

# ***SECRETS OF A CORPORATE HEADHUNTER:***

**“The Top 10 Deadly Recruiting Mistakes Hiring Managers  
Can’t Afford to Make in Today’s Competitive Marketplace!”**

“Some of us will do our jobs well and some will not, but we will all be judged by only one thing – the result.” – Football Coach Vince Lombardi

This paper describes how Hiring Managers and Executives can take control of their recruiting process and successfully compete in the new War for Talent. It identifies the Top 10 Deadly Recruiting Mistakes and what you can do to avoid them. Hiring and retaining the best talent available is the only **‘result’** worth having in today’s competitive marketplace. Read this now before your competitors do.

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## **Introduction**

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This paper is written for the overworked and stressed out Hiring Managers of the world. Its purpose is to shed some light on how and why the hiring process can go so seriously wrong. It will show how you can regain control and put the odds back in your favor. The hiring process in most corporations is badly broken and in need of immediate repair. Hiring Managers don't need anymore stress and wasted time interviewing candidates that are not even close to being a fit for their job openings.

Why would you want to spend time learning about the Top 10 Deadliest Recruiting Mistakes? Because, done correctly, the hiring process can be far less frustrating and down right profitable for both you and your company. It can bring you qualified candidates who are eager to hear about your company and your job opportunities. This translates into more success for you as a Manager.

The process of locating, contacting, interviewing, hiring and retaining top talent for your projects is a complex and dangerous one. How many times have you invested significant time and money into courting candidates only to have them turn your offer down at the last minute? Or, candidates you were hot to interview, ended up joining your competitors instead. The #1 comment heard from highly qualified candidates is, "I never heard back from you guys so I moved on with my job search." Great! Now you get to start the recruiting process all over again.

There are about 21 or so distinct steps in the hiring process. If you mess up any one of them, you can lose a great candidate and end up settling for a mediocre one. You lose, your department loses and your company loses.

This paper highlights the 'Top 10 Deadly Recruiting Mistakes' most hiring managers make when hiring for a critical position on their team. Some of these mistakes are seemingly out of your control but we'll see at the end if shedding some light on them doesn't bring more control back to you. In recruiting, knowledge is power.

A USA Today/Gallup poll survey conducted in March of 2006 confirmed that 59 percent of Hiring Managers said finding qualified candidates to fill their current and future openings was their #1 biggest headache.

So, how is your recruiting program working for you right now? If it's not bringing a steady stream of well qualified candidates to you, it's not working well enough. It is our sincere hope that reading and acting on the suggestions in this Special Report can change that.

## ***The Top Ten Deadly Recruiting Mistakes***

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The vast majority of Hiring Managers spend their valuable time sorting through stacks of useless resumes. Most of these candidates are not even close to having the necessary qualifications and experience to fill their open positions. The resumes stream in and are scanned for 'keywords' by people in the H.R. department who know very few details about your job openings. They are basically just trying to keep up with an avalanche of resumes from the unemployed and the underemployed. This situation does nothing for the Hiring Manager but cause him or her more stress.

So here we have the top 10 mistakes most Hiring Managers have to deal with when in the recruiting mode. You will hire and retain better candidates if you will read them, understand them and work on correcting them. Then, you will be free to get back to managing your projects and enjoying the other parts of your life. Correct just these 10 mistakes alone and you will have placed yourself far above other Hiring Managers who continue to put up with them.

Recruiting in a competitive marketplace is never going to be easy – but it can be far less frustrating than it currently is.

## **Deadly Recruiting Mistake #1: Sourcing Talent**

**Your recruiting department only knows one or two ways to 'Source' highly qualified candidates.**

**The problem:** You can't hire the best people if you never get a chance to meet them. Most recruiting departments resort to posting jobs on the major job-boards, running an ad in the newspapers and maybe using the employee referral program.

The candidates reading the job-boards and newspaper ads are the same ones who clutter your desk with their resumes.

Most employee referral programs have grown old and tired and don't work very well anymore. Don't bet your project's future success on this option.

Today's competitive marketplace means Recruiters have to get creative when searching for potential new employees. Someone has to spend quality time exploring the multitude of niches where the best qualified candidates hang out.

This is Step #1. Great recruiting starts with great Sourcing.

