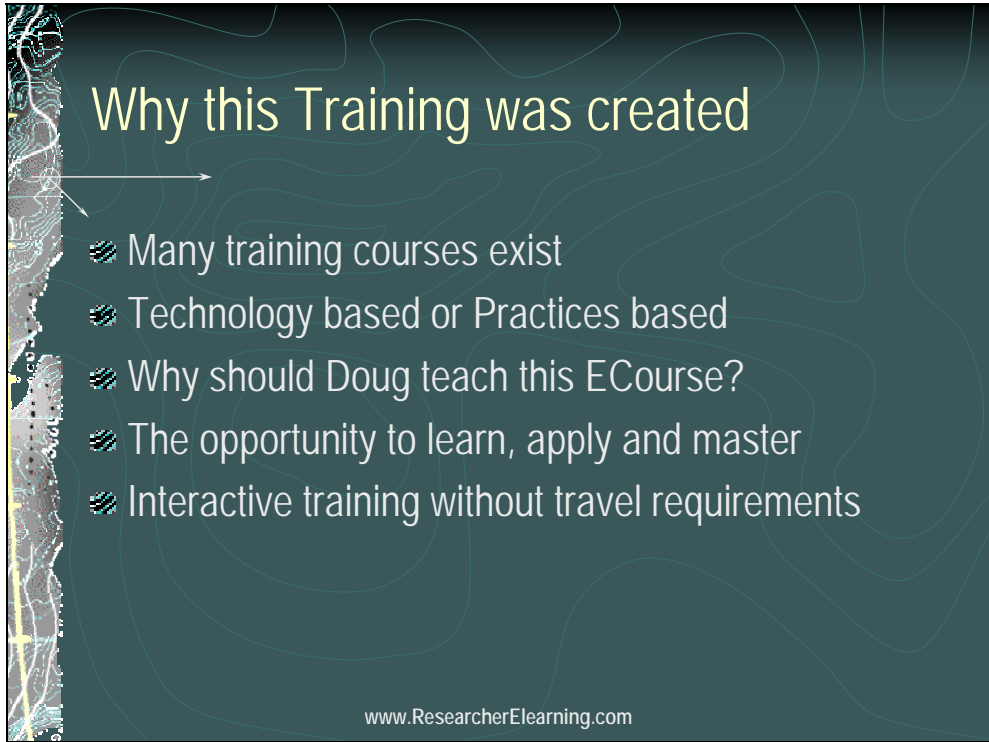




The Researcher ECourse Introductory Webinar

Presented by Doug Beabout

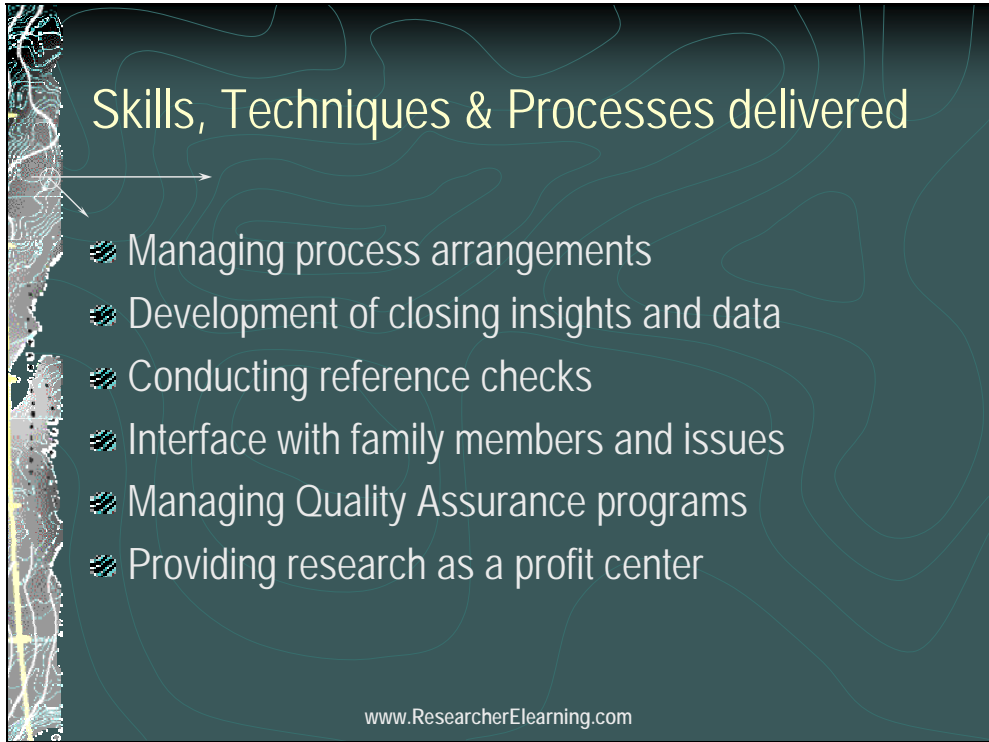




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- Many training courses exist
- Technology based or Practices based
- Why should Doug teach this ECourse?
- The opportunity to learn, apply and master
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A Primer on Researchers

By Doug Beabout

“There’s never enough time to do it right, but there is always time enough to do it again.”

Time was our most precious and elusive element as we took advantage of the affluence of the 1990s. Search assignments were plentiful. Then we hit the wall. In this challenging recovery, the volume of search requirements grows exponentially as does the complexity of each search. Our client’s are demanding more and more of our time, as their talent requirements continue to grow. The demand placed an impossible load on our human capacity as recruiters who were trying to maintain a high level of value-added service to those clients.

We approached the edge of temptation to “cut-back” on some added efforts and thereby increase our capacity to manage the avalanche of search assignments. We discovered an optional approach; in lieu of working furiously and covering more, we decided to work more diligently to serve even more clients. In order to accomplish this seemingly impossible feat, we knew we would have to add staff. The answer did not lie in simply hiring more recruiters. Another issue taken into consideration involved applying new technology tools available to us that could make us more productive and capable of providing added services. The Internet, email, websites (theirs and ours) were promising great potential but also offered further strain on the time we had to provide the most important client service; recruiting the best-qualified candidates. Having come from the days of rotary dial phones and airmail, I was aware of the value offered and the pitfalls of exploiting these tools. I wanted to insure that the quality reputation we had developed by sweat equity investment would not suffer but grow instead.

