

Episode 59 - Top Recruitment Biller Secrets with Josh Hill from The Network Transcript

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Welcome to another episode of The Lone Recruiter podcast. I'm your host Brett Clemenson and if you're a recruiter out on your own or just lacking general guidance or mentorship, you've come to the right place. Our episodes are designed to give you the motivation, the strategies and the support you need to become the very best lone recruiter. So join us, grab a cup of coffee and let's take your desk to another level.

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Now, today we are joined by the

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handsome Josh and he's handsome because he's wearing one of my hats today. Exactly it, thank you. Thank you so much for having me. For anyone at home, who doesn't know Josh. He has quite a remarkable history, I'm learning. And 11 years in recruitment, I'm going to bastardize it if I try to explain what it is.

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But I'm going to give you 60 seconds. Tell us what you do, how you've done it, what got you into recruitment, what you've done. Let's go. 60 second elevator pitch. I think like everybody, I fell into recruitment, it actually runs in the family. My mum was a recruiter so. I wanted to be a recruiter when I was growing up.

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Makes one of us. To be honest, it was one of those things I was in banking and finance at the time, went to see a recruiter and he went, You could probably do this job. I said, Okay, yeah no worries, I gave it a go and like everybody, I think once you get on that rollercoaster, it's really hard to get out of it.

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I started at Hays for my sins and then made the cardinal mistake without any disrespect to anybody in that business of going to Michael Page. You don't cross the divide very often. It's a bit like the Liverpool - Man United rivalry. Right. And then from there, smaller growing businesses, all start ups, all early stage desks. Tech for 11 of those years, one in oil and gas, which is a fascinating industry to be in but really hard slog, I think in any market, but particularly at that time. Built Perth's best now Tech recruitment business as awarded by Sourcr last year and now with The Network here for coming up to nearly five years, so yeah that's me in

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a nutshell. I think we're going to get some wisdom today so let's jump into it. Today we're on our quest to interview 100 recruiters. I don't even know what we're up to at the moment. But we're getting through em we're getting through em and we're seeing some good answers. So I've got five questions for you today. The first one I have for you is, if you had to have one KPI or if you could only have one KPI, I never know if someone's in an environment of like, we love KPIs and I'm guessing you are because you're from Hays and Michael Page, but if you could only have one to measure the success of your desk or to measure your

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day to day success, what is that KPI? I'm the anti KPI guy, like I think in those times probably taught me that KPIs for KPIs sake are wonderful things. I am absolutely a fan of quality over quantity, for me that is all that matters in our industry. Now to answer the question, I think, and I'm going to take a little liberty because I've heard a few other people do it.

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I'm going to, I'm going to answer it two pronged. One, I think you need to be across both ends of your recruitment pipeline. Now, by that I mean what you're doing with your clients and how you're bringing them in. Meetings, for me, you need to be in front of people. If you're not sitting down and having this type of conversation.

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You're not doing the job properly. That's where the magic is. That's how you get to build the outcomes and then where things are at when it comes to final stages and interviews so that, you know, your dollar at the end. Those two things, if you take care of everything in those two areas and the rest is actually pretty easy.

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It takes care of itself if you do the job, even, you know, to a basic standard. So you're basically saying if you get in a room with a client, you know the works going to come. If you do it well. And if you're at the end and when you say the end, you're talking about at the closing stage? The closing part, making sure you're doing that part well.

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So as long as you're tracking every step naturally without maybe the same rigor. But if I was to sit and look at a desk from a bird's eye view and someone said, Hey, what is this person doing well or doing poorly? And they gave me no other metrics. I would look at how many meetings they're doing every week and then how many interviews they're getting, or final stage interviews they're getting.

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For me, if that answer, that would give me the indication of where I need to look at that might be breaking down if those two things aren't working. That makes sense, so just going a little deeper on that. How many meetings a week would you like to see? If you were, like on yourself just a senior recruiter who had no other managerial expectations.

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Whatever. You're just a biller, how many meetings a week? I would like to say that I'd do one a day, but the reality of that is that I think realistically four is a pretty achievable kinda goal. I actually have times now where I just go to one location and say, Hey, I'm in the area, I'll try get through four in a day.

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Yeah, sure. And my whole approach to recruitment is hyper organised now because increasingly I have less and less time. I have a day planner and like all this level of fastidiousness. It's always kind of been very positive for me. So I think that if you have those metrics and you're seeing that many people, as long as you're not in there just for the sake of it and you know the person you're meeting, there's some value to be had at

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both sides, it will come. Typically a meeting happens because they've got something they need you to help them with so. Correct. You've already, that hurdle's already jumped. You would hope so. You would hope so. Okay cool, that was a great answer. Two, if you could only for whatever reason you've run out of time. You've only got three interview questions to ask the candidate, like what are the three main ones you need to run off and go, I can make this happen, or I can at least get this thing started.