**What you can do:** You need to impress upon your Recruiter the fact that most highly qualified candidates are not out looking for a new position. They must be located and contacted using the following methods to name just a few:

- Cold calls made to the leaders, movers and shakers in your industry looking for recommendations. A good Recruiter can compile a list of potential candidates and start filling the pipeline in a short period of time.
- Warm calls to your current employees to get names of people they have worked with in the past or know about from competitors. Your current employees attend conferences and professional trainings. They read their professional journals and they know more qualified potential candidates than most Recruiters.
- The Recruiter should go to where the best candidates are: conferences, trade shows, and professional meetings of all kinds. They are relaxed and enjoying themselves and are open to being approached in a professional manner to hear about your company and your opportunities.
- On-line communities are hot and growing everyday. Just ask your current employees where they hang out on-line then go there and check it out. You need a professional attitude to pull this one off so don't send the newbies.
- Use of outside third-party search firms. When time is critical and your projects are stalled due to lack of talent, give your job-orders to a professional search firm that specializes in recruiting the types of candidates you're looking for.

There are many more sources of candidates. Great Recruiters know where they are and will be actively searching these niches for you. This is the only way you'll meet the level of candidates you need to hire.

## **Deadly Recruiting Mistake #2: The Initial Contact**

**After a qualified candidate is sourced, most corporations send their weakest players out to make that first critical contact.**

**The problem:** First contact with a potential new candidate is critical for several reasons; the candidate probably isn't thinking of looking for a new job, the phone call will probably be viewed as an unwelcome interruption during their work day, and it's most probable they won't know much, if anything, about your company.

So, what do most corporations do regarding this initial contact? They put the new Recruiter just out of college with a degree in Sociology on it. They have no idea what to say to this person let alone how to persuade them to give you some time so you can discuss your company and its growing opportunities. Nine out of ten times the candidate shuts the Recruiter down quickly and the Recruiter retreats back into their shell. Another candidate lost and another position remains open.

The best candidates need to be wowed if you hope to get their attention and get them interested enough to consider your proposal. They must be given a reason, and quickly at the very beginning of the recruiting call, to want to hear more of what you have to say. They need to be sold the sizzle of both the company and the job.

Most employed candidates, passive candidates as they are called, don't have an up-to-date resume, have a deep hatred of interviewing, and will not answer any questions until they are motivated to know more about your company and the specific job opening.

They must be sold on the opportunity with your company. Your Recruiter is the person who needs to do the selling. A lot of candidates today are open to hearing about new positions but they need a clean and exciting presentation of the facts so they can decide to pursue it or not.

**What you can do:** The Hiring Manager cannot be expected to make the initial phone call. So, you need to work with your Recruiter to give them all the information they need so they can answer questions and objections quickly and professionally.

You can also share your enthusiasm and excitement about your projects with the Recruiter.

And the last but most important thing you can do is to talk to your Recruiter about their skills in making this initial contact. They must learn to never take 'No' as a final answer. This is the #1 trait of all great Recruiters.

### **Deadly Recruiting Mistake #3: The Qualifying Phone Interview**

**Potential Candidates are not properly qualified by a professional Recruiter during the first phone interview.**

**The problem:** Most internal Recruiters are worried that if they ask the hard questions the candidate will retreat. The truth is many unqualified candidates make it through the phone screening and end up wasting everyone's time during live interviews.

**What you can do:** The Hiring Manager or his Recruiter must elicit the following information during the initial phone interview to determine not only qualifications but motivation to show up and do the work.

- Educational credentials
- Candidate's personal criteria for type of work he or she prefers
- Level of enthusiasm for current work
- Preferences on size of company, environment and culture
- Geographic preferences
- Detailed examples of major accomplishments in comparable jobs
- Management, planning and organizational skills
- Team skills – ability to work as a team member
- Future potential
- True motivations behind reasons for wanting to change jobs
- Perceived level of communication skills
- Salary and benefits requirements
- And the most important question to ask: "Is there anything we have not covered during this call I should know about that would prevent you from joining our company if you are made an attractive offer?" Get this answer now and not weeks later after the expense and time involved in a live interview.

Newly sourced candidates are filled with legitimate objections on why they are not available to look at your company and your job openings. Someone must not only qualify them to see if they're a solid fit but must also counter each objection with a solid reason why they should interrupt their work life and pay attention to what your company has to offer.

Remember, this phone interview is usually done before you have a resume or any detailed information on the candidate. Your Recruiter has to quickly develop rapport with the candidate in order to solicit the information you need to qualify him.

