

## **THE QUALIFIER JOB ORDER**

by  
Bob Marshall

I know in this day and age it is our main focus to write Job Orders—ANY JOB ORDERS! But alas, as it was before this time of few Job Orders and way too many Candidates, we need, indeed we must, qualify the Job Orders we do write in order to expend our straight commission time on those that we can successfully fill.

### **0-1 Out of 15**

If you recall in my presentation entitled, “Your Desk As A Manufacturing Plant”, when a top recruiter writes Job Orders these are the ratios that operate. Out of 15 Job Orders they write:

0-1 will be of the “Search Assignment” quality;  
4-5 will be of the “Matching” quality;  
and about 10, or 2/3rds, will be of the “Can’t Help” variety.

### **The Qualifier Job Order**

Most of the time, Recruiters, having a “positive mental attitude”, think that every Job Order they write is a Search Assignment—that it’s supremely ‘fillable’. I guess it’s necessary to have that kind of a positive outlook, but we have to temper it with reality.

Most of the time Recruiters keep the Hiring Manager (HM) on the phone way too long. The HMs weren’t expecting the Recruiter’s call. Keep in mind that Americans are nice people (as a rule) and they don’t want to be too rude or too abrupt. Because of this, the Recruiter can spend 30 or 40 minutes on the phone with the HM. The Recruiter takes this time to fill in all the empty blocks on the Job Order form, then hangs up and runs to his manager and says, “See, everything I write is a Search Assignment”. Or, he might tell his manager “the big lie”. It goes something like this: “You know, Mr. Manager, you keep telling me to make a lot of marketing calls and personal visits. But as you can see, everything I write is a Search Assignment. I have more Job Orders on my desk now than I can possibly fill. What I need to do is recruit.”

That’s the great lie in our industry. Because what you have on your desk, usually, if you haven’t qualified it out properly, is garbage. You’re working in areas where you’re not going to be paid and then, all of a sudden, you can’t understand why you have low production. You criticize the industry or your manager or anybody but yourself. But what you haven’t accomplished is to qualify that Job Order so you can place on it. What you have done is waste time. You’ve spent at least 30 minutes on the phone with the HM wasting his time. When you got off the phone with the HM, you ran to your manager to talk about how everything you write is a Search Assignment; you don’t have time to fill what’s on your desk already. But what happens when the HM finishes his long call with

you. He turns to his secretary and says, “You know, it never dawned on me while I was talking to this guy, but he’s a Recruiter. He took a lot of my time asking me questions that he could have found out just by doing a little homework on our company. He actually wants me to pay a fee for him to find someone. Can you imagine that? I mean, we can run ads; our personnel people can find that kind of person. I tell you what, next time he calls, tell him we moved to Lima, Peru. Or better yet, that I’m in a meeting and can’t be disturbed. I don’t want to talk to him anymore. He’s already wasted my time and I’m just not interested.”

So, you see, you have two opposite views to the same situation. The Recruiter who thinks he has a Search Assignment is going to spend the next 3 weeks recruiting on it. The HM has just given specific instructions to his secretary not to let this person in any more. Well, if that’s going to happen, let’s qualify it on the first day. Let’s make sure that we have a quality Job Order – something we can fill.

### **The Qualifier JO**

With this in mind, I came up with the idea of what we call, **The Qualifier Job Order**. What you are going to do when you are taking information on a Job Order is get 6 pieces of information. After those 6 pieces of information are secured, you are going to look at your watch, either on a personal visit or over the phone, and say, “Gee, I tell you what. I need to do something else—a phone call, appointment, etc.—however I need more information. What I have taken is a skeleton of the description of what you are looking for. Let me call you back this afternoon at 3 PM, or let’s say tomorrow at 9 AM. What’s the best time for me to call you?” Then you leave the Job Order alone, and you continue making marketing calls. You continue to try and develop the companies that are going to pay you – the 20% of the companies we are constantly looking for and they are constantly changing – and that’s why we have to be on the phone all the time.

What we are going to do is set up a time that we can call back. But, first we need the 6 basic pieces of information.

### **ONE**

Contact Information: Name of the company, address, name of the HM, title, secretary’s name, phone number—all of the regular pieces of contact information.

### **TWO**

Duties and Responsibilities of the Position: I need to know a day in the life, a week in the life, or a month in the life of the position. Or, what are the percentages of supervisory time, of technical time and of administrative (paper shuffling) time that equal 100% so that I can find the Candidates who match those percentages. For instance, let’s say an Engineer supervises 25% of the time, administrates 25% of the time, and actually works 50% of the time doing the type of work that an Engineer does. In that scenario, I need a 25-25-50 person to fill that position. That’s what I will be looking for. So, if they can’t

give you a day in the life of, week in the life of, or month in the life of the position, at least try to get percentages.

