



The Reasons Searches Fail

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According to a survey taken at a recent International Association of Corporate and Professional Recruiters (IACPR) conference, the following problems were listed as **reasons for failure and/or elongation** of search projects:

Unrealistic expectations:

- ▶ Perfect candidates don't exist (and certainly not at "below market prices").
- ▶ Focus should be on "can the person do the job and accomplish what needs to be done," not "what imperfections can be found," or "is the resume lacking anything?"

Unwillingness to adjust to market-driven compensation package requirements to attract top candidates:

- ▶ In a "free agent" environment, compensation is dynamic & market-driven. It's very difficult to attract a top-tier candidate for a mid-or-bottom-tier compensation package.

Improperly managed search process, failure to generate or seize upon momentum:

- ▶ A search project should have a client sponsor/driver, with an efficient and expeditious process. Coordinated teamwork is critical.

Lack of clear requirements - Moving targets - changing specifications:

- ▶ 'Tweaking' is normal in the search process, but major changes and/or major 'scope creep' frequently prove very time-consuming, frustrating and expensive for all parties.
- ▶ As with any project in any field, the better defined the project is, the more successful and timely the result.

Indecision and delays:

- ▶ Hiring by committee can sometimes rule out the most qualified candidates, due to difficulty in acquiring consensus, associated time delays, and because one "no" can outweigh several "yes's".
- ▶ And while all executives have multiple important priorities, acquisition of top talent requires a considerable commitment of a decision-maker's time.
- ▶ Excessive time delays kill all deals.
- ▶ It's best to ensure consistent evaluation criteria and insist on constant progress toward closure and completion.

Unresponsiveness and/or poor communication between client and search partner(s):

- ▶ The more communication and coordination there is between client and search partner, the better.
- ▶ Consistency, momentum, expectations etc. must be managed effectively to optimize results.
- ▶ Client executive accessibility and input is critical to success.
- ▶ Effective search is a team sport, requiring coordinated and complementary execution of a well defined plan.

Lack of corporate buy-in - Hidden Agendas – Politics:

- ▶ Are all parties committed to the relationship and process as defined, or is it possible that someone could (intentionally or unintentionally) sabotage the project? These are internal problems that must be addressed and which can severely inhibit a search project.

- ▶ Is it important to the company? What's the justification for the person/role?
- ▶ If the new person can positively impact the company, all gears should be in sync to attract the person.

Failure to adequately "sell" the candidate on the positive aspects of the position/company/career:

- ▶ Even in today's market, great candidates have multiple options.
- ▶ Both hiring employer and search firm must point out how the opportunity matches the candidate's needs, desires & goals.
- ▶ And obviously, the offer should be attractive to the candidate.

Less than serious candidates:

- ▶ Not that a person would intentionally deceive a prospective employer, but "tire kicking" is very "time wasting." Level of interest should be determined early and frequently throughout the interview process.

Shortage of, or inability to find, an attractive selection of qualified candidates:

- ▶ Even today, there is extreme competition for certain critical management talent.
- ▶ An effective sourcing strategy and strong search partnership will help.
- ▶ However, these market factors further accentuate the need to move decisively, efficiently and expeditiously when a good candidate does appear, and to present an attractive career and financial opportunity that meets his/her expectations.

Choosing the wrong search firm:

- ▶ While seeking all new business possible, most firms' strengths are better suited to certain projects and clients more than others. Yours may not be one of those. Absolute care should be taken in evaluating and selecting a search organization that best suits your needs and fiduciary responsibility.
- ▶ The interview, recruitment and offer process should be clean, crisp, proactive and impressive. Both the search firm and client executives must execute a concentrated, efficient and coordinated effort to attract the top person for the job. Avoiding the above pitfalls can help to achieve everyone's desired result...a great new employee/executive.

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