

Ready Set Recruit

The Hiring Manager's Guide to Recruiting with Confidence

Amy Lee Miller

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*To Pete M., Paul Brannock, Luke Hessels and Jan Schindler.
Thank you for giving me a shot. And to John Kroog, thank you for
the wisdom you shared.*

That which we need most will be found where we least want to look.

~Carl Jung

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Introduction

Are you experiencing frustration somewhere in your recruiting process? Have you made a past hire that didn't work out? Did your lead candidate surprise you by turning down the offer, and looking back, you now see some signals you perhaps missed before? Are you simply not finding suitable candidates, or is the search just taking too long?

As a professional who has mastered the art of recruiting, with several years of experience uniting industry-leading companies with top talent, I can help. In partnering with hiring managers and division VPs to grow their teams year after year, I have established an efficient and effective recruiting process that yields lasting wins and keeps my repeat clients happy and consistently sending referrals.

My goal is to continue making hiring managers' lives easier and now to inspire unwavering confidence in your future hires. In this book, I share the secret of my foundation and the subsequent tools that drive my winning process and successful results. By employing these simple, yet profound (while entertaining) concepts, you will eliminate unnecessary inefficiencies and maximize your time so that you can hire with confidence and focus more attention on your primary responsibility—leading.

I first got the idea to write this book when a loyal client reached out, asking if I would be interested in joining their in-house team. When this HR director was tasked with finding a lead internal recruiter, it wasn't difficult for him to zero in on exactly who he wanted—me. I had placed close to a hundred people at their company. I had established great relationships with most of the managers there, and it was me they called first when they had a new opening. I was proud of the reputation I had secured and honored when asked to join their team. I gave the opportunity much thoughtful consideration.

However, inherently I knew that working for a company was not for me. I'm an entrepreneur. I work for myself, and even more inherently, I also knew bigger things were in my future beyond my current focus.

I turned the opportunity down, but my wheels were in motion. Even though this client relationship had been a key contributor to my income over the years, I wasn't worried. I understand that there is enough success to go around for everyone. Instead, my dominant thought was, "How can I help set them up for success when they are ready to transition to an internal recruiting team?" I got the idea of offering to train their internal team once in place and to provide consulting services as needed, helping managers run a smoother, results-oriented recruiting and hiring process.

At the start of my commission-only recruiting career, I was taking a risk in saying goodbye to the security of my medical sales job. I believed in myself and was relentless in my efforts. I learned what worked, which substantially increased earnings year after year. Averaging over 25 placements annually, many of whom have since been promoted, and having grown a client base of nearly a hundred hiring managers, I now have what I like to call the "Panoramic Perspective." I understand the needs and drivers of the *Hiring Manager*, the *Candidate*, and the *Recruiter*. I have observed great practices leading to lasting hires, and I've also seen many unnecessary inefficiencies, resulting in challenging and time-consuming processes that bring unwanted surprises.

The mindset and process that have led me to a successful recruiting career also keep me winning at other endeavors I set out to achieve. One reason my method works is the driving force behind it is helping others. While money is important and necessary, my primary initiative in all that I do, including recruiting and writing this book, is to help.

Often, I can tell within the first few seconds of the conversation whether a candidate will be a fit. Equally, when connecting with a hiring manager, I can tell whether they are likely to have some self-imposed challenges in their search. While I was born with an inherent and palpable gut instinct that I may or may not be able to teach, I *know* I can help employ some simple tools to help you hone your craft, maximize your strengths, and even leverage your perceived weaknesses. I view myself as a partner, ally, and protector to my hiring managers, and with the knowledge I have gained through my experience, I am now equipped to help in perhaps a more impactful way. I offer coaching and consulting services, and you can refer to my book as often as you need to as well.

By committing to reading this book and implementing the action steps outlined, I promise your hiring process will improve. As a bonus, other areas of your life that you apply these concepts to will also improve. Ultimately, what you get from this book will be up to you and what you put into it. I also promise the process will be easier than you might think. We get results when we first acknowledge an issue. Then the pending solution and appropriate action steps come naturally. Action equals change. You were drawn to this book, so you are well on your way.

A powerful secret weapon we all have within us is the ability to become an observer. Awakenning this quality within myself has resulted in exponential personal and professional growth. When something doesn't feel right, I am acutely aware that feeling indicates change is needed. There is a better way, and the solution awaits. By simply paying attention to what's bothering us, we bring ourselves much closer to uncovering the root issue and then implementing a solution. I apply this concept to life and career, and I can help you do the same in your hiring process. With each challenge comes the opportunity to grow into a better version of ourselves, and with clarity comes ease in our pursuit.

In addition to my ability to observe, I am also instinctively curious by nature, which helps me uncover essential information when interviewing candidates and when understanding the needs of my clients. In this book, I teach key fundamentals you can also employ to inspire confidence in your recruiting process and secure lasting hires with ease. By making the commitment to dig deeper to uncover any underlying issues, you will be able to see and implement solutions that resolve repeating surface-level challenges showing up in your hiring process (and perhaps in other areas in your life).