### **THREE**

Salary Range: You're going to need to know the low, medium, and high salary range. Also, you're going to have to discuss your service charge at this time and cover it in dollars and percent. Keeping in mind that most people don't listen. There are only 5 to 7 conscious chunks of "information processing ability" possible in anyone's mind at any given point in time. If those pieces of information are being used and you are talking, nothing is going to filter through. Hopefully you can get into one of those chunks. The reason that we discuss the service charge in both dollars and percent is so that we can be sure that they understand. When you ask for the salary range, let's say the HM says he wants someone in the \$58,000 to \$62,000 salary range--\$58,000 would be the low; \$60,000 would be the ideal, and \$62,000 would be the high. It is critical that the Recruiter keep the range a secret. That is information only between the HM and the Recruiter. If you don't keep it secret, what you are going to do is create little ego monsters amongst your Candidates. This is how that scenario can take place. You tell the Candidate who is making \$50,000 that the salary range is between \$58,000 and \$62,000. Naturally, the Candidate will see himself making \$62,000 or \$63,000 or even \$64,000. He's only looking at the top end. And he's going to relate that happy information to everyone who's important to him. The company, on the other hand, is looking at the low end. They want to save money—not only on the salary, but also on your fee. They want to have room for advancement—room for bonuses for this employee. So, even though they told you \$58,000 to \$62,000, they may be looking at \$56,000 or \$57,000. And, of course, someone who is making \$50,000 should be happy with that. You, as the Recruiter, are going to be happy with somewhere in between. So, at a mid-range salary of \$60,000, you will be expecting a 30%, or \$18,000, fee. Well, there's the dilemma. You have 3 different individuals looking at the salary range 3 different ways. The offer then comes in at \$58,000—an \$8,000 per year raise for the Candidate. But what you have created is a little monster in your Candidate. This Candidate will say to you, "That's terrible. In other words, what you are saying to me is that they are going to offer me their lowest possible number in their salary range and I'm supposed to be happy going to work for them?" So, this is where we create a lot of problems when we divulge salary. What you want to do is close the Candidate towards the low end, without telling him that low end. You ask the Candidate, "You're at \$50,000. What are you thinking about?" He might say something like, "Well, I'm thinking \$54,000 - \$55,000". Your response is, "Well, let's see if we can stretch it to that amount." On the HM's side, you're going to close them high - \$51,000 to \$52,000. You would say, "Let's see if we can get anybody down in that 50,000 to 51,000 range."

### **FOUR**

The Hiring Process: Again, we have the relationship where 3 parties are involved. It's really an equilateral triangle type of a situation—as is our business, when you think about it. There are 3 parties involved in everything we do at the 3 points of the triangle:

There's the Recruiter, the Candidate and the Company. Each party in the relationship has the ability to say "yes" or "no". So, when we are talking about the hiring process, what we really need to do is define the urgency of the Job Order, and where 3 parties are going to be involved with this according to their time frame. For instance, you're going to ask the question to determine urgency in this area. You are going to say, "When is the last day that you can keep this position open without something bad happening the next day if it is still open?" What I want to know is how far you can go with this position still vacant. What is your 'drop dead' date?" You don't ask the question, "When would you like this person on board?" That doesn't tell you anything. That doesn't determine any urgency. What you want to know is the last day. If they say to you, "Well, we're not going to hire until we find the right person", what you have just determined is that this is probably a "can't help" situation. Because that means they can go indefinitely with the position open. Or they say, "Well, it's a new position. We just don't have any time restraints on it."—probably a "can't help" position. What you want to do is get a specific date to establish urgency.

What you want to do next is take that date and work it backwards. For instance, today is June 1<sup>st</sup>, and the HM has to have someone on board by July 15<sup>th</sup>. July 15<sup>th</sup> is absolutely the last day that they can go because on July 16<sup>th</sup> they will probably be fired for not having someone hired in this position. Now, keeping in mind that you have 3 parties who have to be taken care of in the relationship, you use the December 15<sup>th</sup> date and back it off. So you say to the HM, "July 15<sup>th</sup> is the last date you can go. What is the time frame between your first interview and the hire? What has to be done in that time frame? What are we talking about?" The HM tells you what is involved and that the process takes 3 weeks. So now, keeping in mind for the purpose of this example that 28 days equals 1 month, what you're going to do is back this date off 3 weeks to June 21<sup>st</sup>. The Candidate would ordinarily need 2 weeks to give notice, but the company he's with needs an extra week buffer. So now you back it off another 3 weeks to June 1<sup>st</sup>. Keep in mind that today is June 1<sup>st</sup>! Now, as a recruiter, you are the third party. You don't need much time to recruit, but you'd like to recruit 2 other Candidates to go in with your prime Candidate for this position. So now you back the date off to May 21<sup>st</sup>. Right away you are a week too late to fill a position that the last day it can be open is June 1<sup>st</sup>. The HM doesn't understand what takes place in the time line for the hiring process. You are the expert and the one who must explain this time line to him. Often, you'll have HMs say, "Gee, I didn't realize that. I understand what you are saying and I understand what you mean. So, instead of 3 weeks, we can cut the hiring process down to 2 weeks." Now you can move the date up to June 1<sup>st</sup>. Today is June 1<sup>st</sup>. You can begin the process if you start today. But, at least, now you've educated your HM.

