

## **In Tech Or Financial Recruiting, It Pays To Play “The Long Game”**

Not long ago, we were working with a candidate who had a PhD in machine learning from a very reputable west coast institution. Impressive, right? He could write his own ticket anywhere!

Or so you’d think.

His resume, as it turned out, wasn’t really communicating what he did because, for a while, he’d been in a traditional business environment, not a high tech one. That meant his resume had been written from the point of view of the kind of *business* problems he worked on.

Translation? Despite his impressive degree, he was getting nowhere in the technical community, largely because of what his story “on paper” told about him. Fortunately, after taking some time to figure it out, we worked closely with him to put together a far more technical description of what he knew and what he had done. This made all the difference.

By taking a step back, we were able to re-position a highly qualified candidate for the ideal fit, especially when it wasn’t obvious to some companies that his background would mesh with their culture.

As much as we live in an ever-accelerating world with technology at our fingertips, there’s a lot of merit in candidates and companies slowing down in order to better prepare and fully understand one another. It’s not just about shooting out resumes and posting job descriptions to fill a role with a body. This is never more true than in financial or technical recruiting, where the process of recruitment and hiring can be more of a long-term investment.

The more we understand the true requirements of our clients, the more we appreciate what the candidate can deliver. We can't ask candidates to learn a new skill and reach a new level of five years of experience at the very same time we're talking to them. That's not going to happen.

However, we frequently have situations where candidates will spend three months or more updating their skills for the purposes of being a

great fit for an opportunity – whether it is a specific opportunity we have in mind for them or one that hasn't presented itself yet but can elevate their career.

That's not all. In addition to updating their technical skill set, they're updating their interview skills too. Many of these candidates have been at their current job for five to 10 years but they're not prepared to jump right into a hyper-competitive world to interview without preparation. In fact, for those who are serious about interviewing, it's not unusual for them to **spend as much as six months preparing** – they can afford to because they've still got a full-time job, after all.

It may not be easy to find time to prepare but if they don't, all that's going to happen is that they go on an interview and blow an opportunity. And if that should happen, they often won't even be notified that there's not a fit. They'll just never hear back.

Quite often, failure to prepare a candidate for an interview is a lot like putting someone in front of a game board to play but they don't yet know if that game board is chess or checkers. They might be really good at checkers and there might be a company in a hiring mode that really wants somebody to play checkers, but if neither one of them expresses that well in advance, what you have are two parties staring at each other without knowing a lot of information.

On the other hand, if that person knows the board they'll be presented with going in will be a chess board and they're already good at chess, they can feel quite comfortable playing. They can think of what moves they'll make and what approach they'll have based on different scenarios. The outcome is far more likely to be a positive one.

What we find at Talman is that the **companies that succeed in hiring quality talent quite often will not compromise**. For instance, several clients in the software space could be looking for a person to fill a certain position for a year. Why? It's worth their time to keep interviewing and looking at people to see if they could fill that particular job. If you hire the wrong person, it might take you six months to a year to discover that – a painful realization after investing a great deal of time and money into that individual.

Particularly in technology, as Laszlo Bock pointed out in the book, [\*“Work Rules! Insights from Inside Google That Will Transform How You Live and Lead,”\*](#) **the lifetime value of one hire could be tremendous.** It’s not just about the role they’re hired for today but the four or five different roles they could have within the company for years to come. Google has hired people who would end up creating entirely new divisions for them, moving very large pieces of their business forward and generating hundreds of millions of dollars in revenue in the process.

### **The “Long Game” Can Pay Off – If You Manage It Well**

If you’re engaging in any kind of highly selective process for evaluating talent that could take six months to a year, you want to tightly manage that process. It’s very challenging for a firm to handle the entire process on their own, which is why many in the financial trading or technical space partner with us at Roy Talman & Associates.

For example, if a client is utilizing tests for candidates to take as part of the interviewing process, they fully expect any candidate we present to them to pass those tests. Why? It speaks to how in-depth our process can be as we establish a relationship with candidates. Quite often, when we talk to candidates, particularly with the ones who have been looking for a job recently, we like to meet with them and talk about how they prepare. After all, any time you’re preparing, you’re probably going to do better than when you’re not.

Ironically, when candidates slow down and take the time to upgrade their skill set, they can find the better type of match they’re seeking with our guidance. The same holds true for companies that see a bigger picture involved with each hire – by taking their time in a recruitment process that is managed in great detail rather than rushed, they find the greater likelihood of hiring a person who will have a long-term impact, which maximizes the return on investment of the entire process.

The old adage is true. Good things do come to those who wait – as long as they also commit to doing what it takes during that time to put

themselves in a position to succeed. For both companies and candidates, we're here to help them ultimately arrive at that positive outcome.