



The Do's and Don'ts of Landing Your Next Strategic Hire

ACEC

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January 18, 2018
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Introduction



**My Passion for
this Topic**

My Background



Learning Objectives

Learning Objective #1

Recognize the most critical pitching angles to address when selling your firm and the career opportunity (and why this is a must).

Learning Objective #2

Be able to critically **analyze a LinkedIn profile, including how to recognize compelling content and potential red flags.**

Learning Objective #3

Be able to **design and **execute** a candidate interview process that's beneficial to both the candidate and your firm.**

Learning Objective #4

Understand 3 best practices and 3 pitfalls to avoid when communicating with candidates during the search process, including how to message the offer.



Keys to Success

❖ **It's a candidate's market, requiring:**

- 1. Clear strategy**
- 2. Ability to walk in the shoes of candidates**
- 3. Use of high-ROI candidate identification tools**
- 4. Compelling message**
- 5. Carefully executed interview process**

❖ **Assumption: hire to build a firm-wide BD culture**

Step 1: Defining the Opportunity

❖ Know what you want and why:

What strategic needs will position meet?

How does role fit into business plan?

How will you measure success?



❖ Answers should be reflected in position description

Think Through

- ❖ **Title**
- ❖ **Reporting hierarchy**
- ❖ **Key performance indicators (KPIs)**
- ❖ **Position within the leadership structure**
- ❖ **Ownership opportunities, if appropriate**



Craft a Solid Pitch

- ❖ **Position firm/opportunity to candidates**
- ❖ **Crisp messaging regarding:**
 - Your firm and aspirations
 - Strategic rationale for search
 - What you're looking for and why
 - Expectations and success metrics
 - Ownership/leadership potential



Craft a Solid Pitch

❖ Crisp messaging (cont.):

- Why candidate should be motivated
- Firm culture
- Your strategic plan and process
- Approach to BD and marketing
- High-profile clients/projects
- Comp range and benefits



Step 2: Research and Prep

Do your homework:

- ❖ Strategy should hinge on carefully identifying potential candidates and pursuing them
- ❖ The scoop about job postings
- ❖ Develop target list of competitors you respect

**We Are
Hiring !**



Step 2: Research and Prep (cont.)

Identify target candidates:

- ❖ Tap work colleagues
- ❖ Tap network—including clients and business partners
- ❖ Network through professional associations
- ❖ Look for candidates who present; serve on committees (particularly for mkt/BD folks & practice builders)
- ❖ LinkedIn (Rich: TreanorHL case study)



Step 2: Research and Prep (cont.)

LinkedIn: what to look for

- ❖ Robustness of profile
- ❖ Outreach activity (high # of connections)
- ❖ Participation in industry or market via talks, articles, social media
- ❖ Do they follow industry groups to stay current?
- ❖ Robust recommendations from clients, partners, colleagues

- ❖ *The scoop on LinkedIn endorsements*



Step 2: Research and Prep (cont.)

Establish a clear process:

- ❖ If not working with executive search consultant, internal point person must manage search
- ❖ Distill pitch into compelling elevator speech prior to outreach
- ❖ Schedule confidential screening calls with candidates
- ❖ Don't ignore red flags in the communication process!
- ❖ Be sure to get personal e-mail and cell (Rich: case study)
- ❖ Don't stop at "no"! (Rich: CD case study)



Step 2: Research and Prep (cont.)

Key questions you may not think of:

- ❖ Reason for leaving each past position (why ask?)
- ❖ Status of their job search:
 - If you don't ask, you won't get!
 - Which firms and at what stages
 - Offers on the table/anticipated and timeframes
- ❖ Existing comp package



Step 3: Interview Process

Establishing a clear process (cont.):

❖ Consider scheduling an informal “get-to-know” meeting for promising candidates and assess:

- Questions they ask
- Homework they did
- Cultural fit
- How they’d interact with clients and staff
- Rich: Case study (the deal-killer question)



Step 3: Interview Process (cont.)

- ❖ Proceed with next round of interviews, if appropriate
- ❖ Aim for 2-3 candidates—avoid putting all eggs in 1

Tips for successful interviewing:

- ❖ Set a schedule and stick to it—avoid delays
- ❖ Stay in regular communication with candidates
- ❖ 360-degree debriefs



Step 3: Interview Process (cont.)

Tips for successful interviewing (cont.):

- ❖ **Consider group interviews:**
 - Demonstrates ability to think on one's feet
 - Allows interviewers to compare notes
- ❖ **Respect confidentiality (Rich: case study)**
- ❖ **Study candidate's background info (resume; LI profile; online presence) prior to interview**



Step 4: The Offer

- ❖ **Best offer coming out of the gate (Rich: case study)**
 - Small details can be negotiated
- ❖ **Don't let offer stage languish**
- ❖ **Initiate background check (if applicable) early**



Step 5: Onboarding

- ❖ **Start onboarding early (if done right; begins with initial conversation)**
- ❖ **View onboarding as ongoing vs. post-hire activity:**
 - Base your pitch on reality
 - Highlight your culture
 - Follow through on all promises throughout entire process!



Other Advice

- ❖ Be wary of being played during the hiring process
- ❖ Be wary of countering when a strategic hire threatens to leave (Rich: case study)
- ❖ Consider using an outside third party:
 - More leverage in asking questions and gathering intel
 - Candidates will be more honest
 - Will keep process on track



Questions?

Want more tips, resources, case studies, and best practices? Opt into The Friedman File.

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