

by Allen Anderson

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## Prospecting as a Needed Tool

Effective management of a job placement department requires an integration of basic marketing and sales techniques into the department's operational planning.

An important marketing detail to be monitored in generating jobs is the effectiveness of prospecting activities.

A prospect is an employer with the potential to hire one of your candidates.

Prospecting is the art of identifying prospects by their probability of hiring.

The key to most strategies in job placement, as provided by prospecting, is the ability to recognize the importance of timing in hiring decisions and the level of serious consideration that will be afforded to your candidates.

Prospecting can take place either by you identifying and contacting potential employers or by employers self-identifying and contacting you.

Some of the crucial elements in the success of a prospecting plan are:

1. The number of direct contact points your organization has with the market place is directly proportional to your success. Prospecting should be designed to establish direct contact points and to not rely on a third party connection.

Prospecting must focus on rapidly connecting you to the person who will make the hiring decision.

If you are taking too long to connect to decision makers there is a serious flaw in your prospecting methodology. Try a new strategy.

2. Prospecting should project three to six months ahead of your current needs. If prospecting is designed only for responding to immediate needs, it tends to fail to establish long-term payoffs, long-term relationships, innovative placements and up-graded placements.

Some agencies prospect only as graduates emerge from their programs. This is a major mistake. It limits your market to jobs immediately available and thus is expensive due to the intense competition for the jobs. It characterizes job placement as desperate by concentrating on what you can get today and not building for tomorrow.

Prospecting, primarily for immediate needs only works if there is a large base of potential employers. It will alienate employers in smaller communities where the employer base is finite, as the prospecting tends to be repetitious and demanding.



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3. Receiving negative responses from prospecting should help you evaluate your current practices and redesign your prospecting approach. A negative response should not be seen as an exclusion from the marketplace.

Prospecting produces both employers who will hire and a goldmine of information about the marketplace from those who have said no. A no is as good as a yes if you know what to do with it.

4. Prospecting is often perceived by staff as one of the most difficult jobs in marketing job placement; that is because it is. There can be a lot of rejection involved in locating new employers.

It is best to make prospecting an integral part of job placement from the beginning rather than trying to add or implement it later. It is important to stress accountability for prospecting and acquiring new employers. It is very easy to lapse into getting all the jobs from a few employers and resting on past accomplishments.

Without continually adding new employers who hire, the agency will stagnate, limiting its own options by a limited penetration of the job market.

Prospecting is the main tool in strategically planning all marketing activities. You must be able to identify a market and connect to it before you can sell to that market.

