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The Heart of Dialogue: Opening the Client Conversation



American Staffing Association

Call Plan	
Current Status of Account > >	Key Relationships > >
Date of Call >	Time Requested/Scheduled >
Objectives of Call: <i>What is it I want my client/prospect to think, believe, feel or remember about this conversation? What will I have achieved by this conversation?</i> > >	
Introduce: <i>Who are you? What do you do?</i> >	
Insight: <i>What do you know about me, my position, my organization or my industry?</i> >	
Inquire: <i>I am listening to you and what you have to say is important.</i> >	
Inspire: <i>Why should I listen to you? Why is this of value to me?</i> >	
Invest: <i>What do you expect from me? How will we spend our time together?</i> >	
Results and Future Action (Mutual Investment/Commitment): >	

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3x3 Exercise

- **Pick a client relationship you currently have. What is their title/role?**

- **How are they measured?**

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

Call Objective

- Call Objective (The “What”)
 - V.M.A. goals
- As a result of this conversation, I want my prospect/client to do.....?
- *Begin to establish a relationship with the influencer.*
- *Determine additional influencers/decision makers*
- *Develop better insight beyond the obvious information.*
- *Determine key staffing/hiring initiatives this year.*
- *Determine the next steps with this individual.*

Clear Purpose

Opening The Client Conversation

The “I” Model

1. Introduce: (I am...I am with...I specialize...)
2. Insight: (share insight / market knowledge)
3. Inquire: (ask purposeful open questions)
4. Inspire: (alignment / value proposition)
5. Invest: (investment / commitment)

Introduce Example

- *"Good morning, Ms. Larsen. My name is Jim Mitchell with Tech Jobs Unlimited. I am responsible for developing business relationships with key clients in the biotech industry."*
- *"Good afternoon, Tom. My name is Matt Brady with ABC Associates in Dallas. I am a specialist in the banking industry."*
- *"Hi, Mr. Jackson. My name is Carol Williams with Health First. I am a search consultant in the health care industry."*

Insight Example

- *"Ms. Larsen, I understand you've just accepted the position as Vice President of Sales for ABC Corporation. Congratulations! I also understand that your organization is scheduled to introduce a new drug line next quarter, which means your first few months will be filled with decisions that could have a big impact on your success for years to come."*
- *"Tom, in preparation for this call, I noticed in the Michigan Banker that you are applying for your trust powers and thus will be building a trust department in the near future."*
- *"Mr. Jackson, in your role as Director of Marketing for the hospital, I know you are constantly challenged with balancing a competitive recruitment package for your physicians with your not-for-profit status."*

Inquire Example

- What are your primary initiatives for the next quarter and how do they differ from your goals last year?
- How will you measure the success of your hiring program over time? How will you identify that the objectives have been met? What would be the specific metrics?
- What is keeping you from meeting your recruiting goals right now?
- What do you personally see as the most challenging part of achieving these goals?
- If your current program/approach is described as 'not working,' what is not working and why is it not working?
- What are the primary duties and responsibilities of this position?
- When you *do* have an opening, what is the most difficult position to fill?
- What are the most critical positions that you need to fill now?

Inspire Example

- *"I have partnered with specific key players including _____ and _____ in the manufacturing industry, helping them anticipate the very special challenges that are unique to the introduction of a new drug line."*
- *"As a former banking officer, my area of recruiting expertise is in banking with a specialty in trust and investments. Partnering with a recruiter adept in both Michigan and Federal regulations will be a critical component in your developing the right team."*
- *"As the preferred provider for the Texas Hospital Association, we work with hundreds of not-for-profit healthcare institutions in guiding them through the challenges you may be facing of recruiting physicians while adhering to Federal 501C3 guidelines."*

Invest Example

- *"It would be great to have the opportunity to spend 20 minutes with you to better understand your short-term/long-term hiring goals and to identify how we can be of assistance in identifying key talent for your business. Would Wednesday or Thursday be better for this discussion?"*
- *"I recommend we set aside 20 minutes this week (or specific time and date) to discuss some of the considerations you may need to address around the hiring of key talent for your trust department. You can expect to hear from me tomorrow morning so we can determine the next steps."*
- *"I will be in your area Wednesday through Friday of next week. I suggest we set aside time to discuss our recommendations for hospitals challenged with competing for physicians in a not-for-profit environment. We can also exchange ideas for working together in the future. I will follow through with you later today to schedule a specific time and date."*

Investment Exercise

- What are the top five questions you can ask early on in a conversation to get investment?

Clients:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Candidates:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Group Exercise

- **Goal / motivation** questions beyond the obvious

1. _____
2. _____

- **Problem / concerns** questions beyond the obvious

1. _____
2. _____

- **Need / requirements** questions beyond the obvious

1. _____
2. _____

- **Compensation / budget** questions beyond the obvious

1. _____
2. _____

- **Competition/Option** questions beyond the obvious

1. _____
2. _____

- **Decision Process** questions beyond the obvious

1. _____
2. _____

Listen / Acknowledge / Clarify / Expand / Seek Agreement

The following L.A.C.E.S. model will help you successfully communicate and implement essential responding skills:

- 1. Listen:** for what's being said and why it's being said – the words and the feeling. Listen for the need behind the statements or the resistance.
- 2. Acknowledge:** to satisfy the person's fundamental need for recognition. It is not agreeing. You are communicating that you either understand or desire to understand.
- 3. Clarify:** to confirm your understanding of the situation or resistance coming from the person. You will want to ask a variety of clarifying questions to ensure understanding by all involved before moving forward.
- 4. Expand:** by suggesting alternatives, different approaches or suggestions that would assist in meeting the person's needs and helping to solve their problems or achieve their goals and objectives.
- 5. Seek Agreement:** find common ground on all or a part of the issue to begin aligning your position with that of the person with which you seek agreement.

The first steps in the LACES model involve Listening and Acknowledging, which is 'indicating attentiveness' in order to meet the individual's need for recognition. You acknowledge, communicating that you have listened carefully and that you understand their perspective. That does not mean that you agree with them, only that you understand their perspective. If you fail to acknowledge and begin with your response, you risk being perceived as argumentative and combative.

The final steps in the LACES model involve probing for acceptance. Expanding and Seeking Agreement both involve listening and asking the person directly to confirm their acceptance.

Note that the use of this model is the science of responding. Use this science as a basis for developing your own responses, according to your own personal style and the specifics of individual candidate situations.

Are You the Best?

- Think about the one area that you **know** is your weak spot, and what you can do in the next 10 days to address.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Next Steps:

- Read one industry article per day for the next 10 days
- Shadow a candidate or create a list of questions that will help you understand responsibilities
- Tour your client's office, or visit a client site or facility
- Create a list of words/acronyms daily that need further explanation or clarification