

Hiring Psychology and Why We Share, Revisited

The purpose of The TENG and what makes it work is when its ACTIVE members share job leads on a timely, as-found basis. The Associate members are usually not interviewing and will share leads on an occasional basis, at best. If you wait for your candidacy for a position to end before you share the lead, chances are the job will be already filled or out on offer. You will be doing your network friends a disservice by wasting their time on a dead job lead. I created this group to operate much like The Financial Executives Network Group, (The FENG www.thefeng.org), with the blessing and counsel of Matt Bud, its Chairman. Very little CFO level hiring goes undetected by The FENG. Matt has grown his group from 35 members in 1997 to a global networking powerhouse of over 11,400 today, and he did it based on this very same philosophy. In his words, "Time is the enemy. The value of any lead is its freshness". Someone will be hired for every job you explore. If it can't be you, it might as well be one of your friends, rather than someone you don't know. This means that you personally introduce a fellow TENG member (this can be done through a conference call) to either the search consultant or the company, telling them that they should consider this person as a candidate. This elevates you in their eyes, because your positive qualities including self-confidence, selflessness and faith in your own abilities have been showcased. If your friend gets hired, s/he owes you a tremendous debt and will do everything they can think of to help you in kind. You now have an excellent industry contact. Matt reports that most members who were originally very skeptical of this approach to lead sharing have now embraced it to the point of being some of the FENG's more active evangelists. They have found that even in a tight market like our present one, sharing a job lead immediately helps to generate more positive activity and sharing among members. Even at your darkest moment, there is something about reaching out to help a friend that makes both you and them feel better, and ultimately causes them to reach out to help you in return. This will increase the number of leads we share. Watching someone else succeed at being hired for a position you want may be painful in the short term, but it is a part of the process. Remember the rejection you gave to the unselected candidates when you hired in the past. Understand that this is a numbers game and that each rejection you receive places you one step closer to success.

During my career in executive search, I have heard the comment, "second is always last". Another version of this is that every candidate on the slate for a specific job, who is not hired, comes in second. Of the hundreds of searches I have executed in the past 26 years, I can count on my hands the times when the client's "anointed" candidate did not accept an offer, or the deal fell through for any number of reasons, that a number two was taken. I have several fingers left over. Typically in any search, one person emerges as the chosen one. When the hire cannot be consummated with this person, the client almost inevitably states, "Show us more candidates". When pushed to reconsider those already

seen, they usually decline, offering what they feel are weaknesses in those individuals who remain in the pool. Valid or not, that's the way it is.

The hiring "dance" or process, especially at the senior executive level, is also based upon the chemistry of the moment, or whatever makes two people "click". Frequently it is referred to as a marriage, which is a very apt metaphor. I could recount many stories where people were hired, not only based upon their qualifications, but also because they connected with the hiring executive on a personal and professional level. Knowing this, it simply means that one person will stand out from the pack and get the offer, whether they were seen early in the search or late. All you can do as a candidate is prepare for an interview do your best to sell yourself and move on. Referring a colleague will increase the odds that at least someone you know will be hired. If you get an offer, you can celebrate.

Remember, I send the job leads to you, the membership. I can't prevent you from forwarding a lead to a non-member, but I intend for them to be shared by members only. If you receive a lead that fits a colleague who is not a TENG member, nominate her or him for Active or Associate membership, as appropriate and we will share the lead with them. By sharing leads among members only, we reinforce the bond of friendship, trust and mutual assistance that are essential ingredients to our success. When you submit a lead, tell me if you are pending against it and whether you can introduce fellow members to the company or recruiter. With many of the Web based job leads, it is understood that members will simply apply direct.

Job leads must have some substance. A few comments or some vague specifications with a recruiter's Email address or phone number are simply going to cause that person to be bombarded with people they may not need. If you avoid self-screening you could damage your credibility with that recruiter on future searches where you should be a serious candidate. It will also damage the TENG's credibility. Already members have advised me on two or three occasions that recruiters have asked that they NOT share jobs with the TENG or similar network groups, because people who do not fit the specification are overwhelming them with resumes. Only qualified members should apply. This means that you should fit ninety per cent or more of the job requirements. The old mindset, "I am an IT executive and can manage anything" is long obsolete. It is now best to remove that attitude as soon as possible.

I can't determine whether you will commit to this approach, nor can I control your performance, but the outcome will mean the difference between whether the TENG is a good organization or a great one. That is totally up to you.

Due to time constraints, please keep these "housekeeping" issues in mind before sending a lead to me:

- I am unable to edit laundry lists of jobs. If you have a list of positions to share with the TENG, please edit them to include only the IT Director, VP and CIO, etc. level. You must weed out lower level and non-IT positions before sending

them to me or I will return them to you for edit prior to sharing with the membership.

- Please edit your leads for clarity. Retransmissions of previous Emails can become re-formatted and include carriage returns and other characters. Remove them and any superfluous graphics to the best extent possible.
- Be sure that a contact Email address is included in your lead. If you don't have one please don't forward it to me. I recently distributed a lead without one and had to reply to nearly twenty Email inquiries.
- When I distribute a lead, you know everything I know. Unless I include some amplifying comments due to my own previous research or experience, I probably can't respond to any questions you may have.

This is a revision of a newsletter I sent out in January when we had about 90 members. Our membership is now over 340 and we started in November 2001. Although our newsletters are posted on my company's Web site, I will update and redistribute some of them, when appropriate, as our membership grows. I am serious and committed to growing The TENG to be a valuable and useful career service for senior IT executives. You have been kind and generous in your support, referrals and comments. Please keep the new members and job leads coming.

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