



SECRETS TO ACQUIRING GREAT TALENT

INSIDERS STRATEGIES TO
FINDING QUALITY TALENT



An interview with
ROBERT & DANIEL MIDONECK

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ABOUT

Robert and Daniel Midoneck are the father/son team behind Velocity Search Group. Robert Midoneck, President and founder of Velocity Search Group, has spent over 30 years in the Executive Search and Staffing Industry. Starting his career as an accountant for a New York based CPA firm, Bob's passion for technology and his natural gift of making friends, as well as coaching and mentoring people, led him to begin a new career in the executive search business. He joined a national search firm that specialized in Information Technology and Accounting as a recruiter and business development representative where he developed the skills necessary to become a leader in the Executive Search industry. In the early 1990's Bob founded Eric Robert Associates, a New York City based search firm, where he stayed until he started Velocity Search in 2011.

Bob has been very active and has held numerous leadership positions in the TechServe Alliance, a national collaboration of placement firms, clients, consultants, and suppliers dedicated to advancing excellence and ethics within the placement industry. These leadership positions included National Executive Committee member and Vice President of the New York/New Jersey/Connecticut chapter. Previous professional experience includes public accounting and selling accounting software. Bob holds a Bachelor of Science in Accounting from the State University of New York at Albany.

A LITTLE BIT ABOUT DANIEL

After spending twenty-five years observing the staffing industry through his father, Dan decided to join the family business right out of college (in 2011). His college degree was earned from Curry College in Milton, Massachusetts.

As Chief Executive Officer/Director of Strategic Sourcing Dan's goal is to help eliminate the frustrations of the candidate and client within the hiring process. Depending on the situation, this could mean taking a consultative approach to the Client to map out their hiring processes and see if any steps can be tweaked to improve efficiencies. He also conducts a very thorough job intake to find out what the Client is trying to accomplish. For the candidate, Dan finds out what drives and motivates them. He engages them to find out their interests and goals and what they are looking for in the next step of their career. After uncovering the goals of the client and candidate Dan works to find a good match. He walks everyone through the hiring process so it continues to move along smoothly. He helps teams grow by infusing talent and passion into the companies he serves. As the candidate and client continue to grow within their industry, Dan will be there to help them with any questions or concerns they have. As a trusted advisor and expert in the industry Dan has witnessed lots of situations and he's prepared and excited to assist and help everyone's career.

**VELOCITY SEARCH
GROUP HAS
A MISSION TO
POSITIVELY IMPACT
COMPANIES AND
ENHANCE CAREERS
BY PROVIDING
THE BEST IN
PROFESSIONAL
EXECUTIVE AND
TECHNICAL SEARCH**

CHALLENGES

WHAT ARE THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES YOU HAVE SEEN IN ATTRACTING AND PROCURING TALENT?

One of the biggest challenges we have seen with our clients is a complete lack of them selling themselves. They do not sell the company. They do not sell the role. They feel that the candidate is the only one in the hiring process that must sell themselves. Additionally, the hiring manager feels that they need to find the perfect person, somebody that has 100% or 95% of their required wish list. What happens if somebody has 70% of the skillset, is smart, and has a great personality? They should be able to pick it up quickly, and by the time it takes to find the “perfect” person, the less than perfect candidate should have been able to be trained and be productive. So many companies are looking for perfection when perfection might not be what they think it should. Perfection may be someone that can be molded into the Client’s vision of perfection.

Another challenge is that during the hiring process, companies are looking at their existing salary structures rather than looking at what the market value is on that skillset. The market being a candidate-driven one has driven salaries up, but the company’s salary structure has not changed. When offers are extended that are not quite market competitive, a greater chance exists of turndowns and “buy-backs”.

How much does that endless interviewing cost you in lost time and delayed projects? Do your vacancies also put a strain on the entire staff and create moral problems? Does it create turnover? It is all about the supply and demand of candidates. Lastly, one of the biggest challenges facing those involved in hiring is never being told if the requirements of the job have changed. Recruiters and Human Resources are still looking for skill A, when skill B is more important now.

