

Episode 14 IWR - Jo Markham 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 advice, the strategies you need to succeed as a lone recruiter. So join us. Grab a cup of coffee and

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let's take your desk to another level. Today we are on our quest to interview 100 recruiters the same five questions about what makes them successful as a recruiter. And today, I'm joined by Jo Markham. She's got 20 years experience in recruiting across banking, I.T. and telco. Turn your phone off. Across Australia, PNG, Myanmar... and she's going to help us answer the five questions we've got.

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So, Jo, welcome. Thanks, Brett, Having a bit of fun today aren't we? Yeah, we are. Let's kick it off. Let's kick it off. So your life's highlight reel. You got 60 seconds. Okay, so... is there enough time? No. Okay, go, go! So I'm from East London originally. I'm actually from a county called Essex. But don't judge me. I started my career in investment banks on trading floors in London, which wasn't that far from my house, to be honest, and rose up through the ranks to be a middle office manager, know a lot about products and risk, and did a lot drinking in bars and lots of fun and all that kind of thing, and then naturally fell into recruitment,

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which is pretty much the same sort of role. So moved to Sydney in 2004 after being here in the nineties as a backpacker and just loving it and thinking, How do I get back? And so got an opportunity to join an agency as a banking specialist who wanted to start that kind of desk. Which agency? And that was actually for Ross Human Directions which was owned by Julia at the time.

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And she wasn't really traditionally in that sector. You know, she was more admin customer service and whatnot, and she wanted to diversify. It wasn't really the probably the right brand, is fair to say in terms of trying to go out as a headhunter I suppose for want of a better word, but had some relative success there. And it was a really good first cab off the rank for me in recruitment.

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Learnt the ropes somewhat, I suppose, and then went to Brooklyn and was manager on the banking team there and basically stayed in recruitment agency into the crash in 2008 because at that stage nobody really wanted an ex banker who was a banking recruiter because there was obviously no work. There were no banks. Yeah, there was no banks and no work.

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So I luckily, because I didn't have my residency at that point, I was taken up by ING Australia because I've done a big fee there and they said will you come work for us and I said yes. And so I

went in as technology business partner there and that's how I really fell more into fintech, I suppose, than I had been before, and loved the space, just love the technical aspect of it.

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And for any agency recruiter out there who hasn't done internal, believe me, it's people think it's an easy ride. It isn't. When you trying to manage agencies, stakeholders, candidates, politics and it goes on and on. The most jobs I ever had on at one point in that role was 87. Wow. And that was when ANZ had bought the firm and there was a big transformation piece and I was in charge of all of that.

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Yeah, that that was some serious hours, to be honest. So it's fair to say you've done some recruitment. I've done some recruitment and then went full circle and then became an expat for nine years and worked more in HR was a senior manager in recruitment in Myanmar and PNG, which was fantastic. And what an amazing experience. And now I find myself circled back to Sydney, which I'm really enjoying.

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So it's great to be home and great to be in what my mum would call a normal country. Wow. Well that was a jam packed 60 seconds. And that's about half of it but anyway. I love it. I love it. Well, let's jump into it. I've got five questions for you today and I'll kick it off with one of my favorite questions.

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What is the one KPI that matters the most? If you could only have one? Deals done really. In my opinion, deals done equals money in bank. I've done my job. I've done my job. I've done my job. It's really interesting for me, I think because I've been a sole trader standalone, until obviously I've now joined ALRA, for about the last five years.

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And prior to that I'd essentially been in HR internal roles for ten years. Although I'd always kept the agency aspects of my life and time, I suppose. So I hadn't really worked with a KPI for so long and when I knew this question was coming up. I'm thinking, I don't really know how to answer it, because I've been such a lone wolf.

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But I think at the end of the day, you know, the tangible side of figures and, you know, when you look at that bank statement and you you must done a good job, otherwise you wouldn't be carrying this bank balance. And I think really, you've just to work out what makes you tick, what makes you able to get to that end goal, end of.

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And look, the reality is right, if you're not making money and if that's your metric, then like you're going to be very stressed. Yeah. You know, and if you're making that if you're making deals and there's money in the bank, clearly what you're doing is right. Yeah, I think so too. And I think that

I've had the pleasure slash challenge of working in very, very interesting markets with a wide range and spectrum of candidates talent levels, reasons as to why to hire.

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You know, when you work in start-ups or scale-ups and they're big telcos and they're hiring in bulk or someone brings their mate in and you know and it's... so there's lots of different types of challenges. So I think that has enabled me to be really resilient in the process and I'm very agile in terms of how I manage it.

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Mmm great. Love it. Question two, top three interview questions? Why are you looking for a move? 100% If you get the offer, are you going to take it? I'm half joking, but I think it's interesting because when I worked in HR, you talk to interview people from the behavioral style and we all know what that means.

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Tell me a situation when... give me an example of... all that I don't necessarily believe in that style of questioning. I think it's really important when you are interviewing people to try and understand who they are as opposed to the paper and what's written on it. I think that, you know, it really depends on role and level as well. But I think what you're really trying to find out, in my opinion, is tell me about yourself?

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You know, that's my first question. Tell me a bit about yourself? I'm looking at the watch on your wrist. I'm thinking about, you know, your family structure. I'm looking at what types of firms you've worked in, you know, that kind of thing. You've got the CV, you know what they've done. Yeah. So you're trying to find the human behind it.