Once qualified the Recruiter must then persuade the candidate to move to the next step by selling him on your company and your opportunity. This is delicate work and must be done correctly in order to motivate the candidate to come in for a live interview.

### **Deadly Recruiting Mistake #4: Preparation for the Live Interview**

**The candidate is not properly prepared, has second thoughts and cancels the live interview.**

**The problem:** A lot of candidates will start getting 'buyer's remorse' immediately after agreeing to a live interview. All the usual objections and perceived barriers will start raising their ugly heads. This is no time to leave your potential new hire blowing in the wind and wondering if he made the right decision.

**What you can do:** This is the time to mail-out any company information that the candidate would find valuable; stock reports, press releases, newspaper articles on your company, etc. Keep an up-to-date file on company milestones.

You should also throw in some information on your geographic area, schools, recreation, arts and entertainment centers, etc. Your friendly local Chamber of Commerce will be more than happy to show you what they've got and even mail it out for you.

Remember, decisions concerning any sort of relocation usually are made by the entire family and not just the candidate. Make sure to include information the husband, wife and kids will find interesting and exciting about your city and surrounding areas.

Your Recruiter should check in with the candidate by phone and email as often as necessary to see if there are any new questions to answer or problems to be dealt with. Candidates do get second thoughts and if left alone will call and cancel the interview. This is one reason to cut the time between initial contact and the live interview down to a minimum. You want to measure it in days – not weeks.

The minimum information every candidate should have prior to the interview:

- Detailed directions on how to get to your building and where to enter.
- Names and titles of people who will interview them and what specific areas they will be questioning them about.
- The major problems the candidate will be working on if hired.
- A link to the company's website.
- Any other information you can think of that will make the interview more productive for everyone concerned.

Your goal should be to get as much out of every live interview as possible. Preparation makes it easy for everyone to concentrate on what's most important – the work to be done.

### **Deadly Recruiting Mistake #5: The Live Interview**

**You fail to get the candidate totally excited about your company, its products and the work he or she will be doing and how it adds to the company's big vision.**

**The problem:** Your H.R. department treats the interview as an interrogation of the candidate. Their job is to find reasons to knock the candidate out of contention. Their questions are aimed at finding out the following:

- Is the candidate a convicted felon, sexual pervert, drug user, heavy drinker, etc?
- Has the candidate ever sued a past employer and why?
- Has the candidate filled out the job application in full?
- And finally, can we hire this person so we can make our quota this month?

The answers to some of these questions are important obviously. The problem is the candidate can be intimidated, stressed out and feel that he is not respected when he arrives at your office.

**What you can do:** The interview between the candidate and the Hiring Manager is where the real magic takes place. It's:

- a meeting between equals to discuss mutual benefits.
- an opportunity to share your passion and excitement for your various projects and the work you do.
- an opportunity to focus on the problems that need to be solved and the work that needs to be done.
- a chance to experience the candidate's enthusiasm and motivation to do the work you need to get done – or lack of.
- a chance to sell the job opening and the company to the candidate so they leave pumped up and excited about the opportunity.

So, as a Hiring Manager, you should be excited about having interviews. It's a time to 'talk shop' with another talented person who can join your team and help you reach your work goals. You can let H.R. and the others do their thing without worrying that they will turn your candidate off to the position. Your interviews will show the candidate what the day-to-day work will be, how it fits into the company's big picture and the potential for career growth for everyone.

## **Deadly Recruiting Mistake #6: Immediate Candidate Debriefing**

**The candidate is not thoroughly debriefed immediately after the live interviews.**

**The problem:** Your Recruiter doesn't properly debrief the candidate after the interviews. The candidate leaves the building with a hundred different thoughts running through his head. On the drive back to the airport, hotel or home he realizes he didn't get answers for all his questions. He might find he's a bit confused about various areas of responsibilities or issues concerning the work he's expected to do, or the benefits package, or a dozen other areas.

**What you can do:** Your Recruiter must take this time to gain all the information he can so you can control the closing of the candidate if an offer is going to be made. The interviews are over and the candidate can relax a bit. This is the time to cover the following points in detail:

- Open the meeting up on a broad base and answer any questions that have bubbled up since the interviews.
- Clear up any confusion the candidate might have on any issues concerning the work, company benefits, geographic location, relocation, etc.
- Get a clear understanding of how the candidate feels the interviews went. Make a list of what he liked best. And, this is the time to hear all the negatives he might share with you also.
- How did he like the Hiring Manager? Other project members? The work environment? The company culture? You'll need to know the answers to all these questions if you move forward and make an offer to this candidate.
- The Recruiter should try a trial close by asking: "Are there any reasons you can think of right now that would keep you from accepting an attractive offer from us?"
- Ask, "Have you discussed the relocation issue with your family? How do they feel about it?" Are they motivated to move or is this going to be deal killer down the road?