In respect of all this issues and challenges, we adopted and perfected a “process” of finding, evaluating, hiring, training and implementing full service research services. These services were initially intended as an internal support and increased service value. They evolved into an added resource that produces sizeable impact on profits. The following is a summary of how this process works; the detailed description of a prime candidate for the role of researcher and the specific duties integrated into the search process (once “owned” entirely by the “full desk recruiter”).

Take a picture of this:

You spent big bucks on technology and you want to reap the rewards that of your investment. Your office has cable access to the Internet and you have several 3.5-GHz dual core Athlon PCs running 4 gigabytes of ram. You acquired the latest software and database management tools. You probably invested a pretty penny in a recruiter “desktop management tool”. Everyone that you deal with, clients and candidates alike, expect your business and your staff to operate on the leading edge of technology. As you work your desk every day, it becomes increasingly apparent that to truly compete, you must have the fastest “time to market” with your candidate referrals. Are you mining or making deals? Obviously both are essential to growth and success. The problem is you are too busy, as is your staff, working your desk to “mess” with all this technology. Worse, your staff is spending more time on the keyboard than the keypad. After all, it takes a lot of time to learn this new software and all the “techno tricks” everyone expects from you. Not least of all, you want to see a profitable return on the investments made in all these tools.

Whenever I discuss the placement business, I operate on the assumption that our clients expect two things from us: recruiting and closing. The incredible advances in information technology available to us could certainly place us on the cutting edge of competitiveness. If there were 30 hours in the day; we could all work our desk at 110 %, master our technologies and still have personal lives.

In the placement industry there are three distinct groups in terms of the technology challenged. First, knee deep. Second, up to the neck. Third, drowning. To meet the challenge technology places before the placement professional you need to resolve a question. When you're using technology are you really productive, or just very busy? Or, another way of saying it, are you cyber-advantaged or cyber-paralyzed.