First, you've explained what is necessary, and now you have a fillable situation, at least from the hiring process point of view. Second, by setting up the process, writing down the dates, you now have leverage to work with the HM should anything deviate from this plan that has been laid out. For instance, the HM says that in the process of the 2 week interview, if they like the Candidate during the first interview, they will bring him back in 1 week for the second interview with a different party. You send in a Candidate, everything goes well, they like the person and they say they will get back to you. A week

goes by. You call the HM. If you haven't set this all up ahead of time, the HM can tell you anything at this point. He could say, "Well, we liked your Candidate, but we have to talk to some other people first." Or, "We really need him to talk to the president and the president is going to be in Europe for 3 months." What are you going to tell your Candidate? You have already told him that urgency is everything in our business. You've pre-closed him on accepting should an offer come down and giving a 2-week notice so he can start work right away. Now you have a 3-month delay because the company's president is in Europe! Well, had you set this up ahead of time and you knew that there's a week between the 1<sup>st</sup> and the 2<sup>nd</sup> interview if they liked your Candidate on the first interview. Now when you call the HM you can say, "When we talked originally and I took the information on this JO, you told me that if you liked the Candidate on the 1<sup>st</sup> interview, you would bring him back for the 2<sup>nd</sup> interview in 1 week's time. Well, today is the end of that week. I told the Candidate what you told me. Now what do you want me to tell him?" You see, you are out of the process. You have nothing to do with it. All you did was relay information the HM gave you to the Candidate. While you don't understand what has gone awry, you can see the tremendous amount of leverage and pressure you can exert on the HM in this instance. What you have done is written down the hiring process. You've determined the time frames. You've set the parameters. You nailed it down.

## FIVE

The Recruiting Column: We need to get some information so we can do what we call "Rifle Shot" recruiting. This is how we do it:

We are going to ask, "Who do you want for this position?" If they missed that you are a Recruiter going in, they are now going to know that you are a headhunter because you are actually asking for a 'head to hunt'. Recruiters say to me, "If they knew who they wanted, they could go out and get that person themselves." But what those Recruiters don't understand is that there are a lot of reasons why HMs can't or won't go out recruiting on their own. They can't do it because they don't have the talent to do it. They put themselves in jeopardy by trying to take someone from a competing company because they could start a stealing war. They could start a salary escalation war. A lot of HMs don't take people from their competitors because they don't want to be rejected. They run the risk of getting into a interview situation, where proprietary information is given, and then being rejected. Now that information is being taken back to one of their competitors. So, there are reasons why they will use Recruiters and give that Recruiter the exact name of the person they want to fill the position.

However, if you don't get that particular name, then you ask the HM this: "Give me 3, 4, 5 etc. companies, or competitors of yours, that you respect and want someone from." That's exactly how you state that question—companies or competitors that you want someone from. Don't make the mistake a Recruiter once made when he asked, "Who are your competitors?" The company named who their main competitor was and the Recruiter spent a couple of months recruiting 3 people out of this company. Each one was highly skilled. Each one was highly motivated to move. And each one was

thoroughly 'prepped' by the Recruiter. The Recruiter called back the original company to set up the interviews and found out that, even though it was one of their major competitors, they never took people from this competitor because the presidents of the 2 companies had agreed that they would never take each other's people. So, you never ask, "Who are your competitors?" In fact, if you are an expert in the industry, you should know who the competitors are already. You ask instead, "Which companies, or which of your competitors, do you respect and want someone from?"

And finally, if they can't answer that question, you ask, "What industry do you respect and want someone from? Remember, if you are asking these questions and not getting definitive answers, then this JO is going into the tank. Don't let them be vague. You can't recruit every good engineer who lives in the US. There are merely not enough days left in your life to do that.

You need definite parameters of where you can get local talent because those are the quickest placements. Those are the ones that tend to hold together real well because relocation is not involved. You can justify your service charge based on how much you are going to **save** the HM just in relocation costs alone. And a successful relocation assumes that both the husband and the wife could move considering the dual income situation that we have in the US today.

