

The Simple Brilliance of
ROBOCRUITER – Part 1

The Pre-Qualifying Technique

Some years ago, I had the opportunity to visit the Idaho location of a man whom I consider the best, most complete recruiter in the world. To protect his identity, I will simply refer to him by his first name, Dan. Those of you who know me know of whom I am speaking. I nicknamed him Robocruiter after the 1987 movie “Robocop—Part Man, Part Machine, All Cop.” Well Dan was Part Man, Part Machine, and All Recruiter.

One particular morning I was beginning my rounds of desk-level training in his office. I decided to start with Robocruiter. Dan began each day by making marketing calls. During those calls, when he would identify a potential client need, Dan would start to write down the Job Order (JO) information. But that’s when he did something I had never heard before. Dan would stop the Hiring Manager (HM) in the middle of taking the JO and say, “I think I can help you, but let me explain to you how I work.” When the HM would say that they had worked with recruiters in the past, Dan would say, “Well that’s fine, but you have never worked with me. I may be a little different than what you are used to.”

“Number One: My service charge is 30% of realistic first year’s earnings. It’s not negotiable. My time is as valuable as the next guy’s—and I’ll need your OK on this today because this will be the last time we will talk about that.”

“Number Two: I offer a 30-day guarantee. If the candidate doesn’t start to work, I will refund the service charge and, if he is terminated, or quits, in the first 30 days, I will credit my service charge toward the candidate’s replacement—and I’ll need your OK on this today because this will be the last time we will talk about that.”

“Number Three: I recruit people who are happy, well-appreciated, making good money and currently working and I entice them to move for a better opportunity (i.e., yours, if you give me the appropriate information to conduct the search). I will not present you job hoppers, job shoppers or rejects—those who are looking at ‘want ads’ in the newspaper or on the Internet. What this all means to you is that I won’t have a resume so don’t ask me to send you one because it will only slow down the process and possibly cause you to miss the opportunity of interviewing my highly qualified and desirable candidates while they are available—and I’ll need your OK on this today because this will be the last time we will talk about that.”

“Number Four: All offers need to come through me. I serve the function as a buffer and as an impartial third party during the offer process. Being utilized in this way, I can almost guarantee that an appropriate offer will be accepted—and I’ll need your OK on this today because this will be the last time we will talk about that.”

“Number Five: I will need to take an in-depth job order. This means that we will need to set up a time for me to call you back for this activity to take place—and I’ll need your OK on this today because this will be the last time we will talk about that.”

“Number Six: I will need to arrange a time that we can speak for feedback from the candidates about you and your company after the interview. Because you and I are both busy businessmen, we will need to set up an agenda for this post-interview meeting so that it can proceed quickly—and I’ll need your OK on this today because this will be the last time we will talk about that.”

“Number Seven: I will need to be able to contact you in a timely manner and so will need your home and mobile phone numbers should the need arise to reach you after hours. Also we will need to prearrange a time when we can talk (should the need arise) on a daily basis—and I’ll need your OK on this today because this will be the last time we will talk about that.”

“Is all of this clear?”

When Dan had hung up the phone, he looked up at me and could see by my expression (mouth hanging open, wide-eyed, etc.) that I was stunned by what I had just heard. He said “What?” I said, “Do you do that every time you write a Job Order?” And he said, “Yes, every time.” I said, “And it works?” He said, “Yes, always.” I said, “I can’t believe that the Hiring Managers agree with all of your demands.” He said, “Bob, you’re missing the point. I want them to disagree with me. You see, I know that most of the JOs I write will fall into the ‘Can’t Help’ category. I say what I say to edit those out. If a HM says they can’t work my way, I dismiss them professionally, hang up the phone, look to the heavens and thank my lucky stars that I found out on ‘day one’ that this was a ‘Can’t Help’ JO and not ‘day fifteen’ after I had spent my straight commission time on surfacing multiple qualified recruits, thereby sacrificing marketing time, only to find out that this HM had no intention of hiring in the first place.”

Ah, yes. I remember that conversation clearly. That was Robocruiter in action.

After this ‘sea change’ moment for me, I continued to travel and train and listen to top producing recruiters when I was in their offices. And do you know what? They all practiced, in one form or another, the pre-qualifying technique I first learned on that cold and snowy morning in Boise, Idaho from Robocruiter.

*“The Simple Brilliance of” is one in a series of articles focusing on ideas and techniques from some of the great thinkers, movers and shakers in the field of recruitment who Bob Marshall has had the privilege of meeting and discussing various topics over the past 25 years.

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