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I love this question. This is the one that I was thinking about on the drive up here and I was thinking, How am I going to answer the three interview question rule and when I kind of broke it down in my own head. I think that I purposely can be quite vague, and by that I mean I'll ask questions that I don't give further clarification to.

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So for instance, tell me about yourself. It gives me a lot of insight into who you are. By the way, you answer that question. It's true. I had someone yesterday. I asked that question to in technology leadership and they started telling me about the fact they do archery on the weekend and stuff like that. Awesome that's where your priorities lie.

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I understand a bit about who you are as a person, but my next follow up question is always, okay well what about work? I want to know about career ambitions. And then I'm going to ask, why? And lastly, I know I've just kind of 2. you know, two and a half there. But lastly, it's always the fundamentals of recruitment. How much do you want?

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You know, what's the notice period? All these kinds of things. So three interview questions, with part 'a's and part 'b's in between. You can't help yourself. I'm sorry, I'm sorry, but yeah the recruitment fundamentals one question just, hey, is it aligned? Who are you? And why? Yeah, yep. Do you interview people, like are you predominately headhunting environment? Bit of both. Where you know what the brief is or have you gone.

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Nah, I know my market, I know that you're good talent for my client base, I don't know where the jobs are, bit of both? I think in my market at the moment it's a people in advertising roles. I advertise one recently for Head of Technology. I had 400 and something odd applicants. My phone has been blowing up the whole time I've been here.

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That's a really different market to the kind of middle market that you're seeing. What that means is that when you get really good people and I don't have capacity to take more than say, five on at time, I go and take those people to market. But then also I'm out there trying to win briefs and retain assignments to then do the other side of that.

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I try to avoid that kind of contingent space as much as possible. In this day and age, I like being paid before I do anything. I think it's a mutual benefit, but good people will always open doors and having good people and good relationships on both sides of your recruitment fence is the key to success, in my opinion.

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I agree. I agree. Okay, wonderful. Let's just say you get to the end of the process and the candidate, the offer comes in. What's your closing sequence or how do you close a candidate? Do you have a favourite closing line? I do. I do. And and it's again, I'm sorry, I'm not letting you run the format, but for me, a, b, c, always be closing.

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Right. Your closing should begin from the minute you have that first conversation. Yes. You know, if you've only got three interview questions. Maybe I'll go back and answer that differently, maybe you should ask about the kind of counteroffer and everything there. For

me if that person is in that final stage of interview and I'm not 100%, 98% sure that they're going to take that role.

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They're not going forward. I am having that discussion around making sure everything is locked down. Before I get to that, right? Because it's important that I save face with my client, but also that the candidate isn't there being messed around either. Time is our most precious commodity. So the closing line is always the last one is always, Hey congratulations it's done.

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That's it. Because I've already known. Yes, you're happy with it. We've moved through that process. My processes are also quite long, so it's not like a day and a half turn around. Hey look, we spoke yesterday, here's an offer. It's a case of Alright, we've negotiated a bit here and there, this is how we go about things.

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Everything we wanted done? You happy? Cool. And you mentioned you do a lot of C-suite or executive roles and I find when I go that level I way prefer playing there. And it's not because everyone says, Oh, because the fees are better, yeah they are way better, but that I actually genuinely think people at that level are way more considered

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They know what they want and more importantly, they know what they don't want. And I find that it is way easier to have that conversation halfway through and going we're going down a path, are we on the right track? Yeah, the level of professionalism is miles different and the more senior you get. I've done a couple of CEO assignments recently.

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Those are pleasures to deal with because everybody in there knows what you're in for. They've invested a lot of time. They're busy human beings to go through a process. So none of them are going to waste that. You'll have maybe 100 pre screen calls or more when people come and say, Hey, look, what about this role? And they'll just cut it off halfway through.

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And it's refreshing. It's like, okay, well, look, you know that this isn't right. Anybody that's going through that process, you've done all the due diligence, you've got all the information they know excuse me, they know about everything already. So there's none of that kind of, oh maybe, yes, no. I'm not sure, they know before they even start the process.

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Yeah, I agree. Okay, wonderful. We're smashing the timing. Okay. Counteroffer, we all love a counteroffer. Let's just say you have this dream process and this person, you know, we get all the confidence in the world and we've just sung the praises of these C-suites. But I'm sure you still get counter offers. Of course. How do you handle them? They're a reality, right? Yeah, they have to be.

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They have to be and I think that, you know, we'd all be hypocrites to say that we haven't probably thought about them at times in the career and stuff like that. I think that the reality is, is that you can only be so prepared. And I know from my earlier, you know, time in my career when I was working at engineering roles and things like that, you run out that kind of tie in line, oh 80% of people are gonna.

