

## Hiring Psychology and Why We Share

When I am interviewing candidates for recruiting assignments, I always inquire about their previous job search activities, to gain some idea how long they have been looking and how well they have penetrated the market. As people recount their experiences, I will hear vignettes similar to these, “I came in second for the Director’s job at XYZ,” or “I had a great interview with the company and they sounded like they would be calling with an offer, but I haven’t heard from them in a month”. Probably these words, or some version of them, have been uttered by nearly every job candidate at some time or other. Of course, upon hearing such comment from candidates whom I represent, it is interesting to compare their input to my clients’ feedback. Many times these debriefings have left me wondering if my candidate and my client were in the same room together, but I will save this thought and discuss it in my upcoming series of newsletters on the Interview Campaign.

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 based more 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 for being the most qualified candidate, but 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. If you get an offer, you can celebrate.

The purpose of The TENG and what makes it work is when its ACTIVE members share job leads on an as-found basis. The Associate members are not interviewing. If you wait for your candidacy to end, chances are the job will be filled or out on offer. You will be doing your 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, (You’re right, it’s

The FENG ([www.thefeng.org](http://www.thefeng.org)), with the blessing and counsel of Matt Bud, its Chairman. Matt has grown his group from 35 members in 1997 to a global networking powerhouse of over 9,000 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.

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. I will act quickly to include them, and will forward the lead to them. Whenever a new member signs on, I send them all the previous newsletters and the most recent and relevant job leads. When you submit a lead, tell me if you are pending against it. If you receive a lead through The TENG network and wish to pursue it, let me know and I will place you in touch with the referring member. Of course, this applies only to those leads from search firms and hiring companies. For the job board postings, you simply go direct. Over time, I feel that we need to have more of the former, to make this method of introducing friends a successful one. I turn around any valid lead within one to eight hours. Delays are caused only when I am out of the office.

Job leads must have some substance. A few comments with a recruiter's phone number is simply going to cause that person to be bombarded with people they may not need. This could damage your credibility with that recruiter on future searches where you should be a serious candidate.

I can't determine whether you will commit to this approach, nor can I control your performance. That is totally up to you.

If you live in the Southeast, you have a fellow member in the Northeast who would like to consider opportunities from the Carolinas through Atlanta to Florida. If you are a retail systems executive, you have fellow members with a wealth of contacts and experience. Timely and substantive leads would be most appreciated.

Our membership is now almost at 90 and we started about two months ago. Most of us are located in the Tri-State area: NY, NJ and CT. Our other concentrations are Boston, Washington DC and Atlanta.

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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