How to Read This Book

While this book can be used as a reference book, the best way to read it is first, all the way through. Where we start dictates where we end up. We begin by clearing away any unsettled sediment in the foundation that will likely lead to a rocky process, yielding less than ideal results. I will show you how to identify and unblock hidden challenges that are unnecessarily hindering your focus and pace. We will discuss action steps toward getting what you want by first uncovering exactly what that is, therefore strengthening your ability to discern the right direction with confidence.

These discussion topics include the fundamentals of problem-solving, how to establish greater confidence in your desired candidate profile, and how to craft an effective story to attract the right talent. The first four chapters, you will notice, focus on solidifying the elements of the foundation. After that, we will move into specific action steps to get better organized, interviewing 101, what to look for throughout the process, and optimizing your working relationship with your recruiter. Once you've finished reading the book, you can keep it on hand and later refer back to individual chapters as needed in your next hiring process. In introducing each topic, I will sometimes first apply the lesson to real life, helping to stimulate, entertain, and lock in the message. Then

we will consider how the lesson is relevant to recruiting. While many of my examples are based on my experience recruiting for the medical industry, these concepts can also be applied across other industries as well.

I will discuss introspection, the art of looking within ourselves as a means to uncover challenges that might be holding us back, and then help you identify the shift needed to surpass these setbacks. While learning this practice may feel uncomfortable at first, like anything we're not used to doing, the more we practice it, the more easily we begin to identify challenges and implement solutions.

We succeed at what we focus on. If you need proof, take a look at where you are today and how you got there. You focused your attention on growing your career. That's a little trick I threw in my bag years ago that has become so second nature I now never doubt I will succeed at whatever I give my attention to. If it isn't already, the same mindset can be yours. Let's get focused.

Throughout this book, you will also get to know me. I will share personal background stories, some funny and others heartfelt, that shaped me as an individual and a professional. I will also share some philosophies that can help guide anyone toward living their best life. Are you ready to improve your recruiting, interviewing, and hiring process and free up more time and energy to focus on leading? Yes? Then it's go time.

Chapter One

The Foundation

Efficiency, Integrity, and Perseverance

Troika:

- 1. A Russian word; its meaning translates to all languages.*
- 2. Literal; three horses pulling a cart.*
- 3. Figurative; three forces moving in one direction to achieve a goal.*

Chapter Objectives

In this chapter, we will discuss:

- ✚ The importance of establishing a solid foundation when setting out to achieve a goal.
- ✚ Discovering and appreciating your dominant qualities, good and bad, and learning how to optimize them.

Have you ever felt squeezed, like you're trapped inside a box that no longer fits and maybe never really did? Not sure? An easy way to tell is by paying attention to how you're feeling.

Discomfort Is Intentional

Consider your recent hires. What emotions come up as you reflect on the process and your experiences? Did you find yourself stressed? Frustrated? Agitated? Pressured? Do you feel overwhelmed at the thought of searching for your next hire? When we feel discomfort, it's natural to keep plugging away with our responsibilities rather than acknowledge the feeling. However, eventually, feelings of frustration become too big to ignore. Discomfort is intentional. It propels us toward a new and better direction. That's what happened for me just before I decided to go into business for myself.

Looking back throughout my life, this feeling of being squeezed, of irritation and discomfort, was always present just before I made a pivotal move, changing the course of my life. I now get excited whenever I start to feel uncomfortable because I know better things are coming, not without hard work, but they are coming.

Let's dig into the foundation, where all things begin. If there is a crack in the surface, there is a flaw somewhere below. Our foundation, solid or rocky, balanced or shaky, dictates our future experiences, successes, and ultimately, our outlook from day to day. The foundation we establish, or lack thereof, greatly influences our recruiting, interviewing, and hiring process.

Efficiency, Integrity, and Perseverance

I chose these words for my business tagline as they describe my work ethic, the foundation of how I do what I do, and the way I lead my life. Before further exploring the significance of these words and how they are pillars of an effective recruiting and hiring process, let's travel further back into the foundation by taking a deeper look within ourselves. I'll take the pressure off by going first.

Our Best and Worst Qualities Compliment Each Other

One of my favorite personal theories I've discovered is that our best qualities are often the same as our worst. Or at least, there is something good in our "perceived" bad qualities. Alternatively, our best qualities can sometimes hold us back. Have you heard of the "double-edged" sword cliché? If you look, I bet you will find many double-edged swords and good-quality, bad-quality examples in yourself and others. It's also a fun self-esteem-boosting exercise to remind us to be a little easier on ourselves. At the end of this chapter, you will find chapter questions and an exercise that will help you explore your own good and bad qualities and how they might sometimes hinder as well as help you.

Efficiency is one of my best qualities. I've been called out about my direct and blunt personality many times. I've even been called "brutally honest" on several occasions. For the first half of my life, I tried to tone down my direct personality to fit in better. While *I* appreciate and prefer direct and honest communication, I understand that not everyone does, and I never want to make others feel uncomfortable. But when I try to be someone I'm not, then *I'm*

uncomfortable. I would find myself either not engaging and feeling disempowered or the complete opposite: direct, straight-to-the-point, and risking offending someone.

Being direct is who I am, and who we are is exactly who we should always be. Only then can we attract the people and opportunities we align with, while releasing those that might obstruct our growth. After literally decades of trying to mold my personality to please others, I finally found myself uncomfortable enough to make a change and start being myself.

