

# Crafting and Delivering an “Attention Grabber”

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For the last few years a few of my peers (in addition to many of my clients) have been focused on recruiting passive candidates within the financial services industry. Given the recent market turbulence, it is not uncommon for quality, proven professionals in this space to receive 5-10 calls/emails a day from recruiters.

This has only heightened the importance of crafting/delivering a compelling message [we call them “Attention Grabbers” (AG)] that distinguishes you from the competition, and ultimately - - gets you engaged with the top candidates in your market.

While there are many keys to “The Art and Science of Recruiting Passive Candidates,” I thought I would outline a few that have been instrumental in our latest successes when recruiting quality professionals in high demand.



1. **Remember the 30-second/90 word rule.** In Milo Frank’s book – “How to get your point across in 30-seconds or Less,” he discusses how humans ‘consume’ information and emphasizes that we have just ‘30-seconds’ to grab someone’s attention and/or make a point. Here are 2 keys to make sure your recruitment message is compelling, to the point and delivered (via email, voice mail, or catching them live) in 30-seconds or less.
  - First, I recommend role playing with your peers and/or leaving yourself a voice mail. (When leaving yourself a voice mail, time it, it may surprise you)
  - Second, try the, “90 words or less,” rule. If your email is 90 words or less, it is probably 30-seconds or less.
2. **Outline 1-3 compelling reasons why they should listen.** Most recruitment messages describe the skills you are seeking in a candidate, RATHER than the reason(s) someone would/should take a few minutes to check out a new opportunity. Don’t use trite, cliché, or often-used generic phrases like; “excellent career growth,” “uncapped compensation plan,” “flexible schedule.” They don’t work. Instead, insert a point that actually describes what you mean.
  - ***Instead of, “Excellent career growth,” Insert:*** The last 5 outstanding performers we hired into this position were promoted within 15 months from date of hire!

- **Instead of, “Uncapped Compensation Plan,” Insert:** Our top 10 performers in this role average \$130,000.
- **Instead of, “Flexible Schedule,” Insert:** Students – we will sit down with you each semester to craft a work schedule that fits nicely with your class schedule.

3. **Respect & remember you are contacting them unannounced.** If you are recruiting passive candidates that are not expecting your call/email, it is nice to be respectful of their time. Some phrases that “soften” the delivery of your message include:

- Email: Hi Dave. I apologize for emailing you unannounced. I have an excellent opportunity and was hoping you might be able to help me out.
- Catching them live: “Hi Bob: My name is David Szary and I am a recruiter with \_\_\_\_\_. I am sure you get calls from recruiters all the time but I have an excellent opportunity and was hoping you might be able to help me out . . . “

4. **Use an indirect, networking approach when contacting passive candidates.**

When contacting passive candidates (especially folks that work for your competitors), we have standardized an indirect, networking approach. Instead of the direct approach (“I would like to talk to you about an opportunity . . .”) we use phrases like:

- “I am networking with professionals in the industry and thought you might be able to help me out . . . “
- “If you know of anyone that might be interested in this opportunity, I would appreciate you passing my information along . . . “
- “If you know of anyone that fits this description, please let me know . . . “
- “I just started this search; any assistance you could provide would be greatly appreciated. Is there anyone in the industry well respected and connected that could help me with my search?”

Steven Covey tells the story of two folks chopping wood:

- One that works frantically all day chopping wood with a dull ax.
- One that takes precious time to sharpen his ax during the day.

Of course by the end of the day, the one that takes time to sharpen his/her ax ends up with the most chopped wood!

I relate this to crafting compelling recruitment messages. If you don’t take time to:

- Understand your candidates motives
- Craft (and edit) compelling messages
- Practice and role play

You are sourcing candidates with a “dull” ax.

Crafting and delivering recruitment messages is “an art AND a science.” And, the ideas presented above are just a few of the many keys/ways to successfully contact passive candidate!

As I mentioned in the Newsletter, if you would like another set of “eyes/ears” to help constructively critique your message(s), please contact me as if I was a candidate. I would be more than happy to help you review and critique your message!

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