

Restraint of Vision

Peter Weddle

With 16 million Americans still out of work, many CEOs now consider new employees a free good. There are so many candidates available, they think, recruiting them should be as easy as hooking fish in a barrel. Sure, the recruiting team is now much smaller and its budget has been slashed to the core, but with hundreds if not thousands of unsolicited resumes pouring in the door each month, all recruiters need to do is cherry pick the best.

So, how should you react if that's the scenario you're facing with your employer? What you can't do—and have any hope of success—is hunker down and hope the hallucination passes. Or adopt a stiff upper lip and try to work around the madness.

The only way to implement your vision effectively and thus secure your own future is to pull your executive team and the CEO, in particular, back to reality. As business plans and budgets get reframed to capitalize on the recovery, you have to convince them that the War for Talent is still on and just as competitive as it ever was.

How can you do that? Adopt the perspective of the Sales Department. In other words, analogize what your CEO doesn't understand to something that he or she does.

As has been widely reported in the media and the experience of most organizations confirms, consumers are still hanging on to their wallets. Sales are up a little, but nowhere near even what they were back when the recession started. There's not a CEO on the planet, therefore, who doesn't realize just how hard it's going to be to get buyers back.

No less important, every CEO worth his or her salt also knows that an organization has to invest in the sales team if it wants to see more sales. It has to hire more salespeople and then give them the support they need to:

- find and qualify prospects in order to identify the most likely buyers;
- inform those prospects about the most compelling features and benefits of their organization's product or service;
- overcome the concerns and hesitation that can often derail a sale;

and then

- close the deal.

CEOs know that such a process takes time and talent, and they're willing to pony up both to ensure a successful outcome.

The steps are much the same in recruiting. You and I know that, but most CEOs never make the connection. How can you bridge that gap? Make your case in the language that CEOs understand. Use the vocabulary of sales to present and defend your plans and budget.

For example, begin by defining "recruitment" as "selling top talent" on your employer. Then, add some illustrative context to reinforce your point. Don't say that you intend to set aside time and money for "sourcing;" state, instead, that you'll be allocating them to "prospecting." Don't use unfamiliar terms like "social networking" or "data mining," when what you're actually doing—from the CEO's perspective—is

“qualifying prospects.” And finally, don’t define success as “new hires on board,” but as “the deals you’ll closed with new employees.”

I realize that sounds a bit forced and even artificial, but it effectively leverages a powerful human instinct. We tend to support what we know and ignore or discount what we don’t. So keep the myopia of your CEO from becoming a restraint of your vision. Help them to understand what you will do for them by describing it in words they understand and respect.

Thanks for reading,

Peter

Visit me at Weddles.com/WorkStrong

Peter Weddle is the author of over two dozen employment-related books, including Recognizing Richard Rabbit, a fable of self-discovery for working adults, and Work Strong, Your Personal Career Fitness System.

**When using the above Weddle’s content, please use the following attribute:
© Copyright 2010 WEDDLE’s LLC. All Rights Reserved.**