A not-so-light example of how our good qualities can sometimes hold us back is something I recently learned about my late stepfather, only after he had passed. Growing up, he and I were not as close as I wanted to be. We had a lot of challenges as emotional connections were difficult for him. He was a high-integrity man. He was a loyal and fearless protector with a solid work ethic. He was usually quiet, but when he did speak, it was often a quick-witted one-liner under his breath that made everyone laugh.

After my stepfather passed, my mother shared some of his career achievements with us kids. We were all surprised and impressed. He didn't need a lot of praise and never bragged about his accomplishments. He also never complained when something was bothering him. In the end, these commendable qualities were the most significant contributing factors to the loss of his life. My stepfather was getting sick in his later years, although he died at just 68 years old. While he had been experiencing uncomfortable symptoms, he didn't complain. Sadly, he also didn't pay enough attention to how he felt to know he needed help.

The severe underlying comorbidities causing the symptoms he chose not to complain, or speak up about, later weakened him beyond recovery. Good quality? My stepfather never complained. Double-edged sword? He didn't communicate when something

bothered him. If he had spoken up years or maybe even months earlier, he might have been able to get the help he didn't realize he needed before it was too late.

If there is something to learn from this experience, it is to acknowledge our feelings and pay them some attention. Our feelings are clues that can keep us safe and protected, and can also guide us in a new direction toward greater fulfillment and bigger opportunities to provide value.

Identify and Define Your Top Three Qualities

Efficiency: achieving maximum productivity with minimum wasted effort.

As I previously shared, one of my top traits is being efficient. Double-edged sword? I lack patience and have limited tolerance for time wasted. While patience is a virtue, in my opinion, so is efficiency. Being efficient saves time. Being honest saves time. In leading with these qualities, I feel I am giving respect. Honesty provides an opportunity to stimulate growth and understanding. If there is one thing everyone in the world has in common, it is the desire to be understood. Unnecessary confusion and frustration are inevitable when we fail to say what we truly mean, and when what we say is not the truth.

However, telling the truth is not always popular. The truth is hard. It forces us to look at ourselves and sometimes introduces things we would rather not see. My honest and impatient, or "efficient," nature also makes me quite good at my job, getting things done, and achieving goals in general. While there is undoubtedly a time and place for patience, efficiency is one of my greatest virtues.

Integrity: the quality of being honest and having strong moral principles.

Having integrity is a strong quality that, at first, seems challenging to find its opposing double-edged sword. Can there be such a thing as too much integrity? I'm a middle child and have always adhered to my strict moral principles, including high standards for myself and others. As a result, I can become deeply offended or hurt when I or someone else is mistreated or when I feel someone is not doing the right thing. I can also become overly agitated when a process is not being executed to my standards. I think things should be done the right way, no excuses. This perception is not always well-received.

I love words and their meanings, so I sometimes look them up for fun to see if I can learn something new. I looked up *Middle Child Syndrome* once, and I did learn something new. It encompasses having a strong desire for fairness and becoming deeply disturbed at the occurrence of injustice. This makes sense, as sometimes, middle children seem to get the raw end of the deal, even if unintentional.

I often felt I got the raw end of the deal growing up: the smallest room, the least amount of freedom, and the most reprimanding. I found myself getting very upset at anything that went against “the rules.” These included literal rules, like when playing board games, and moral principles like treating people kindly and with due respect. When I witnessed what I felt was an injustice, I would often speak up about it.

While I was always the smallest in my class and the first in line on picture day, I walked tall and with confidence. However, my confidence waned on the first day of middle school. I found myself in a huge new building with eighth-graders towering over me. One day after school, I was waiting in line for the bus, and one of the big, scary eighth graders cut in front of me. True to form, I was deeply offended at her attempt to bully me.

I still vividly remember this pivotal moment. I knew that whatever choice I made would define who I was going to be and how I would

feel about myself moving forward. Was I going to do nothing, caving into fear of the consequences if I didn't stand up for myself? Or was I going to speak up and let her know I was not someone she could mess with? While my heart pummeled my chest, my poker face stood strong. In the span of a few seconds, my little sixth-grade brain contemplated my future, and I made my decision. I took my place back in line in front of her, looked her in the eye, and sternly said, "I was here. You don't cut in front of me."

With my nerves on end, I awaited the outcome. To my relief, she didn't say a word. She just rolled her eyes and never bothered me again. I had decided who I was long before this moment in my young life, and I had passed the test that was presented to me, the opportunity to *show* myself who I was.

Integrity, to me, is doing the right thing without fear or worry of what others might think. This makes me great at my job, and while it has brought me years of repeat business and client referrals, not everyone appreciates this quality. Occasionally I rub a client the wrong way. They think I will back down, and when I don't, they have to. Sometimes we agree to disagree and keep moving forward, and other times we learn that maybe our business partnership is no longer mutually beneficial. I've had candidates choose not to work with me due to my direct nature, and I've had recruiters partnering with me become frustrated with my high expectations throughout the process. I do have very high standards. I don't deny that, and I will always do what I think is right and speak up when I feel something is not.

Perseverance: persistence in doing something despite difficulty or delay in achieving success.

Once I decide I'm doing something; I'm doing it. With similar stalwartness and on the other end of the spectrum, I have a very challenging time forcing myself if I don't want to do something.