What are some of the advantages technology brings to us at the placement desk? It saves time. It creates time. It provides a fire hose of information. Internet technology grants us instantaneous global access. We can access information from anywhere at light speed. When properly integrated into your office and staff efforts-- these are truly competitive edges.

What suffers the most from poor technology utilization in our practices? Time, information, and image. Time becomes a disadvantage when technology takes it away while we stumble around using tools we simply do not understand how to use effectively. Information in its raw form is of little use to the recruiter. Raw information is typically the byproduct of an unskilled effort on the Internet. Open up your Internet browser, search with the words "oracle programming", and see how many hundreds of thousands of hits you receive. I've seen more than one recruiter diligently reviewing all the promising hyperlinks made available by such an Internet search. It makes the "needle in the haystack analogy" seem to be an inadequate description. In a telephone intensive business, such as ours, image is created, maintained and enhanced on a virtual playing field. This was true long before the invention of the PC, the Internet, and Microsoft.

Many of our hiring companies utilize technology inefficiently without truly realizing the negative impact of the time they're wasting. Recent credible surveys have indicated that the average amount of time spent in Internet browsing by Corporate Americans is in excess of three hours per workday. The search consultant or recruiter cannot afford to invest time in any endeavor that is not creating wealth. Surfing the Web during primetime hours can cost your office hundreds of thousands of dollars in lost placement fees. But yet, our clients expect us to be master's of e-mail, Internet browsing, desktop publishing, and become our own world-class webmasters. We have to learn to profit from technology.

The profits of technology can come to us in several ways. Your recruiting reach is inarguably global. Your time to market is potentially the fastest in history. Your ability to communicate is accentuated by e-mail, voicemail and wireless technology. Let us not fail to mention the virtuosity afforded us by the cell phone. This speed of information technology equipment and the capacity of the same allow us to react to client and candidate expectations at light speed. However, as was stated earlier in this article, are you mining or making deals? Are you more efficient at the cost of effectiveness? I read recently where technology advancement is doubling every .35 years; twice as fast as was growing just four years ago. This becomes painfully apparent to the person who buys "state-of-the-art" computer equipment just to find out that within six months it is antiquated. I truly believe that today's technology must be exploited and forged into a wealth generating asset. In order to achieve this though, I believe we need to divide the "desk".

The division of which I speak is between the creative and administrative sides of the recruiting practice. Both dimensions of the placement process are critical to its success. A creative recruiter who fails to manage the details will often fall short of the minimum standards he or she sets. A recruiter, obsessed with details will literally miss the "forest for the trees".

If you divide the desk you must answer the question of "Who should do what?" The researchers role involves process oriented tasks can manage those details critical in the placement process, ongoing office support tasks and maintaining currency of records and contacts.

Some of the specific technology and process-based tasks they should perform are:

- Marketing lead generations
- Name gathering for search activity
- Initial candidate contact and qualification
- Secondary reference checks
- Interview travel arrangements and confirmations
- Gathering and distributing closing information
- Spousal and other interface to determine key decision points and obstacles
- Placement invoicing and follow-up
- Quality Assurance input gathering
- Candidate and referral follow-up
- Managing quality assurance actions and programs*
- Building specialization files and libraries
- Creating in maintaining client company information files
- Conducting scheduled candidate e-mail distribution*
- Classified advertisements intelligence gathering (of printed media and the "Net")*
- Managing office interruptions and distractions*
- Administrative correspondence and marketing campaigns*
- Sweep and document additional and alternative markets niches*
- Idle client tracking and maintenance efforts*
- Web site maintenance and upgrading administration*
- Internet and Web surfing information source manager*
- Web 2.0 exploitations*
- Gatekeeper of all databases*
- Idle candidate maintenance*

* These tasks *may also* be accomplished by staff whose responsibilities are more global than the tactical focus of a researcher.

While a researcher is managing the tasks listed above, the search consultant is free to do far more of what really produces fees: marketing, recruiting and closing.

