grumble about "low-level activities" like following up, think in terms of how much it could potentially impact your immediate cash flow.

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