This information also allows you to further qualify the JO because there are times when we don't know if a salary being offered is realistic or not. But, if they give you 3 companies or competitors that they respect and want someone from, then you can quickly determine if this is a good JO right from the out-set by merely determining if the salary is realistic or not. So, you go out, for instance, and recruit 3 people. The salary offered on your JO is \$58,000 - \$62,000. The least expensive of the 3 people your recruited is at \$62,000 and he's not coming laterally. The other 2 people are more expensive. Now it gives you the perfect opportunity to re-call the HM and say, "I have good news and bad news. Remember the companies and competitors you told me you respected and wanted someone from? Well, I've gone out and recruited 3 people, one from each of those 3 companies. That's the good news. And, they are all able to come and see you next week. That's also good news. However, here's the bad news. The lowest salary being made among them is \$62,000 and that person is not moving laterally. You would have to offer at least \$65,000 for him and the other 2 are at \$70,000 now. So, we have 3 options as I see it. First, we can raise the salary to get these people in and you can interview them. Second, we can lower the duties and responsibilities and let me go out again and see if I can't recruit someone more junior—and I think that's what you are looking for if you can't move on the salary. Or third, we can cancel this JO because it is not realistic."

The trouble is that Recruiters are so diligent and tenacious that we often spend an exorbitant amount of time recruiting on crummy JOs and find people who, believe it or not, are working for an even crummier company and this company is a step up for them. But don't do that. It's a waste of your time and effort. The time you expend filling crummy JOs could be expended in more profitable ventures filling 10 times the number

of leads with good companies. So, this is a way of eliminating those marginal or poor companies.

## **SIX**

The Personality of the HM: What schools did that person attend? What are their interests or hobbies? Let's say that the HM's major hobby is fishing for sharks. He actually dives into the water, catches the sharks with his bare hands (and a sharp knife!). I guarantee you that if you find a Candidate, not even a technical match, who jumps in the water and kills sharks by stabbing them with a knife, you are going to get a hire. You might say, "Mr. HM, I know you wanted an EE, but I've uncovered an Industrial Engineer that you will be interested to know not only is terrific at what he does, but he also has the same hobby as yours." You're going to get a hire and it wasn't even for the position you were searching for. So, always keep in mind the personality matches. They are absolutely critical. Too often, we work and work making the best technical matches in the world and we never find out the chemistry or the personalities of the 2 parties, and we put people together who mix like oil and water. We don't get the placement and wonder why. Sometimes it's because we weren't aware of what was going on behind the scenes. We didn't think past the technical match.

## **THE CALL BACK**

Now you have the 6 pieces of information. You have a skeleton JO. Look at you watch and say, "Gee, I've kept you on the phone too long as it is. I do need some more information (and, in fact, you do need some more information). Let me call you back tomorrow morning." And, when you call back and the HM picks up the phone and talks to you for the 20-40 minutes that you need, you have now qualified that JO. That's the first qualifier. Please note that you have done nothing on that JO yet. You don't want to waste your time on an unprofitable venture. The "Call Back" and having the HM actually talking to you on the phone now allows you to determine more clearly if this is a fillable JO.

Now, there are 3 ways to call back:

1. Call back that afternoon or the next day. You should allow only a short time to elapse before you call the HM back.
2. There are Recruiters who, when they call back, present a "File Search Candidate". This will be a close match – not an ideal one – that they pull from their files. The purpose here is not to get the person placed or even set up an interview. What they want to determine is how the HM reacts when a Candidate is presented. Again, to determine urgency and to determine the honesty behind the HM working with the Recruiter.
3. Some Recruiters are so up on the talent that they have recruited, that they can actually make presentations to the HM while they are taking the Qualifier JO. This is more unique, but it is a way to "test the waters" and find out how the HM

reacts when Candidates are presented. This is very prevalent in the Sales specialty areas.

## **REVIEW**

It's called the **Qualifier Job Order**, and, to reiterate, you want to get 6 pieces of information:

- 1. Contact Information**
- 2. Duties and Responsibilities**
- 3. Salary and Fee** covered in dollars and percent
- 4. The Hiring Process** pinned down to the last day that they can go. Working the process backwards. Make sure it's realistic. Educate the HMs.
- 5. The Recruitment Column** – The “Rifle Shot” Recruiting Column. We want to find out who they want, what 3 companies or competitors they respect and want someone from, or what industry they want people from. We can then go out and Rifle Shot Recruit – extract people precisely for this position in the least amount of time.
- 6. The Personality of the HM.** Schools, hobbies, how they seem over the phone, quick talker, slower talker, all the things that you might write down under personality so that you can really start focusing in on something that you really haven't done a good job on lately, and that is good chemistry matches.

When you get that information you look at your watch and say, “I have something else that I have to do. I'm sure Mr. HM that you do to. Let me call you back this afternoon or tomorrow morning at 9 AM. I will need to talk with you for another 30-45 minutes to get the necessary information.” And then, when you call back, and the HM takes your call, that is your first sign that this is a workable JO that you can agree to expend your full talent and effort filling. If you use this technique, it can only make you more profitable. It can only make you a better, more efficient Recruiter.