

## **SENDING RESUMES? It Has Everything To Do With Positioning!**

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The majority of recruiters submit resumes to clients before securing interviews for their candidates. In many instances, the recruiters actually volunteer to send resumes. It generally sounds like this:

*“As soon as I have located a qualified candidate, I will send you their resume.”*

Or

*“I’ll get right on this and send you resumes as soon as possible.”*

In addition, many clients request resumes as part of their screening process. Consequently, in the area of candidate presentation, sending resumes has almost become the standard for our industry. This begs the question:

***Is it right or wrong to send a resume prior to securing an interview for your candidate?***

The answer to this question isn’t a simple “yes” or “no”. Rather, the answer is that sending resumes has everything to do with the “positioning” you have with your clients. Positioning determines the level of positive power you can assert during the process of working with your client.

Consider the following factors.

1. The resume is a sales tool developed by the candidate in order to present them in the best possible manner. Depending on the source, studies have found from 30% to 67% of all resumes contain at least one major distortion of fact or outright lie. Is this the type of document you want to utilize in support of your positioning?
2. Resumes are easy to submit via fax or e-mail which certainly increases the speed at which information can be transmitted. However, does this ease of transmission take you, the recruiter, out of the equation? After all, if the client decides not to interview the candidate, the decision is based on the resume and not your

assessment and presentation skills. Also, by sending a resume to a client, it may create or reinforce the perception that the recruiter is just doing “key word matching” while expecting the client to actually do the screening based on a document that was prepared by someone other than the recruiter. This can be viewed as a “hit or miss” strategy by the client and definitely does not support your positioning as the primary screening source.

3. If clients request resumes to review in order to determine who to interview, in essence they are stating they do not trust the recruiter to properly screen candidates on their behalf. Based on feedback from clients, this lack of trust is due to their belief that the average recruiter does not fully understand the nature and scope of the position nor do they adequately understand the culture and operating style of the client’s organization. Consequently, the recruiter’s positioning is weak because the client does not believe they have the wherewithal to properly screen qualified candidates.
4. In many instances, the recruiter is instructed to send the resume to Human Resources for screening. This is a clear signal they are either not working with the right individual to begin with or, worse yet, the individual they are speaking with places little value on their time or input (*See Petra Article, “Positioning Human Resources”*). Obviously, this also reflects poorly on the recruiter’s positioning.
5. By sending a resume, the recruiter is basically stating they have a lack of ability to properly screen qualified candidates and therefore is willingly passing on this responsibility to their client. It is a clear signal to the client that the recruiter is either unwilling or incapable of establishing a process that positions them as the primary screener.

Although there may be a place and a time for sending resumes to clients for screening purposes, it should be the rare exception and not the rule. Also, it has nothing to do with whether or not you work a local or national market. However, it has everything to do with your positioning.

Consistently top producers learn how to position themselves as the primary screening source when initially writing the order and establishing the process with their clients. They may use positioning statements similar to the following:

*“If you have found it necessary to screen candidate resumes in order to determine who to interview, then you may have been dealing with the wrong recruiter. My clients have found it to be in their best interest to allow me to handle this critical step for them.”*

Or

*“Your expectation should be that I would successfully complete the initial screening of all candidates. Therefore, each candidate that I present to you will be both qualified and interested in the position. Since I will be handling this critical function for you, we will be able to move forward with interviews in a more proficient manner without sacrificing the thoroughness of the screening process.”*

Or

*“The benefit of having me handle the preliminary screening is that it will save time, improve the efficiency of our process while increasing the likelihood of a successful hire within the agreed upon time line.”*

These all represent process positioning statements. However, they will only produce the desired result if the recruiter has earned the trust of the client through the use of a “client centered” approach to taking the order/search. This approach will demonstrate to the client that the recruiter fully understands their needs and possesses the recruiting and assessment skills necessary to successfully screen potential candidates against the job related, performance based selection criteria. This creates an environment where there is every reason for the client to view the recruiter as their primary screening source. Positioned in this manner, the resume no longer has relevance in the process.

As a final point, regardless of the recruiter’s positioning, most clients will still require some “paperwork” in front of them during their interviews. This is only natural. However, do not send the candidate’s resume because of all the reasons stated above. Rather, consider utilizing a customized candidate profile. You can easily develop a profile format and save it as a word document. Then, for each candidate who will be interviewed by the client, you can quickly fill in the blanks and make the necessary adjustments in the profile to accurately reflect the candidate’s qualifications for the position.

This eliminates the distortions and misstatements that are found in the typical resume while providing the client with a standardized tool for reviewing the job related, performance based information on each candidate.

If you would like to receive an example of a candidate profile format, just drop me an E-mail and I will send one to you (Terry@tpetra.com).

Meanwhile, please remember that your positioning will determine the amount of positive power you have available to create a successful and beneficial outcome for all those you serve. Sending resumes as a screening tool can seriously erode your ability to achieve the proper positioning.

As always, if you have questions or comments, just let me know. Your contacts are always welcomed.

Recipient of the "Harold B. Nelson Award", Terry Petra is one of our industry's leading trainers and consultants. He has successfully conducted in-house programs for hundreds of search, placement, temporary staffing firms and industry groups across the U.S., Canada, Mexico, Australia, New Zealand, Russia, England, and South Africa. To learn more about his training products and services, including "**PETRA ON CALL**", and "**FIRM VALUATIONS**" visit his web site at: [www.tpetra.com](http://www.tpetra.com). Terry can be reached at (651) 738-8561 or e-mail him at: [Terry@tpetra.com](mailto:Terry@tpetra.com).