

The Simple Brilliance of
LOU SCOTT

The MPC

Lou Scott passed away on Saturday, January 14th, 2006. Who was this man?

Lou Scott was one of the Giants of our industry. As Dr. Dan Posin said in his book, *Dr. Posin's Giants*, quoting Newton, "If I have seen further than others, it is only because I have stood on the shoulders of giants who have come before me." For those of us who train recruiters now, we stand on Lou's shoulders.

For those of you who don't know, Lou was the moving force behind the recruitment techniques for which Management Recruiters International (MRI), based out of Cleveland, Ohio, became famous. Thanks to Lou's training and Alan Schonberg's mastery of the franchise concept, MRI grew and grew to become the world's largest search and recruitment firm.

Over the years I have had the opportunity to speak with many of the great practitioners in our business. Possibly none has had the continuing impact on me of Lou. Lou was the developer of the system that MRI uses to this day. Of course there have been minor changes along the way, but make no mistake about it. The MRI recruitment systems, and by extension the systems prevalent in the recruiting world today, are Lou's. One of his most original inventions was the process of marketing with a Most Placeable Candidate or MPC. Let me see if I can explain to you how this process works.

What Is A Most Placeable Candidate (MPC)?

Here are the five qualities that Lou taught us to look for in an MPC:

1. A candidate who has a **marketable skill**. This is not a wonderful skill as much as it is a skill that will get the attention of the potential hiring manager. A brain surgeon has a great skill, but it is not necessarily a "door opening" skill.
2. A candidate who is **realistic** about everything—job title, job compensation, commute, office location, etc. We want a candidate who lives in the real world. We want them to know that an average increase for a working person in the US who makes a change is in the neighborhood of 5-8%--not 50%, or even 20%. That just doesn't happen in the real world. And, if you are unemployed, you will be lucky to find a job with a lateral compensation, and to go lower is not out of the question.
3. A candidate who has the ability to **interview** when you say—within reason—during normal working hours (not just on the weekends). Also, this candidate has the ability, should the match be right, to **start** within two weeks. A two weeks notice is reasonable—not four, not eight, but two.

4. A candidate who is **reference checkable**. Yes, we do professional business reference checks and the degree confirmations whether the client company wants to do them or not. Everyone has at least three professional references. The degree checks are a given—and a must!
5. A candidate who gives us **respect** as a professional. This candidate needs to understand that we know our job and we expect them to know theirs. They are not allowed to tell us how to perform, just as we don't tell them how to conduct their business in their profession.

There is also this secondary list:

6. **Currently working**—i.e., happy, well-appreciated, making good money, but can be motivated (by you!) to move for a better opportunity;
7. At a **mid-level** position so that your hiring managers understand that you can recruit above and below their position;
8. Agree to **call you** every day at a pre-arranged time;
9. Agree **not to compete with you** by trying to place themselves (or work with other recruiters) during the period of time that you are going to be presenting their accomplishments and benefits to your marketplace.

13 Questions To Qualify Your “MPC”

1. What is going to happen in 2 months if you don't have a new position?
2. How long have you been looking?
3. How many interviews have you had?
4. How many offers and turndowns have you had? Why?
5. What other opportunities are you considering? Why haven't you acted on these yet?
6. What is your deadline?
7. When in the next 3-5 days can you interview?
8. Is there anyone in your family who will resist this move?
9. Have you given notice? Is it verbal or written? If verbal, will you type up a notice to hand to your institution/company when you have a position—or even before then? When is your last day?
10. Have you really made the decision to take a new position? Why? Are you serious?
11. Have you had the “family meeting” and made the “family decision”?
12. What if we find what you want and you then get a counteroffer? Will you consider it? Why?
13. If I can find what you want, you get an interview and get an offer, when can you make a decision?

(*Special Note: If you qualify hard on the front-end, those same answers will be there on the back-end.)

Once we identify the candidate who exhibits these qualities, we are ready to develop our FAB presentation and, even though it can be scary, to start marketing. Lou didn't want you to be afraid. He would say to not let fear control your actions, but to embrace it. In the words of Eddie Rickenbacker, "Courage is doing what you're afraid to do. There can be no courage unless you're scared."

Why The MPC Approach Works

Lou taught that the 'primary goal' of the MPC marketing presentation call was to arrange a Send Out for your MPC. Everything else was secondary. And you know what. It worked! But there were also 'secondary goals' inherent in this presentation.

Basically, a marketing or sales call is really a rapport building call. Lou understood that, by using a "Most Placeable Candidate" (MPC) as a vehicle, you can open doors that would otherwise remain shut. Or, at the very least, exhibit to your potential hiring authorities, the caliber of talent that you can present when called on to do so. You can also avoid the "No Openings" box that so many of us face when we ask the ubiquitous question "Do you have any needs or anything I can help you with today?"

Lou understood too that on each call you are also attempting to get between the 2 to 5 minute conversation mark. Less than 2 minutes and the call is not long enough for rapport building. Over 5 minutes and you run the risk of not being able to call all of the companies you need to call to ensure your "low risk operation" success. Of course, the companies who give you job orders and who exhibit one of the three requisites for which you search (i.e., companies who have a sense of urgency; companies who have particularly difficult positions to fill; and companies who want to be kept apprised of top notch talent as that talent surfaces) and who are serious, will receive more and longer phone calls from you. The other job order givers will not.

The Detractors

Now this approach doesn't come without detractors. Some recruitment systems, recruiters and even so-called expert trainers all fall into the same trap when they lament that recruiters who employ the MPC marketing presentation approach are attempting to arrange send outs for their candidates when they don't even know what positions the potential client company might have open for search. And I would agree with that narrow view if I didn't understand that this candidate/vehicle merely serves as a way to help the recruiter engage the hiring manager in conversation and to start the rapport building process. You want your hiring managers to like, believe, trust and understand you. All four of these elements of rapport must be operative in order for these people to buy from you. Lou used to always say, "You sell what John Brown buys when you sell through John Brown's eyes". So, at the end of the day, this MPC approach allows you to:

1. Start the rapport building process;
2. Fashion optimum length conversations;
3. Avoid the “No Openings” box;
4. Obtain alternate Job Orders.

You know, Lou loved our industry. He would want you to keep the following in mind. You offer the finest, most affordable service in the United States of America. You will agree to keep all of your hiring managers apprised of the top talent available in their specialty area and near their geographical location and you will do that forever and you will do that for free. You are only wagering that someday they will like someone that you present so much that they will bring that individual in for an interview, make them an offer, the candidate will accept and will start to work. Only then will your service charge come in to play—the best service available anywhere.

And so there you have it—the gift of the MPC approach to this business given to us by Lou Scott. He was a giant in our industry. We will miss him as we continue to stand on his wide shoulders. God speed, Lou Scott—we miss you already!

*“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.

Bob Marshall, CPC, CIPC started in the search business in 1980 and became Western Regional Manager for over 60 Management Recruiters Intl. offices in 1984. In 1986 he founded The Bob Marshall Group, International, training recruiters across the nation as well as the United Kingdom, Malta, and Cyprus. In 1996, he returned to working a desk full time and continues to train recruiters. To learn more about his activities and descriptions of his products and services, contact him directly at: 770-898-5550 or @ tmg@charter.net or espro@bellsouth.net.