When you notice your energy evaporating at the thought of doing something, pay attention. This is a signal pushing you in a different direction. When we observe our feelings, what feels right and what doesn't, we equip ourselves with a powerful tool, the ability to prioritize what is meaningful. Often, that's when our next direction shows up.

Starting with an Unstable Foundation

I want to share a little more detail about my past, as it directly relates to problem-solving and other concepts we will explore throughout the book, including when considering candidate profiles.

While honesty and integrity are qualities I adopted from a very young age, I struggled emotionally growing up and well into my thirties. I battled anxiety and depression in my seemingly endless search for fulfillment. I was on a constant quest for a place where, and for people with whom, I felt accepted and supported. The more I searched for these things, the further away they felt.

It wasn't until I began to shift my focus to looking within rather than outside of myself for what I needed that I finally began heading in the right direction. I have learned that as long as we are looking outside of ourselves for what we are seeking, the things we want will continue to feel just out of reach. It's ironic that what we are searching for everywhere except within ourselves, actually could not be closer to us. We can discover just *how* close when we shift our perspective inward.

One thing I always had with me during my emotional struggles was my work ethic. Growing up, I felt out of place and uncomfortable even in my home, and I couldn't wait to start working. Work, I felt, would give me a sense of freedom, a space I could call my own, as well as the self-empowerment that comes with having responsibilities. I got my first job working at a grocery store when I

was fifteen, and when I turned eighteen, I started waiting tables. Work brought me present and out of my head. When we keep ourselves in the present moment, we feel better and attract better things. Fulfilling my responsibilities felt good and provided an outlet to absorb my endless supply of energy. I aim to fully exhaust myself each day, both mentally and physically. Energy unspent equals frustration.

Having responsibility and making a difference is a true self-esteem builder. When we contribute, we see our value. The independence I established through my work ethic and the ability to provide for myself is at the root of my foundation and continues to greatly influence my path moving forward.

Stepping onto My Career Path

When we show ourselves what we can do, we build and solidify our belief in ourselves. We prove to ourselves that we can overcome any challenge and achieve anything we set our mind to. This awareness stimulates inevitable success and the drive to aim higher. When we know we have within us the ability to get what we want, we *will* go get it. At the time, I didn't know that I was adopting a powerful mindset and practice that would lead me to finally stumble upon my long-awaited career path and continue growing in ways I had not yet imagined.

I've never felt comfortable in office settings. To me, the atmosphere feels stifling and distracting. I prefer to work independently, where I can focus and get things done. Waiting tables, I ran my own section, taking care of my guests as if it were my own little business. I'm very observant when it comes to people, how they feel, and what they want.

After several years, I had successfully mastered supporting myself by waiting tables, and I was ready for more. I began to feel increasingly frustrated the last few years of my serving career with

my failed attempts at finding a new path. I applied for jobs and went on interviews, but I couldn't see myself happy in the day-to-day of any of the positions I had applied for. I'd also be making less money than I was waiting tables, so I just kept waiting tables. I had the burning desire to do more; I just didn't know what. I knew what I didn't want, which was to work in an office behind a desk. I needed to move around and be in an atmosphere where I didn't feel stifled.

It wasn't until I shifted my focus from looking in scattered directions outside of myself, to instead look within, that I would finally find the answer. One night, during my ninth year of waiting tables, I was beyond frustrated and feeling very unhappy. I decided to give up, for the moment. I lay awake in bed. I sighed and said to myself, "Okay. If you could do anything, what would you do?" In one second, I had my answer. Write. "If I could do anything in the world, I would write," I said. I closed my eyes and went to sleep. In the morning, I awoke with an idea. I had gone within, and I had found the answer. Now, the idea, the answer, made no logical sense and would not lead me to become a published author overnight. But it started me on a path that was ultimately life-changing.

When we go within, we find the answers. And when they sometimes seem illogical, we are often heading in the right direction. There are many times looking back over my life, when I decided to do something I knew made no logical sense. Yet somehow, I felt compelled to keep going and trust my instincts, which in the end, led to a positive and significant change.

Can you think of a time when you felt compelled to do something that made no logical sense yet led you in a life-changing direction?

On the day I woke up with my illogical idea around my next career move, I was 26 years old. Since I had affirmed that I wanted to be a writer, I went online to a local magazine's website. This was the illogical part. What was I planning to find here? I wasn't going to be

able to get a staff writing job with just my college newspaper clippings. Actually, looking back, maybe I could have. I was pretty good.

Was I going to get an internship that paid no money? I had my own apartment and bills to pay. Still, something told me to keep looking. I went on their job board, and I saw an Account Executive opening selling ads for the magazine. I read the qualifications, of which I met none of. I had a college degree, which was not required. Still, I applied. I wrote a genuine, heartfelt cover letter, which I sent with my bare-bones college graduate and restaurant experience résumé. I got an interview. I got the job, and I became the number one sales rep for several consecutive months later that year. The role was commission only and terrifying; however, with great risk often comes great reward.

Back to You: Leverage Your Perceived Weaknesses by Recognizing Your Strengths

Now that we've explored the art of looking within to solve our problems and we've touched on the power of perseverance, it's time to reflect on these concepts and make them your own.