There is a lack of communication when the requirements change. We all know that when the hiring process starts, you are looking for skill A, but as you start speaking to more people, maybe A does not seem as important. Maybe you are looking for skills A and C in combination now. Not being aware of this, having too many people involved in the process, and managers not getting back to whomever is trying to source for the position is definitely a struggle. It definitely increases the time that it takes to fill the positions because as things change, no one is getting that information other than the client. Therefore, if the role is filled, it is because of pure luck.

WHEN REVIEWING RESUMES, HOW DO YOU KNOW THAT A CANDIDATE IS THE RIGHT FIT FOR AN ORGANIZATION?

You cannot tell if anyone is the “right fit” based upon how their resume is written. The resume is just a piece of paper. You cannot look at it and see someone’s intelligence, desire, their communication skills or their passion. Most of the people looking for new opportunities (our sector is technology) are not resume writers. The resume may not look as beautiful as the client would like or the resume might not speak about all the skillsets that the candidate has that the client is looking for. So, you must get on the phone and talk to these people. That is exactly, specifically, and precisely what we do. We uncover what it is clients are looking for and what skillsets they have that are crucial to the position that are not listed. You cannot judge a book by its cover. Speaking to these individuals enables us to find out what drives them for a new position. Is it better quality of life or growth potential?

Is it new technologies or training? Of course, money always plays a part in finding the right fit, so we need to make sure compensation expectations are aligned.

Another challenge that I think is overrated is judging a resume/candidate by their job histories. This is shortsighted. There are typically reasons for spotty resumes. We have had multiple recessions and lots of acquisitions and mergers that created duplication of staff that caused layoffs. Projects sometimes end abruptly as a result of moving the development teams to cheaper on-shore and near-shore locations. You cannot just look at a resume and say, “This candidate is a job hopper because there may be legitimate reasons for that jumping. Maybe the candidate is the victim of bad luck. Of course, now and then, you may uncover someone who is a jumper, but again, that’s not always the case.

AT VELOCITY

At Velocity Search Group, we truly have a passion for both clients and candidates. We prep the candidates thoroughly and get back to them on a timely basis, and this is appreciated because a lot of recruiters sometimes only focus on the client side.

TECHNOLOGY

HAS TECHNOLOGY CREATED A LESS PERSONAL APPROACH TO THE INITIAL HIRING PROCESS?

“THIS LACK OF PERSONAL APPROACH WITH THE HIRING MANAGER LEADS TO A LOT MORE INTERVIEWING OF THE WRONG CANDIDATES, CREATING LOTS OF WASTED TIME, AND A LONGER VACANCY PERIOD. ALL THIS ADDS TO THE TRUE COST OF THE HIRE.”

It seems that almost every company out there is putting in, or has put in, some sort of resume portal or vendor management system.

What this has done is that it has created a lack of personal touch, therefore, we can't be a trusted partner to our clients. There are many rules and regulations instituted by the Company: We cannot contact the manager. We cannot provide them information that our clients need and want, including, but not limited to, the market demand for the skillsets that they are looking for, the close-ability of the candidate, where the candidate is in the offer process with other companies, will the candidate accept the job if offered, and will the compensation be in line with the candidate's expectations.

Are there things on the resume that could be very important and desired if the manager knew this? This less than personal approach has become extremely frustrating from both sides of the hiring process.

The managers are getting resumes in which they can't see the total picture and the recruitment vendors are being judged by how quickly they respond to a job requirement and the number of submittals made and not necessarily on the quality of the submittal.

IS THE MARKET A PREDOMINANTLY YOUNG INDUSTRY OR ARE YOU STILL SEEING A HUGE RANGE OF DEMOGRAPHICS?