Obviously the individual researcher can be far more productive if they are trained and proficient in the use of information technology tools. Skilled researchers are adept at efficient Internet-based information gathering. The role of the researcher may appear to be somewhat administrative in the classic sense. But, I would advise that a fully trained and dedicated researcher must be supported by an office assistant handling word processing, answering a telephone, and other administrative chores.

We are considered preferred providers of placement of personnel services when we perform our recruiting and closing efforts to the satisfaction of our client companies. Only then can we evolve, in their eyes, as trusted advisors. Wealth generation in today's candidate short marketplace is dependent upon rapid "time to market" with our referred candidates. A skilled researcher can filter the information to the placement desk thus

eliminating large amounts of time spent by the recruiter discerning the value of raw information. Maintaining currency of the database and client contacts is a recommended procedure for all placement services companies. The time spent chasing lost causes and dead-ends is very costly. Researchers can insure that the candidates we call our both pre-qualified, currently available and worth our critical time.

In this recovering and affluent marketplace recruiting firms will compete by being able to provide multi-skilled and critically talented people.... yesterday. The biggest billers will be those who can work the most searches and deliver the goods. Having a fully qualified and effective researcher utilizing an intelligent investment in technology tools has become a non-negotiable reality of the competitive recruiting firm.

The placement process can often appear as a very complicated matrix of twists and turns. The people we deal with on both sides of the equation present challenges and obstacles to the “deal”. In the confusion of the moment, it can seem overwhelming and very time-consuming to handle every little detail necessary to gain our fair share of wealth. The fundamental reality is that once we remove all the various labels and circumstantial challenges, there are only two realities we have to manage and sell to both clients and candidates: time and information!

The consultant with the right information at the right time is the winner! The most successful search consultants and recruiters manage their time most effectively. They always do the right thing at the right time. Successful time management in a daily performance business such as ours boils down to task management. There are two basic task groups: tasks that create deals and the detail-oriented administrative tasks. The details are important, but do not create wealth alone. These tasks will be detailed later. The major advantage of employing a researcher is the time one gains to create wealth by virtue of someone else handling the time consuming details. Researchers give us more:

- Prime time activity
- Greater search load
- Competitive reaction
- Time to manage staff
- Information mining
- More marketing and recruiting leads and insights
- Larger network
- Exposure: “right place, right time, right stuff”

The search for researcher candidates can be (and should be) the most important project on your desk. The assets of a researcher can bring both immediate value in terms of increased billings and equity to your business.

I suggest the following checklist for a researcher search:

- Write up a grade A search assignment for a Researcher (serve yourself as well as you serve clients)
- Determine compensation plan
- Source possible candidates
- Staff referrals
- Client referrals
- Advertisement considerations
- Evaluating researchers
- Screen on the telephone
- Face-to face interviews

- Evaluate:
 1. Individual characteristics (described later*)
 2. Skills testing
 3. Office culture/personality fit
 4. Telephone exposure/exercise
 5. Library exercise
- Decision point

*The best choice for a researcher is best decided by the characteristics and personal skills of the individuals you interview. The most critical elements common in the best researchers are:

- Intelligent
- Articulate
- Positive mental attitude
- Tenacity
- Sense of humor
- Inquisitive nature
- Detail orientation
- Project mentality
- Team orientation
- Ability to prioritize and organize
- Resiliency
- Professional image and demeanor
- Verbally capable
- Hiring researchers
- Check references
- Staff input
- Train-ability
- Ability to fit in the office culture

Tasks of the “desk” can be put in two categories:

1. Wealth-generating, creative tasks
2. Administrative essentials.

Some of these tasks are:

Creative:

- Initiating, developing and closing placements
- Initiating, improving and maintaining client relationships
- Managing multiple searches
- Office and staff development

Administrative:

- Handling details and tasks
- Technology tools maintenance
- Vendor interface
- Information mining

- Handling telephone traffic

Researchers can be most productive when given the lion's share of the administrative tasks (as described above) thus freeing up invaluable creative time for the recruiter to generate wealth.