Consider what others say about you, and then look deeper to see if you can find the opposing trait within the same quality. Have you been called stubborn? Perhaps you are confident with a strong belief in yourself. Have you been labeled a workaholic? Maybe you are driven. Do people tell you how considerate you are? Perhaps you sometimes neglect your own needs. Take what you have learned from this section and think it over as you progress through the remaining sections, so you'll be ready for the exercise at the end of the chapter.

Implementing Perseverance

I had been given an opportunity and a new direction. Of course, I was scared I might fail. What's the worst that could happen? I'll not get a sale, and I'll make no money. My customers will smell my fear of needing the sale, and they won't buy. I had fears. But I told myself, this will work. Yes, it will; yes, I can; and yes, it did. And this was the start of my successful sales career and the attitude I carry with me in all that I do. Yes, I can.

Even though perseverance comes last in my business tagline, it comes first in my life and is perhaps the most crucial element to success, following two foundational fundamentals. Peeling back the layers, perseverance starts with listening to yourself and acknowledging that little voice most of us ignore. It's easier to ignore it, that voice inside of us that is trying to be heard, screaming at us somehow at the lowest octave, while simultaneously vibrating loudly, persistently, annoyingly, with the hope that we will listen, until we finally do. The possibilities are limitless when we get out of our own way and begin to hear ourselves.

What If It *Does* Work Out?

The reason it can be so scary to really listen to ourselves is that once we acknowledge what we truly want, then we have a choice. We can do something about it, begin trying and risk failing, or we can live with the awareness that we are lying to ourselves by not pursuing what we truly want. That last option sounds so bad to me that it's not an option.

So that's the first crucial element of perseverance: listening to yourself. If you could have and do anything, what would that look like? Whatever the answer is, it is the direction that is meant for you. The path beyond that does not have to be clearly laid out, and it likely won't be. That's not how it works. However, when we stay true to ourselves, present and focused, the next step shows up, often in

unexpected ways. While it may take us many steps to get where we're going, the knowledge and growth we acquire along the way prepare us to be equipped once we get where we're going. If we skipped ahead and published our first book overnight and without the journey, what's going to be in the book?

The second fundamental of perseverance is belief in yourself. We've acknowledged what we want. Now we tell ourselves we *can*. And when the familiar feeling of doubt creeps in, trying to veer us off the very path it may have taken us years to finally step onto, what do we do? We switch it. We tell ourselves we can. "What if ... it *does* work out?" And then what? We persevere. We keep going even when it's hard. It will be hard, and that's okay. It is in the face of challenge and the self-imposed menace of doubt that we show ourselves who we are and what we can do.

Exercise:

1. Write down your best quality along with the opposing negative quality you find in yourself. Then, reflect on an experience where you employed your best quality and suffered a negative outcome.

2. Now write down your “worst” quality and the positive opposing trait you identify in yourself. Take a moment to reflect on an experience where you employed this “bad” quality, and you experienced a positive outcome.

3. Think of a time where you felt compelled to carry out an action that made no logical sense. What was the outcome?

Use this newfound awareness and appreciation for yourself to trust your instincts moving forward, guiding you toward better things with greater ease.

Apply and Take Ownership

Now that you've reached the end of Chapter One, you should have a better understanding of:

- ✚ The significance of building a solid foundation.
- ✚ How to persevere by leveraging your qualities and trusting your instincts to guide you in your next direction.

Efficiency, integrity, and perseverance are rooted in the foundation of how I achieve my goals, including winning jobs and building trusted partnerships with my clients. In the next chapter, we will discuss how to establish your foundation and how applying efficiency, integrity, and perseverance can help you hire with confidence. Ready? Let's go!

Chapter Two

The Application

*Applying Efficiency, Integrity, and Perseverance to All Things
Recruiting*

“Go as far as you can see. When you get there, you’ll be able to see further.”

~Thomas Carlyle

Chapter Objectives

In this chapter, we will discuss:

- ✚ How to create greater efficiency by leveraging your resources.
- ✚ How to identify solutions with ease and certainty.

What is more important? Time or money? Some argue their value is equal, saying time *is* money. We can always make more money; however, we can never get back the time we've spent. While we cannot *make* time, we *can take* time. By using your time more efficiently, you maximize each hour, creating more time for leading your team.

How? Knowing what you're good at and not good at is an excellent place to start. Do you know someone, perhaps right at your fingertips within your organization, who *is* good at what you're not? Take time to learn from them. Give them a quick call and ask them about their process. What's working for them? Can they show you how they do what they do? By taking ten or twenty minutes, maybe even an hour, to learn from someone who already has an established process, you can save yourself hours of time and slowed momentum attempting to reinvent a wheel you could have instead borrowed from someone else. And chances are, you have something you're good at, a skill set that comes easily to you, that you can offer someone else—the exchange of giving and receiving. When we *take* time by utilizing our resources, we can avoid unnecessary stress and execute more quickly and efficiently.

For example, while I'm good at staying organized, I'm not good at *creating* organization methods. When I first started recruiting, I felt overwhelmed with how to organize my jobs, résumés, candidates, and my hiring manager communication. Knowing I'm not good at reinventing this wheel, I reached out to members on my team who had been in the business for much longer than I, who already had established organizational systems. I adopted the ones that worked for me, adjusted the ones that didn't, and I was able to quickly focus on doing my job rather than taking a week first to organize my job.