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Exactly. So I call it skeleton and skin, really. Because the skeleton is one thing, but the skin overlays, that is the personality is the, is this guy going to cultural fit within this firm. Is that line going to get on with this person, you know, all the time in these ways, you're just thinking end? Yeah I'm just seeing here does this fit?

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Because if it doesn't, I've got to pivot quick. Right? You know, on the flip side, I think that sometimes clients want you to ask particular questions, particularly on the technical side. So around technology, what kind of level of skills do you have? So I think interviewing questions are really based on the knowledge you have of the role as well.

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Absolutely. How you want to direct that plus showing that soft skill side or trying to gather information around that. Okay, so not sure what the three interview questions were. I'm not sure I gave you three questions. No but I liked it, I really, skeleton skin, I love that. It's really interesting, yeah. Talking about yourself. So really, I'm getting the feeling for you

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it's just all about the human. And you're right, you're putting people into teams. And if you're looking at it from a HR perspective, too, well you've got to deal with that dickhead if they come in and you get it wrong. And that's exactly right. And I think when you're working from an internal perspective, I mean, how many times do you sit on an internal team and I literally have billed about \$1,000,000 worth of talent, right?

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You know, and I was getting paid... Don't get me wrong I was being paid quite well on a base, but obviously I had no upside and I'm sitting there thinking, you know, because there was all this great talent I was engaged in that we could have made a lot of money from an agency. But yeah, it really depends. You can take the recruiter out of agency...

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It's so true. They always used to say to me in HR you're the biggest agency recruiter we've had in HR, you know, cos that's how I think. And I think having that commercial edge actually really helps in HR. Yeah. Because you need to close the deal. Yeah. We need to move on. When you've got 87 roles in your portfolio and you start closing them down. Well, then that's actually a great lead into the third question we have, which is what is your favorite closing question?

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You kind of already answered it, but what... when you got them there, you've got the offer... I'll fast forward because you kind of did answer that, but you've got the offer out. You're about to present them with the offer you've had multiple interviews. Like, what are you asking? What's your closing question? Do you need to speak your wife? Totally.

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What do we need. What do we need to satisfy to get this over the line, John? Mm. Who else is in the mix here? Particularly on the, I know this isn't standard in Australia, of course, but working in the expat side as well, it's really taught me that there's more decision makers in this game aside from just this person.

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Absolutely. And what schools are their kids going to go to and all the rest of it? Right. So I think you have to really get down to the nitty gritty of is brain ruling heart or is heart ruling brain and what's that balance look like? How does that connection happen? You know, so that's the other reason why trying to find out a little bit about.

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That's a nice watch. Where'd you get that? Or how's your dog? You know, heard he had a hip operation. Yeah. Whatever it is, to try and build a picture profile of this human and how I can best assist them slash get them over the line. I love it. I love it. And so then say you do get them over the line. My fourth question is how do you handle counteroffers?

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Oh, I never get counter offers, Brett. Oh, tell me your secrets. Oh, good question. Do you know, I think you get a gut feeling and it doesn't really depend on level. I mean, you can you can have a managing director level mess you around. You know, he's going for a counteroffer because, you know, he's going for a role because he wants to get the counteroffer. I think your gut over time, tells you who's serious and who isn't.

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Yeah I think as well that comes down to the questioning that you initialise in the beginning you know so let's get the model, let's get that skeleton in place. Okay let's really work out if this person's serious. Yeah. If it's really down to money, I don't think I've had a client that isn't hasn't got ten, 20, 30 grand up their sleeve.

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Okay. If they really need it. If they love that person. They're going to deliver. Really, sometimes if you have to lose the deal unfortunately. And it slips through your fingers. In hindsight, that was probably the best thing that happened because most people, if they're really just in it for the money, then you need to start headhunting

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out of the team. Yeah. And I think also, yeah, you're right that if someone's coming to you to look for a job, they're not going to stay in that job more than 6 to 12 months. That's, that's the current measurement anyway. So I agree. Yeah. Great, great. Well my last question is how do you pull yourself out of a slump? Go done the pub.

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One way to do it. I used to do that years ago. I think.. do you know what that is though? It's not even the alcohol. It's going and hanging out with your mates. It is to be honest. They are the best people to pull you out. You need you need people around you that are going to give you that hug or sorta say

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come on. It's not all bad. Hmm. I think also you need to really look at your metrics in your own head and say, did I do enough? Am I doing enough? Right. Have I covered all bases? You know, sometimes I just need to go and get coffee and walk around the block. Yeah. You know, then I need to go back and make ten calls or whatever it takes. Next.

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Sort of thing, exactly. And sometimes it's a question of going to the movies or having a few drinks or whatever. But I think really when you've got over the stress of whatever it is, you need to look at your metrics, however you measure it and however you document it and just identify gaps and sort of say, hold on a minute, you know, if I've not got enough work on and I'm stressed, I need to get more work on. If I haven't got enough candidates, I need to pull it, you know, need to pull something outta my hat, right, you know, that kind of stuff.

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So I think, I think a massage always helps. Love it, love a massage. Anything in the wellness sphere. I think whatever it is that makes you tick, right, if you need to go and ride a fast car or whatever, you know, it just depends. I think always be true to yourself because that in itself is the main thing to do, because if you're not comfortable with what you can bring to the table, how you deliver, what you're capable of, you're only getting in your own way.,

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So I think try and get out of your own way if you're feeling stressed. Get out of your own way. Yeah, I love that. Jo, that was fantastic. Thanks, Brett. Thank you so much for coming on. It's my pleasure, thank you. We're going to wrap this one up so that is all we have time for you today. Join our mailing list and you can receive this week's episode material

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