



S T R A T E G I E S

Human Resources

The Sell Trip: Creating an Outstanding Candidate Experience

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Recruiting for senior-level or highly specialized positions often requires tapping into a national talent pool. Once the group has been narrowed down to the top two or three candidates, they often complete a “sell trip.” This is the visit to the employer’s location that serves as both the last round of interviews, as well as an opportunity to showcase the benefits of the organization and the community in which it’s located. While it’s important that all applicants have a positive experience throughout each phase of the search, the sell trip is critical in ensuring that the preferred candidate will accept the offer.

The following are some sell trip tips to make certain you land the top talent:

Family Matters

Although many executives indicate they will relocate “for the right opportunity,” moving is rarely a one-person decision if the candidate has a family. While more costly, it’s often necessary to extend an invitation for the candidate’s family to visit the city during the sell trip.

Know Your Candidates

To create a personal experience that resonates, you must learn what’s important to the candidate; then use this knowledge to create a customized agenda.

Sweat the Details

The search firm or hiring company should arrange for travel, ground transportation, interview details and other logistics to make the candidate’s travel experience as stress-free as possible.

Showcase the City

There are companies that charge for “executive tours.” However, there are also many outstanding realtor partners who work with the families in advance and on the ground (for free and without requiring a signature/commitment) to provide community information, personalized tours and gifts to make the candidates and their families feel at home. If the candidate prefers to explore without a guide, create recommendations on communities/areas that may be of

interest. Also provide a list of preferred restaurants, coffee shops, things to do and city highlights.

Social Settings

Use this opportunity for the company and the candidate to get to know each other in a less formal environment. A meal, sporting event or cocktail reception that includes the candidate’s family provides a perspective for both parties away from the interview table.

The Red Carpet

You expect this leader to add significant value to the organization, so do everything possible to ensure he or she feels valued on this last trip. Here are some additional specific tactics that have proven to be successful:

- **Dual-income families:** Use your connections to set up informational interviews for the candidate’s spouse/partner. This helps relieve the stress of being a “trailing spouse.”
- **Children:** Make sure the children feel special and are getting excited about the new city. For high school kids, a few good ideas are arranging for tickets to a performance or sporting event, showcasing appropriate high schools and facilitating conversations with club sports coaches. Younger children tend to enjoy things like visiting local parks and any other “fun” spots, as well as touring the local schools.
- **Community:** It is important that candidates can visualize themselves thriving personally as well as professionally in the new community. Share information about the community’s demographics, quality of life and activities of interest, such as nonprofit organizations or clubs. Better yet, introduce them to a few people who share their stage of life, interests, culture or lifestyle and can provide an unbiased view of the area.

During this final stage of the process, creating a candidate experience that is both positive and genuine could very well be the difference between acceptance and rejection your offer. The sell trip is worth the effort. 🚩



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