The most valuable takeaway that got me focused on my job and not *organizing* my job was organizing my Outlook inbox. I created a folder for each company I was working with, along with subfolders for each job I was working under that company, then subfolders as needed pertaining to each job. Then, anytime an email came in, after addressing the email, I would drag and drop it into its folder, where I could easily access it as needed. In Chapter Six, we'll discuss more on organizational tools like this. When we know what we're good at and learn to use our available resources as solutions for the things we're not good at, we can accomplish more with less effort.

State the Problem and Give Up

What do we do when we know we don't have the knowledge we're searching for and don't yet know where to find it? We give up—temporarily. When I find myself searching for an answer, a direction, or a resource on something I'd like to learn, I pay attention to whether I'm using my time efficiently and progressing. If, instead, I seem to be going down an internet rabbit hole, clicking on this and downloading that while getting no closer to an answer, I recognize that rather than *taking* time, I am wasting time. And since we've established that time is something we can never get back, wasting time is not an option.

When we haven't yet found the solution to make our lives easier and our processes more efficient, we first state the problem. Then, we give up. We've identified the problem, and now we let it go. Then we get present by working on something we do have mastered. Eventually, the solution finds us.

This is true in life and the movies. My first memory of exercising this practice I shared earlier in Chapter One. It was right before I finally found the direction that started my sales career. I had worn myself out beyond frustration in search of a solution, and while I had been relentless in my efforts, nothing was working. So finally, I tried something different. I stated the problem I wanted to solve, and then I gave up. I went to sleep. And in the morning, the idea popped into my head. The solution had found me. I didn't have to do anything.

I think the reason this concept works is that we are bringing ourselves present. Think of the familiar saying, "Can't see the forest for the trees." When we are in the thick of our problems, our minds are cluttered, and we cannot see the solution, which is often much closer than we think. When we relax our mind by simply stating the problem, we let go of the worry or fear that we won't find the solution. Then the very thing we're in search of suddenly appears.

Back then, I had no idea what a genius move I'd just made. Over a decade later, I read about this very concept in a screenwriting book by Viki King, *How to Write a Movie in 21 Days*.¹ (I have done this three times so far in following her process. I highly recommend this book if screenwriting is an aspiration of yours.) She discusses what I call the "State the Problem and Give Up" concept in her book. The main character has a problem, and they are tirelessly searching unsuccessfully for a solution until finally, they give up. They take a

¹ Viki King, *How to Write a Movie in 21 Days: The Inner Movie Method* (New York u.a: Harper et Row, 2020).

nap. They go to the bar, do whatever they do. Then, when they wake up from their slumber or drunken stupor, there it is. The sought-after treasure, the idea, the solution has found them, only after they stated the problem and then gave up. But first, to make the story interesting, they tried a million other wrong directions and exhausted themselves.

The cool thing about learning this concept and putting it into practice is that once we do, we will get there faster the next time. Life is interesting enough without creating more problems for ourselves. Look for this the next time you're watching a movie and watch for it in your own life as well. The answers we need to make our days and lives better are not only all around us; they are *within* us. And when we stop worrying about the problem and get present, we usually figure it out.

Getting Organized

As I shared earlier, while I am very organized, my brain does not easily map out methods to organize. Give me a perfectly constructed cabinet, and I'll arrange everything in a way that makes sense for future use. But design a cabinet? No. I would end up wasting nine hours trying to wrap my brain around how the pieces fit together. It would better serve me to buy an already constructed cabinet or pay a skilled carpenter to make one for me. Before we move on from cabinets, I'll share a story about my "organized" medicine cabinet that I had a slight problem with and how I solved it by applying the State the Problem and Give Up concept.

I had moved into my new apartment, and I was very pleased with my big bathroom and nice big medicine cabinet. I could fit a lot in there, and it was well organized by my standards, except for one small problem. For the entire first year after I moved in, my toothbrush would fall onto the floor every time I opened my medicine cabinet. It really bugged me. I would grunt in annoyance

three times a day for a year when I opened my medicine cabinet, and my toothbrush inevitably fell onto the floor. I tucked it behind this, and I wedged between that, but nothing worked.

One day, I guess I was fed up enough, and I gave up, just for a moment. I stated the problem. “My toothbrush keeps falling onto the floor.” Then I got present with whatever I was doing, probably brushing my teeth, and suddenly, the solution found me. I remembered I had these little mason jars in my kitchen I’d bought to store my cat’s wet food in after opening the can. I had several of them, and they were just the right size to set inside my medicine cabinet and hold my toothbrush. Problem solved. My toothbrush no longer falls onto the floor when I open my medicine cabinet. Can I tell you how happy this makes me?

There are often simple things we can implement to keep ourselves feeling good. When little irritations fester inside us because of things that aren’t working as efficiently as possible, we are being impacted more than we may realize. We attract more of how we are feeling. We attract more of the energy we are vibrating in. When we take steps to improve our day-to-day, maximizing our time with enhanced efficiencies, more success can come to us and with greater ease.