This is an interesting question. In our experience, we have seen a good mix of both older and younger people in the industry. Baby Boomers are currently retiring, so there is a loss of valuable information and subject matter expertise. I suppose that the three types of candidates that you have when you talk about Gen X, Millennials, and Baby Boomers are different. It's what drives them that's different. Companies need to appeal to all three types of candidates, and their managers need to find out how to appeal to them.

I believe that in today's world, people are looking for recognition. The younger generation thrives off of competition. They love getting rewards. They like flexible working arrangements and they want to be important to the organization. They want to be noticed. I think there is a constant need for a sense of: "Why do they need me? Let me feel that I'm wanted. I want to be happy and I want them to make me feel happy." What is it about the job opportunity that will make them happy? Is it working from home occasionally? Is it the perks of the job? Maybe unlimited sick days or more vacation time? Does it improve their quality of life? One thing that is big for me

is communal activities. Are there clubs? Are there intramural sports, including having a softball team after work? Public service, etc. There is still a good mix of Baby Boomers, Gen X, and Millennials working today and I think that notice needs to be taken that all the candidates are not the same, and they need to be managed differently. They have different expectations and driving factors.

Candidates are also looking for a meaning in their work that they do and that their work is something greater than themselves. When people work for a purpose that is greater than themselves, they feel good about their purpose and, for them, that's motivating. It also goes back to that reward-oriented mindset where the younger generations – and I do not say this to be biased, being part of the younger generation – want to feel rewarded. There is nothing better than doing something with a strong purpose. There needs to be more than just working to enhance the bottom line of a company.

TIPS & STRATEGIES

WHAT ARE SOME TIPS AND STRATEGIES FOR MANAGING THE HIRING PROCESS TO INCREASE ATTRACTION AND PROCUREMENT?

Every candidate looking for a job becomes frustrated. One of the best ways to increase procurement and reduce candidate frustration is for hiring authorities to give timely and detailed feedback on resumes that they have received and interviews that have taken place. Instead of just “yes”, “no”, “pass”, “fail”, which we get all the time, why and where did they fall short? Why will you not interview this candidate? This helps us zero in on the right candidate which will reduce the time to give the client the perfect resume.

Additionally, because we are in a candidate driven market, the client needs to understand what it is that the candidate wants in a new opportunity and then “sell it”. When we say “sell it”, we mean the following: Speak about the company, the role that the candidate will play, and the future growth this candidate could have. Make the opportunity sound awesome so that even if you don’t hire this person, you will be indirectly selling to their peers, and their peers are selling to the marketplace, softening up the marketplace for you, and increasing the reputation of your organization.

Maybe also reducing the number of people and procedures that a resume needs to go through before the hiring manager even sees

it would be productive. I cannot tell you how many times we follow up on a resume and we hear – “the resume is sitting on so and so’s desk”, “This guy has been out”, or “this person has been out on vacation”. This manager has not looked into the resume portals to see what resumes are just sitting there. When this happens, it extends the hiring process and makes it more likely that a good candidate will accept another job before the process is complete.

Recently, we lost two candidates that were going in for second interviews because the process took too long, and the candidates received other offers. Lastly, and I think we have alluded to this before, whether it is programming concepts or programming languages, accounting concepts, audits, tools, databases, or methodologies, all are very similar in concept, and therefore, they can be easily taught. Hire somebody bright that has 70% to 75% of the perfect requirements and train them the rest. They will be eager, they will be excited, and you will be up and running before you even know it.

BREAKING BAD HABITS FROM ANOTHER COMPANY

When speaking about bad habits that an employee has acquired during their career, I believe they are changeable. Most people can be molded or can change their habits as long as they are conscious of them. But it's tough. Only if both the managers and candidates are aware of the habits that need changing, these changes can occur. It is a bit of a sensitive subject, because nobody wants to be told that they are doing something wrong. So, I think that if someone has a bad or annoying habit, it must be addressed. I think that by bringing it up, talking about it, and finding ways to work around it will make it easier to change. But again, all parties need to consistently work on this. How do you uncover these bad habits? Is it a personality issue or conflict? Is it the way you do something from a technical skillset? Changes can occur depending on what the changes are. Some habits are easier to pick up on than others, and some are easier addressed than others. You cannot change everything in an individual, but you can change a lot.