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That's not going to work. The reality is, is that if that person has accepted that counteroffer, it's already too late. You should be dealing with that, much the same as you are with the closing from the minute you get in that conversation. I'm actually always in my conversations really upfront. You're going to get a counteroffer. The upside there is if they don't, they're like, Oh, well, I made the right choice to leave.

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And if they do, of course, like, you're amazing, why would you not get one? And if you're dealing with that from day one, it's a difficult conversation that we as recruiters don't like to have. But that minute of investment early on is orders of magnitude more efficient than trying to save something that's already dab on. And, you know, I actually stuffed this up myself the other week.

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I did not prep the candidate for a counter. And it was because the sequencing, I think it was a very, very busy period where we made a lot of placements and we had a lot going on. And there's this one, I just thought she had every reason to leave and you go that's an easy one, whatever. Hadn't, like the contact was coming

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I just said, sit tight contract's coming. Once that contract's done and we've signed it because they've verbally accepted, yep that sounds good, I'm happy with that. I said once they've signed it we'll go through all the counter offer stuff. Yeah. I'll give you resignation letter template, things like that. She jumped the gun. So I just I missed it by a few days. It was always planned to do it, but sometimes people do dumb stuff too.

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They go, well, I know the offers coming. I'm just going to have a quick chat with my boss. And then you haven't prepped them. I got a counter offer, I feel flattered and I was like, it was one of those ones I was like, Oh man, I could have prevented this entire. They're the worst. They're the worst. The thing about our industry is, you know, you're not selling something that is physical.

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It's a person that has thoughts, feelings, emotions, does irrational things, which is the beauty of our industry, but also the challenge. And there's something about it, you know, it's sods law, murphy's law whatever the saying is, is that the one that you don't is the one that bites you. Always. And it's always, I still get it every now and again now.

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And I look back at I kind of I got to the point of not being angry about it. I laugh and then go, Well, this is what I get for being so, you know, so naive. That's it. I love how jaded older recruiters get. It's about the ten year mark, yeah, I've seen it all. Alright last one. I don't get, I don't pick you as someone

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who gets in a slump often, but we all hit something. We either get burn out or we hit a bad patch or whatever. But what do you do? What is your secret to get yourself out when you recognise that you're in a slump? I'm honored that you don't think that that's the case.

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I probably have it once a year. And I think that as a leader, increasingly I've got really good at seeing it not only in myself, but also in the team. There's telltale signs. I think COVID has been really good for that because it helps you, you know, certainly in our business we did a lot of work around burnout and I didn't even really think about it as a concept.

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You know, we were always thought in recruitment. Just keep swimming for want of a better word, you know, keep dialling, keep doing the work and it will work itself out. You have a holiday eventually. Everything's fine. The positive of that is that that's not the case anymore. For me, when I'm at my best is when I am perfectly balanced.

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That is, I'm up early, I've gone to the gym, I'm eating well, I'm really focused on my outcomes day to day. And the benefit of my role is that because I've got like a sales

cycle, it's not as maybe. Time sensitive. Yeah, but also reactive, I think is probably the way I'd put it, right. You're not kind of like I need to get something in 3 hours.

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I do have clients that have that space still, but it allows me a bit more time to be, you know, focus on the end goal for me, if I'm not organised and it happens sometimes when things happen or you have meetings or what have you, and it's like, Oh, where's the day gone? Your head space is gone. So I think being aware of what your trigger is and being aware of what you're good at, what you're not good at, and putting ways not to mitigate, but to get around these issues because you can't, you're not going to avoid it, everyone's going to have a slump.

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This job will teach you every time that you are just human and being aware of that and accepting it. And cynical maybe is the right way of putting it as you said before, is the best way to avoid having those slumps when you're in them. Take time to stop, recalibrate. I've said to members of my team before, Look, you're not in a good place, have the afternoon off

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Don't look at your emails. Yeah. That's the only condition. Have the afternoon. Take the day. You're burnt out. Think about it. And every single time it's happened, they've come back and gone. Yeah, that made a big difference. Yeah. Yeah, I love it. I'm 100% on board with that, I think that I did a podcast the other day about this too, like because of I think really since COVID, that world of work and working from home, it's just like two worlds do collide so people are actually working harder and longer, but they're like oh I get more done because I'm not commuting.

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But then they also pushing the boundary of like, Oh, I'll be there, I'll be dinner in 15 minutes. Like, I actually think people are working harder or they're working longer and not as not as efficiently. Either way, it's creating this friction, right? Big time. Anyway, I find it fascinating. That's five questions, I'm going to wrap this up, 15 minutes that's a long one. That's that was great. Thank you. Thank you very much for coming on. Pleasure, really appreciate it. That's all we have time for today.

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As always, if you got something out of this episode, which I'm sure you did, like us, five stars, share us, go and connect with Josh. It helps us all grow. We really appreciate it. Have an amazing day and as always, may all your deals come true. Hear, hear

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