I encourage you to take a look at your day and your daily activities. Is something bugging you, maybe unnecessarily distracting your focus and inevitably slowing your momentum? Pay attention to what’s bothering you, to what could be working better. When something bothers us, it’s for a reason, and the reason is there is something better meant for us, something that will improve our day and our lives. But we won’t find the solution when we don’t know we have a problem. By becoming aware of what needs improving, we are on our way to the solutions finding us.

Integrity and Recruiting

As a recruiter, my attitude is that my job is to deliver qualified candidates to help the manager build a solid pool so they can ultimately decide who is suitable for the job. While, of course, I *want* to win the job, my focus is to deliver candidates. While winning the job is the only way for me to make my money, in keeping with my goal of delivering qualified candidates, I will win jobs. My focus is to provide strong candidates, help coach the right candidates through the process, and make the hiring manager's life easier. With this attitude, the wins and the money will come, as will the repeat business and client referrals. And that is exactly what's happened for me over the years—business consistently flowing in, sometimes too much business.

Integrity also means sometimes saying no. If I stretch myself too thin, I won't be able to bring value to my clients, and I'm not okay with that. This is another example of integrity that maybe some don't care for. I'd love to help everyone. My primary purpose in all I do is to help others. But there are only so many hours in the day, and sometimes, I have to say no out of respect for my clients.

In what other ways is integrity applied when recruiting? Being honest. It is my job to be honest with my client, the hiring manager, and with the candidates. If I begin to see some red flags throughout the process or have cause for concern with a candidate being the right fit, it's time to check in with the manager. There is an interview process for a reason. Hopefully, the candidate gets to have enough touchpoints with the company and the team to evaluate whether the opportunity is a good move for them. The manager and team get to see how the candidate conducts themselves throughout the process. A reason for concern doesn't necessarily mean the candidate is not a fit, but communicating any concerns that come up can help decrease the chance of surprises in the end.

It's also my job to have integrity with the candidate. If concerns do arise, I dig deeper with the candidate while checking in throughout the process. Chances are, if I'm concerned, the hiring manager will be too. If the candidate is coachable and open, I have an opportunity to help them keep moving forward. I'm not helping a candidate by sending them into the next interview without making them aware of a potential challenge and providing some helpful insight. Concerns and challenges present an opportunity to help the candidate grow and see areas where they can improve. They also present an opportunity for me to push myself and get a little uncomfortable by sharing something that's perhaps difficult to communicate effectively. Also, throughout the process, these little flags or signs let me know if I need additional candidates in my pipeline. My job is to see the job through, persevere, and go back to the drawing board, varying my searches as many times as necessary to continue presenting candidates until an offer is accepted.

Once, a hiring manager called to ask me to work on his opening, and he shared he was at the end of his interview process and was "pretty sure" he had his candidate but just wanted a few more to compare. *Thanks for bringing me in at the end of your interview process, where I have very little chance of winning the job*, I thought. I knew I was not winning the job. The manager had already done his own recruiting. I would be working for free to make his life easier, which is exactly what I did. I delivered eight solid candidates, six of which were stellar.

The manager, of course, hired the candidate he'd already found on his own. I congratulated him on finding a great candidate and moved forward with my other jobs. I also proved myself to that manager. I kept the attitude that my job is to deliver candidates to help him make the right decision for his team. Not long after, the same manager reached back out for my help in filling another opening. This was a leadership position, which meant a bigger payout for me

if I won the job. This time, I presented one candidate, who was the right candidate, and she won the job. Integrity and perseverance won. I won't win every opportunity, but with the right attitude, I will keep getting opportunities.

Integrity with the Candidate

A good recruiter also wants what's best for the candidate. In order to find that out, I take a few minutes to learn about them at the start of our initial call. I always begin the call by asking the candidate about themselves, their day, what their current role entails, and what's important to them moving forward in their career. Without this information, how will I know how I can help them and if the opportunity I have might be a fit? Just like in sales, we cannot help a customer if we don't understand their needs. And as we've discussed, we cannot present a solution without first identifying the problem.

Before the days of Google Maps, one of my pet peeves was when someone would give directions over the phone without first understanding where I was coming from. How can they know whether I need to turn left or right without knowing which direction I'm facing? By taking a few minutes at the start of the call to gain some insight into the candidate, where they've been, what they've done and what they're looking for, I'm better equipped to provide a solution. Integrity also means keeping in contact with the candidate throughout the process and being a resource to them in helping set them up for success as well.

Integrity means going with my gut, even when I know it might irritate someone. On more than one occasion, I've had hiring managers ask me to reach out to a candidate they found searching on their own or perhaps already know in their network. They will ask me to screen them and first vet their interest. As managers are typically well-versed in their geographies and specialties, this is totally

acceptable, and I appreciate that it's me they are giving the opportunity to. However, a quick glance at a candidate's LinkedIn profile makes it easy for me to assess when they are not a fit. Maybe they changed industries seven years ago and are now out of touch with the contacts the manager is requiring. Maybe they've held six jobs in five years, none of which have anything to do with the job I'm recruiting for.

In these real-life examples, I knew that reaching out to these unqualified candidates would not be a good use of anyone's time, not mine, not theirs, and not my client's, even though the request came from them. I was honest with the manager and let them know these candidates were not a fit, and I shared specifically why. One manager pushed back. "Are they hungry?" he said.