TURNOFFS

WHAT ARE THE BIGGEST TURNOFFS TO CANDIDATES?

The biggest frustration working on the candidate side is not having feedback when a hiring manager just says “no” or “pass”. Why? The more feedback they are given, the more they can discuss it with their friends and tell them “this is what I lacked, but you may have this skill”. This can and will attract more candidates to your open position and this may be a good role for the candidate’s peers. The more feedback that is given, the speedier the process. Candidates don’t know why they are failing. It’s frustrating. They want to know why! They want to know why it’s a good fit, or why it’s a bad fit. What are the reasons for passing on them and/or what did you like or not like? Giving more detail to the candidate will help the hiring managers as well.

Another frustration (and I think this happens to everybody at some point in time) is when managers run late to the interview. Maybe it is a phone interview or maybe it is an in-person interview. We know things happen during the span of the day. We are all busy. But it doesn’t take much to put in a call to the candidate for two seconds and just say, “Something came up”, or send out an email, or contact your admin, and say, “Can we push this back?” or

“Could we reschedule it?” Or apologize to the candidate and tell them you’re running late and ask them if they can sit around waiting? This can be very frustrating. If I arrived early for an in-person interview, or was waiting for a phone call, and found myself sitting there around fifteen to twenty minutes without any understanding as to why I wasn’t interviewed on time, I would be a little ticked off.

The hiring process has gotten very long for certain Companies. I think having three to five onsite visits for one candidate is wild. It is crazy. It really extends the process. Look at it from the candidate’s side. The candidate needs to take time off from work for the interview. So, if he is taking three to five business days and the opportunity does not work out, and you don’t hire that individual, that is a lot of time to take off from work for nothing at the end of the day.

A lot of candidates do not want to disappear or call in sick multiple times because we all know the more you are out, the more you have a target on your back where people start questioning you. I think that a way to alleviate this is to have more phone or skype interviews. We know that it's tough to schedule someone to meet

with three to five people, especially if they are in different departments, but if you can get them on a teleconference, it makes things a lot easier than trying to have them sit down in one conference room. Doing this will speed up the process and should alleviate frustration on both the candidates' and the clients' side.

IN ESSENCE, SHOWING A LACK OF RESPECT FOR THE CANDIDATE'S TIME IS WHAT REALLY UPSETS THEM.

Additionally, when offers are made, companies typically have a range of what they are prepared to offer. Sometimes candidates go in to interviews with expectations of what they should earn because money matters. Candidates usually know upfront what compensation range they are looking for in their next opportunity. That is articulated a lot of the time to the hiring manager or the company, but sometimes companies feel that the candidates' skillset is not worth the money, or the salary desired will screw up the existing salary structure and they offer less. That is a major turnoff. If you had expectations and it came in short, and this was your dream job, it would be a major disappointment. And you can develop a negative feeling towards the company and job. Does anyone really want to take a step back in compensation or feel undervalued? It is disrespectful. It makes it hard for us, as

the middle man, to present that offer to the candidate. We've done it before and have seen candidates get insulted, angry, and upset. My advice is to make a competitive offer or don't make one at all. I would say 95% of the time, candidates do not accept the offer if it falls short of their expectations, or they accept, but leave the position when a better paying job comes along.

If you work with a company and find out that your co-workers (with the same experience in years and skills as you) are making significantly more money than you are, that is a recipe for turnover. It creates a feeling of "why did they lowball me and give me "x" when my friend over here has the same experience, maybe even a little less, and he is making more? That is insulting.

COUNTEROFFERS

WHAT IS THE BEST WAY TO HANDLE COUNTER OFFERS?