Successful implementation of researchers depends on planning, selection, effective comprehensive training and mentoring. As the researchers' abilities and skills grow, the individuals gain a real understanding of your business. The advantages and value-added services of a skilled researcher can include:

- Faster information access and discovery
- Updated and organized information
- Broader range of contacts
- Competitive reaction time to clients
- Time to create increased billings by handling more searches concurrently
- Maximum service to clients
- Larger competency networks
- Increased search activity
- Expanded office growth options
- Preferred provider status
- Providing value-added services
- Enhanced resources to attract top-producers
- Improve staff retention
- Major increases in personal and staff billings

Summary

Everybody in this business has 168 hours a week. The biggest billing consultants and recruiters make the most of that time. Hiring a researcher is a definite and proven pathway to more time, more information and increased billings. The demand for competitive information mining and management is evident today to the casual observer in the personnel services industry. Client companies are starting to "compete" with the professional placement industry by developing their own databases of available applicants. Their decision to utilize the services of a recruiting firm is no longer based simply on the statement; "We will find you the best-qualified people available". We must show our clients that we are positioned, by virtue of our internal resources and value-added approach, to be a preferred provider of search services.

Many companies are paying a premium to firms offering "pre-search" information services that identify candidates, pre-qualify them and refer information on these individuals. The mindset of our clients is primed to appreciate the obvious advantages of a researcher resource in your firm. Researchers can and should become a profit-center in your business. This service also offers a unique and compelling forum to expose the professionalism and artful practices you would offer in a full search scenario. As professionals in an information critical business, we must make every effort to gain the resources and tools to compete. The addition of a researcher to your staff can offer unlimited competitive advantages now and as your firm grows in added and complimentary market specializations.

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Doug brings over twenty-nine years of expertise in personal top billings, personnel services firm ownership, and industry training. His tenure in recruiting has resulted in his personal success at building four highly successful recruiting and executive search businesses. A board member and advisor to NAPS and many leading recruiting associations; his reputation for training excellence has placed him, repeatedly, as a guest speaker for many state, regional and private recruiter associations, NAPS, ACSESS (Canada), NPA (U.S., Asia, Australia) and IPA. He trains recruiters worldwide in the unique and leading edge ECourse, Art of the Recruiting Masters at www.RecruiterElearning.com

Doug is in demand with many companies and associations as a featured trainer and speaker at several national, state and international association conferences. Having personally trained and assisted in the establishment of more than 400 recruiting firms worldwide, he knows the secrets and proven process that creates success! He is a business consultant to many corporations, franchised and independent personnel services firms globally.

Doug is currently owner and president of a professional recruiting firm and a training services company in Santa Rosa Beach, Florida. *Doug works a “desk” every day* making him uniquely qualified as a personnel services industry trainer. Many of his recruiting clients have put their net worth and corporate objectives and achieved recruiting excellence as a result of his training and guidance. Prior to his move to Florida, Doug personally established and successfully sold well-respected recruiting and search services firms in Kent and Centerville, Ohio.

Earlier, as an executive officer of a major international franchisor for nearly ten years, Doug established hundreds of successful personnel service firms and their staff members. Prior, Doug was owner and president of three successful contingency, temporary and retained personnel services firm for ten years in Dayton, Ohio. He gained his initial placement experience as a personnel services consultant in an independent firm.

Doug has held the title of CPC; certified personnel consultant (NAPS) since 1981, CSP since 1999. Doug serves on the board of the National Association of Personnel Services and is a past-president of the Ohio Search & Staffing Association.



Mark E. Berger, C.P.C., AIRS CIR has been in recruiting and staffing since 1979. He is currently the proprietor of Swat Recruiting (www.swatrecruiting.com), a firm supporting the technology needs of the recruiting and staffing industry. He has been heavily involved in Internet recruiting since there was Internet recruiting and has become an expert on recruiting and sourcing products and services available to the recruiting industry. Mark also authors the Internet Recruiting column appearing monthly in The Fordyce Letter and is a frequent contributor to other recruiting industry publications. He has obtained both his CPC and CIR professional designations. Mark is also on the board of directors for the Mid-America Association of Personnel Services.