"I don't know if they're hungry; I didn't call them because it's irrelevant as they do not have the required experience."

He pushed back again, saying he could teach them. I held my ground. I'm not in the business of wasting people's time, including my client's. As we were not going to agree on this one, I simply told him, "No, I will not be able to do that. If you would like to reach out to them, by all means. Thank you for the opportunity, but engaging these candidates will not be a good use of anyone's time."

That's something I learned from Oprah's book, *What I Know For Sure*.² Sometimes we can simply say, "No, I will not be able to do that." While I'm sure that hiring manager did not join my fan club that day, I was happy that I saved him, myself, and these potential candidates valuable time.

² Oprah Winfrey, *What I Know for Sure* (Waterville, ME: Thorndike Press, 2015).

Perseverance

There is always the chance that we will fail. And guess what, that's okay.

Failure: lack of success; not getting the expected reaction.

Of the two definitions above, I prefer the second. The first is too subjective because who decides what success is? We may not achieve the desired outcome when we set out to do something, but did we learn from our experience? Are we now more equipped than before? We will always be better at something the hundredth time we try versus the first time—yoga, public speaking, cleaning the shower. Actually, I've still not mastered the last one. The other two I've got. This is a sign that I should probably instead utilize my resources and pay someone to come and clean my shower while I maximize my time focusing on what I'm good at.

As a recruiter, I know that someone will win the job I've been given to work on. Why not me? I get results by acknowledging what I want and why I want it. Then I tell myself I can, and then I try again and again. And when I reach for the stars and land on the moon, the results are pretty great. I've won jobs where I've presented one candidate, and I've lost jobs where I've presented eighteen candidates. As long as I see the jobs through, I'm doing my job, and I will have enough wins—more than enough.

Most Improved

“Most Improved” was always my trophy growing up, and I disliked it immensely. However, I've since grown to appreciate the practice of improving because now I understand its significance. “Most Improved” demonstrates perseverance. Improving means not just trying but continuously trying. It means learning from challenging times and implementing what we've learned so that our better, stronger, smarter, *more improved* selves can now achieve more with

less effort. Learning from our “failures” forever changes us, and we never return to who we were before.

One of my former medical device sales managers taught me something valuable that I carry with me and often still think of. I was disappointed after not closing a sale that, at the time, felt significant, as I was aiming to reach my quota. He told me to let it go. “Learn to cut your losses and keep moving forward,” he said.

As simple as this concept is, we don’t realize how much energy we waste and how much momentum we lose when we focus on our losses. A loss is in the past, which means it’s no longer happening. When we spend time focusing on it, we will certainly miss out on opportunities right in front of us, creating more losses for ourselves. When we get back up and keep going, we show ourselves how strong we really are. Failure is nothing to be afraid of because it’s not actually failing. It’s learning and growing. Letting go of our losses frees up our energy, creating more momentum. Failures are essentially building blocks toward greater successes attained with less effort. While math and science are not my strong suits, let’s explore some physics for a moment.

Momentum: the quantity of motion of a moving body, measured as a product of its mass and velocity.

Without breaking down the “physics” of physics, it’s pretty easy to comprehend that a body already in motion gets further faster than a body standing still. When we hold on to our perceived losses, we stand still. Disappointments are actually little gifts that can shift us in a new direction toward better things. That’s why I always say, “If I’m feeling uncomfortable, great. Change is coming.”

Exercise:

1. Out loud, state the problem that you have identified. Now give up, get present, and focus on something else. Wait and see if a solution soon presents itself later this week.

Apply and Take Ownership

Now that you've reached the end of Chapter Two, you should have more confidence in:

- ✚ Understanding that failures can ultimately propel you to be better equipped moving forward.
- ✚ Paying attention to what's bothering you and using your frustration to help you shift directions and find solutions.

It's easier to get where we're going when we have a clear direction. The first step is understanding what we want, which may require peeling back some layers and digging deeper into the foundation. In the next chapter, we will do just that. While it's sometimes necessary to execute quickly in the recruiting process, we can ensure we end up in the right place by locking in some essentials, including clarifying what we want. We have a little more to go before jumping into the recruiting process. So keep coming with me on this journey. I promise to provide useful information and to entertain and inspire.

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I look forward to hearing about your progress.

It's Go Time,

~Amy

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About the Author



Amy Miller is an executive recruiter and principal owner of Troika Talent Acquisitions. Her resilient outlook and tenacity have led to numerous successful hires and rewarding client partnerships.

While Amy has been writing all her life, *Ready Set Recruit: The Hiring Manager's Guide to Recruiting with Confidence* is her first book. She looks forward to publishing additional reference and motivational self-help books.

When she's not working or writing, you can find her running in Central Park or striking a pose at hot yoga. In her downtime, she enjoys stimulating conversation and snuggling with her adoring cat, Gilligan.

While Amy is fearless in pursuing her goals, you won't catch her ice skating or riding a bike. Instead, she likes her feet planted firmly on the ground while keeping her head in the clouds. Innately aware of her ability to achieve anything she sets out to, Amy is passionate about awakening this belief in others and inspiring self-empowerment. She is also a motivational speaker and life coach and lives in Manhattan.

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