Counteroffers are akin to playing a game of Russian Roulette. There could be a lot of reasons that a person is looking to leave their current job other than money. If you are only looking for money and everything else is great, a counteroffer can work to your advantage. But lots of people look for jobs for more than just the money. Other factors forcing them to look elsewhere could be: older technology, no or little growth potential, perception of poor management, projects are stale and it's in maintenance mode and they are just bored. The one thing I will ask you is "Have those reasons changed now that you have been offered more money? The money sounds great. It is golden. It is fantastic. But, what else has changed? The technology is the same, the growth is the same, the management style is the same, and the projects have not changed. More often than not, three months after accepting the counteroffer, the excitement of that new money will have worn off and all the warts (the reason that you started looking for a job in the first place) are back. Most people get paid twice a month. For those two times a month, people are very happy. But most people work 20 days a month. Outside those two days of happiness, there are 18 days of misery.

Counteroffers rarely work. Companies will make a lot of promises to keep a candidate, but unless those promises are on a contract, it may not be worth the paper it is written on. What if the manager leaves? What if there is a reorg? What if senior management says no more promotions? Tough luck. You are screwed. What about the next time that there is a reorg or layoff? Does the person that has accepted the counteroffer have a target on their back? If you can be happy and you can deal with constantly looking over your shoulder, then that's OK. But if you can't deal with it, you will not be happy camper. Whatever side you are on, counteroffers very rarely work in this market. It has not really worked, ever. Most people are gone within three to six months after accepting a counteroffer. It is a good way for a client to protect themselves and get someone else to replace you down the road.

ONBOARDING

WHAT ARE SOME TIPS AND STRATEGIES FOR MANAGING THE HIRING PROCESS TO INCREASE ATTRACTION AND PROCUREMENT?

Onboarding is a two to four-week period. Truthfully, onboarding is ongoing until the candidate shows up for the first day of work. Typically, there is a two weeks' notice period, background checks, and sometimes, for officer level positions, there is garden leave. I believe that one of the things that must happen is for there to be constant communication between the new hire and the hiring manager. If there is no communication for that two to four-week period, things happen (most of them bad). This is a competitive candidate driven market. The candidate could be reached out to by another company or recruiter during this onboarding period, and because they are not yet invested in the new company, they say "Well, I have not started my new position yet. Maybe I should give this one a shot." Just remember, it is not real to that candidate after they have signed an offer letter. It is real when they show up for the first day of work.

We like to talk about the FUDS. FUDS are Fears, Uncertainties, Doubts, and Suspicions. Unless there is constant contact between the hiring manager and the new hire, one of these aspects are sure to come up. Why have I not heard from the manager? He knows I am starting there. Why is he not reaching out to me just to say, "Hey, just letting you know this is where we are in the process"? A lot of the times, a candidate will go take a background check or a drug test, and they will not hear anything for weeks. The new hire might start getting nervous that maybe they did not pass the background check. Things can happen. I have had people fail background checks erroneously.

FUDS = FEARS, UNCERTAINTIES, DOUBTS, SUSPICIONS

It's not just from a "move the process along" standpoint. If there is constant contact with the candidate, the manager knows that you are going to show up on start date. How many times have people accepted offers and the manager is excited, and then on the first day, the new hire doesn't show up. That happens. I know it sounds like a horror story, but it happens more than anyone would like it to. On the candidate side, there is the extra excitement when the manager seems that he or she is making an effort to reach out to you and get you involved early in the process.

Even if it's just to update you on what they are currently working on, or maybe it's to look into some technologies or business that were not pertinent during the interviewing process. As we all know, two to four weeks is a long time.

Just stay in touch with the new hire, call them, have a meeting with them and the team, or just have lunch with them during the process. This goes a long way. If you consistently engage with your incoming employee and are communicating with each other, the risk for counteroffers is significantly reduced.

CONTACT US

If you like what you heard or read, give Bob or Dan a call.

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QUESTIONS?

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