Your goal is to bring the candidate's visit to a positive conclusion and gather all the information you need to make an intelligent decision on what the next step should be.

The candidate should leave the debriefing meeting with a positive attitude towards the company and excited about moving forward.

### **Deadly Recruiting Mistake #7: The Due Diligence Step**

**You or your Recruiter fail to exercise sufficient due diligence after a successful interview and end up hiring the wrong person for the job.**

**The problem:** The first interview went well and everyone's excited about hiring the candidate onto the team. References aren't checked or they're rushed through in an attempt to save time. Background checks are skipped. No one has the time to carefully evaluate all the information gathered during the interviews and a second interview is considered a waste of time. The end result is you hire a candidate who has serious problems in his background and brings them into your new job.

**What you can do:** The first interview is over but now you must continue to be objective and follow through with the due diligence stage.

The first thing you must do is determine if more interviews are in order. Did everyone who needs to interview the candidate actually interview? Did your boss get to meet and interview the candidate? It's time consuming to pursue a second round of interviews but if there is any hesitation in your decision to hire then you should bring the candidate back and satisfy yourself and everyone involved that an offer is the correct next step.

Now is also the time for H.R. to perform all the reference checks and background investigations they normally perform. References need to be called and vigorously interviewed to uncover any negative data that might prevent a bad hiring decision. You must remain as objective as possible and dig into the candidate's background now before the decision to hire is made.

If the decision is made to bring the candidate back for a second interview, your Recruiter should call and tell the candidate there is serious interest in hiring him and the company always performs a rigorous background check on each candidate at this point. If the candidate verifies that everything stated on his resume and application is true and is looking forward to a second interview, then you have a serious candidate who is interested in joining your company. Any hesitation or retreat by the candidate at this condition should be viewed as a red flag.

Always perform your due diligence and you will greatly increase the odds of hiring the best candidates who will show up on their start-date and do the work they were hired to do.

## **Deadly Recruiting Mistake #8: Negotiating, Closing and Making the Offer**

**Your H.R. department doesn't know how to negotiate and close the candidate BEFORE making the official offer. The candidate turns down the offer and you are now in the worse position possible.**

**The problem:** The best candidates are not out looking for just another job. If they are interviewing, then they are looking for a better job with more career growth potential and more money. Your Recruiter has to have understood and addressed every concern the candidate has before making the formal offer. You have to know the candidate will say 'Yes' before making the offer in writing.

**What you can do:** There are several things you must do at this point to insure an acceptance of your job offer. There are entire books written on this subject and your Recruiter should be trained in the art of negotiating and closing offers but here are some highlights:

- You and your Recruiter need to get together before the offer is made and discuss the candidate and his requirements in detail. Is the company, the job, the salary and benefits package good enough to impress the candidate enough to say 'Yes' to the offer immediately. Make the best offer you can.
- Your Recruiter must have negotiated and closed the candidate on each point of the offer before committing it to paper.
- Has the candidate's family been closed on the offer and are they excited about any possible relocation involved?
- Is the H.R. department ready to move quickly on making the formal offer? Top candidates are not on the market very long at all. If you want them on your team, you must move fast.
- It is best to make the offer face-to-face if possible. This gives you the opportunity to actually see how the candidate reacts to the offer and another chance to address any problems immediately.
- Making the offer by phone or face-to-face is the time to restate what the company and the job position offers the candidate; a solid opportunity to join a growing company in a position that will stretch the candidate and help them to grow.
- Remember, you can't close them all. You will lose some top candidates no matter how good you are but you can minimize the damage by immediately returning to your pipeline of candidates and starting the process over again.

### **Deadly Recruiting Mistake #9: Coaching the Candidate through the Resignation Period**

**Your Recruiter fails to stay in touch with the candidate and to hold their hand through the difficult resignation period. The candidate either has second thoughts or accepts a counter-offer from their company. Again, you lose a top candidate and have to start over.**

**The problem:** Top candidates are being pursued by at least two companies at all times; your company and their current company. Their current company does not want to lose them to you and will fight aggressively to keep them on-board. The best candidates always get counter-offers and it's always easier for them to stay where they are than to pack up and leave.

