



Turnaround

PRESS RELEASE
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Subject **Balancing Sales & Service**

Our rec to rec division has recently been working with a client who is subtly trying to lift the sales activity and consequently the recruitment style of everyone in the business. Their brief was for an experienced recruiter to work on one major account with KPIs around fill rate, customer satisfaction and importantly, growth. So what exactly (or not so exactly) were the pre requisites? Mr (and Ms) Client briefs us.....“we need someone who can come in and grow the account, but not a used car salesperson type and not a hard cold calling type, we’re not paying a lucrative commission structure because we don’t want them just to focus on the billings as they’ll need to get the placements right, but also we need someone who can deliver great service and approach the other departments to use our agency exclusively, a little bit competitive would be nice too because we’ve got other agencies tapping away”. Convoluted? Difficult? Impossible? (not impossible, that’s exaggerating!).

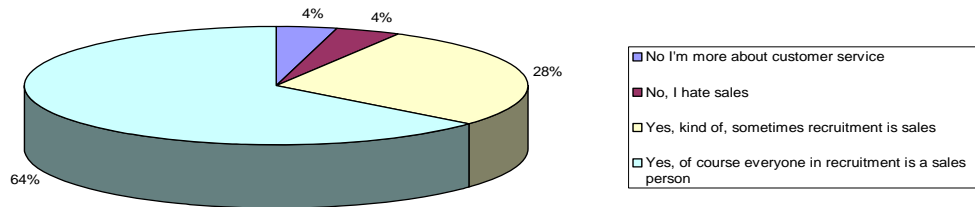
Like most agencies they want to grow and add \$\$’s to the bottom line. Not known for being “overly salesy” but renowned for their super servicing approach, the management team want their consultants to start maximising their current client base by asking those extra questions at the end of a reference check, during an interview and asking for referrals. “We don’t want to change the servicing culture completely, but we need to lift the sales a notch”.

So how hard was it to find a consultant who was fantastic on delivery and loves servicing, but still knows how to get the extra business and cares about the growth figures? Actually, not that hard! This got us thinking, is good sales servicing anyway or is good servicing actually sales? We thought this would be a good place to begin our research for this month.

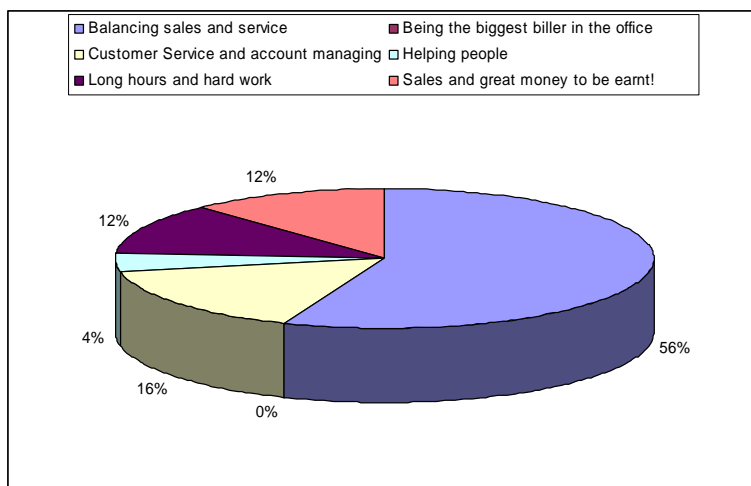
We spoke with 100 experienced recruiters in the market place to try and understand what they thought about “sales” and “service” and where they sat on the imaginary sales versus service scale. We spoke with a cross section of recruiters from juniors to general management, however the majority (76%) were end to end consultants with 3 – 5 years experience and these are the results we will discuss. They came from various industries from government through to executive. We were pleasantly surprised to find that the majority of recruiters answered. “Yes, everyone in recruitment is a sales person” (only a few said “No, I hate sales!” to these people we would politely suggest considering another career!). Pretty quickly we established that most recruiters consider themselves sales people.

Do you consider yourself a sales person?

SALES



When asked “which words best describe what recruitment means to you” there was an overwhelming response from our salesy recruiters that they found it hard to balance sales and service.



Why is it hard to balance sales and service? This question made a lot more sense after we asked the next question and almost 90% of respondents said that they believed their clients and candidates want good service from them, well before sales or even a mixture of sales and service. Ultimately what we've got here are sales people selling to people who value service more than selling! Intrigued with the responses we put on our sleuth hats and decided we needed to drill down. We extended our research to our own clients and candidates and how they like to deal with Turnaround.

It all came down to the definition of sales. For example, one client said to us "if you rang me to reverse market a candidate and binged on about how they were the best candidate ever and how good they were for my business and that they could bill \$5 million in their first year a) I wouldn't believe it and b) I wouldn't like it, however if you represented them realistically and sold me their strengths and weaknesses I'd be more inclined to want to meet them". This divisional manager wanted to be sold to but it needed to be matter-of-fact and truthful. This trend continued with every conversation, "be honest with me or I'd never trust you again" and this "don't over promise stuff! I hate that!" In addition to those comments a total of 95% of Turnaround clients spoken with said that being honest and realistic were the most important traits in a recruiter.

There were similar outcomes with our candidates, "sure tell me about a job, but I want the warts and all version and not fluff!" Our candidates enjoy it when we present opportunities and sell to them why this is going to be a career defining move and why this would be good for their skills. One candidate said "well that's why I came to you in the first place, you know what you're talking about".

The verdict? All clients and candidates ultimately want good service, they want you to provide a solution and that has to include an element of selling. Selling conjures up visions of a slick used car salesman taking advantage of your granny, but the truth is selling isn't a dirty word and we all do it to some extent. Don't be afraid to back yourself if you truly believe you have the candidate the client will hire or vice versa if you have the job you know the candidate will love. Take control of the recruitment process, you'll find that your customer will be glad you did, after all you're the recruitment expert here and you're providing the solution.