**What you can do:** The resignation period is a dangerous time for you the Hiring Manager. Candidates will accept an offer but then have second thoughts if someone isn't there to encourage them and remind them of why they accepted your offer in the first place. And, if the candidate is as good as you think he is, you can almost bet there will be a counter-offer and heavy pressure to stay with his current company.

Here are a few direct actions you can take to insure the candidate makes it safely through the resignation period and reports to work on the assigned start-date.

- Your Recruiter has to make sure the time between the formal offer and the start-date is as short as humanly possible. Don't forget to negotiate this point in your favor.
- Keep the candidate mentally involved with your company during the transition period. This can consist of phone calls with the Hiring Manager or new team members to discuss current and upcoming projects. If the candidate is local, make sure to take him out to lunch to discuss company related business with team members if possible.
- Stay in touch with the wife or husband to see that the relocation issues are all going smoothly. This only takes a few minutes and can expose potential deal killers before they become lethal.
- The Recruiter should help the candidate write their resignation letter if they need help.
- Your Recruiter needs to coach the candidate on how to handle the counter offer and exactly what to say when the offer is made to them. Make sure they understand that managers don't like to have to bribe their people to stay.

The recruiting process isn't over until the candidate reports for work and is happily engaged in doing their new job. That's when recruiting turns to retention.

## **Deadly Recruiting Mistake #10: Welcoming and On-Boarding Your New Employee**

**Your orientation program is less than inspiring and leaves the new hire with feelings of confusion and a bit of “buyer’s remorse.”**

**The problem:** The candidate was wined and dined and treated extremely well during the recruiting phase. He or she came to think of your company as a well run, highly efficient machine and a great place to work. Then the orientation program, or lack of one, leaves them a bit confused and disoriented on exactly what they should do first and how to get comfortable in their new work space.

**What you can do:** Hiring managers can make the initial “first day on-board” experience a first class act by doing the following:

- The new hire should be greeted at the entrance whenever possible by the Hiring Manager. It might just be to say ‘Hello and welcome to the team’ and then turning them over to the H.R. people to process but the new hire won’t forget it.
- Every effort should be made to make sure their workspace is ready and waiting for them. All the information, help and equipment should be in place and ready to help them make a fast start on their new job.
- A short meeting with the Hiring Manager to go over the job expectations once again so he is reassured that any promises made about the job have been kept.
- Your Recruiter should stay in touch with all new hires to make sure any problems that arise are taken care of immediately. Retention should be a major goal for each new hire.
- Make sure there is clearly defined work to be done from the first day. Nothing is worse to a new hire than to be sitting at their new desk and not have work to do.

Your new hire orientation process should be smooth and fast and leave the candidate thinking he has joined a first class company that knows what it’s doing. The Hiring Manager working with the Recruiter can make this happen with a little care and attention to that critical first day.

## ***Some Final Thoughts***

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Hiring top talent must always be your #1 priority. The War for Talent is growing more heated each day and it can't be ignored if you want to stay competitive and grow within your industry.

Hiring great people is not brain surgery. You just need Recruiters who will do their jobs correctly so you can do yours. You need a Recruiter who will not make the above Deadly Mistakes so you can interview qualified candidates, hire the best and get on with your life.

The truth of the matter is if you want to interview and hire the best candidates to fill your job positions, then you need to hire the best Recruiters. You need Recruiters who are professionals and dedicated to building your company into one the best in the world.

Today's Hiring Managers cannot afford to put up with Recruiters who are poorly trained and barely motivated to excel at their jobs. That's why many of these Hiring Managers are hiring us to work with them to fill their most critical positions.

We are hired by some of the best companies in our industry because:

1. We are experts who know how to source, qualify and deliver top talent to our client companies. This is what we do best because we do it everyday.
2. We respond immediately to your hiring needs. We can have qualified candidates ready for live interviews in a period of weeks instead of months.
3. We work outside your company's bureaucracy and politics and can use recruiting techniques your internal recruiters don't even know exist or don't have the courage to use.

Simply call us at our phone number listed below to discuss your openings and to get our professional opinion on what it will take to fill your open positions now.

Thank you for your time and we appreciate your business:

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