

The end game

SAXTON BAMPFYLDE HEVER

THE AMROP HEVER GROUP

You've spent all that money to find the right person; now you need to get her/him aboard. One in a series from Saxton Bampfylde Hever plc

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*“Will you, won't you, will you, won't you,
will you join the dance?”*

Lewis Carroll

You're selling, not buying

When there's a key person whom your organisation really wants to employ, always remember that **you are selling, not buying**. There's little unemployment among truly successful people, so the person you want will be just as attractive to your competitors as to you. So remember to spell out the attractions of the opportunity – and, in particular, the career development possibilities. A good search firm can help you cover the due diligence tasks of psychological assessment and reference checking quite discreetly, so that your stance towards the candidate remains open and welcoming.

Help your new recruit resign well

Resigning well is an art – and one in which few successful people are very well versed, because most people simply have not had cause to do it very often. But it must be done well if the candidate is to be able to make a clean break – without giving the existing employer the opening to slow things down – or even reverse your recruit's recent decision. This is an area where we are highly experienced and happy to give a little coaching on your behalf.

As veterans of many hundreds of appointments in many fields and in most every part of the world, we have seen how often attempts to bring an important new person into the organisation go wrong at exactly the time when the “hirer” relaxes, because it looks as if the difficult part has been done. In our experience, it is precisely when the decision to make an offer is reached that trouble looms. Saxton Bampfylde Hever have therefore published this leaflet in the hope that their experiences may help their clients progress from “Choice to Join” as expeditiously as may be.

Keep it moving

The best tip is the simplest. When you have decided you want someone to join your organisation, **maintain the momentum**. The new recruit will be in a positive frame of mind about your organisation. Keep it that way. Push the necessary steps of hiring through at a good fast pace. Don't let disappointment at your apparent lack of enthusiasm dim the attractiveness of a new job.

Keep it personal

Too often the actual offer to join is expressed in a form that is in itself a turn-off. After a senior candidate has spent a lot of time establishing positive personal relationships with key figures in the new organisation – often a big part of the attraction – it is extremely demotivating to receive a highly bureaucratic missive, which is clearly a standard letter. Where a standard appointment is necessary, always try to **accompany it with a personal (preferably hand-written) note** from the senior person involved, expressing pleasure at the prospect of working with the new colleague. And work on the wording of standard appointment letters to make them as inviting as possible – preferably using warm language like “We have great pleasure in inviting you to join us and.....” rather than “This is to offer you the position of.....”

Contracts can confuse

A simple appointment letter, which covers the necessary ground will often be more than sufficient – even with very senior appointments. Complex draft contracts invite the candidate’s lawyer to “earn their fee” by coming up with all sorts of abstruse points. Getting them sorted out can vitiate the enthusiasm of both parties. If however, a contract is required, remember *“Keep it personal!”*

Money can matter

It is not true, in our experience, that people move jobs mainly for money. Autonomy, resources, a faster promotion track, the opportunity to contribute to society; all these are far more compelling than money as reasons to change job. But the fact remains that (with a few obvious exceptions) **people expect to earn more**, not less, when they change job – and they feel insulted if they are offered less or an increase which is so small as to be insulting. It may be that your employment package involves a higher total, but with a smaller base; if this is the case, do please spell out the total first. Someone who has been accustomed over years to one method of payment will take a little while to become accustomed to the attractions of a new package, so explain the attractions. And always remember the value of first year guarantees of bonus or partial bonus; this approach can make the changeover towards a high proportion of variable compensation much simpler to adjust to. And, talking of simplicity, we do believe that our normal basis of charging flat fees for our work does help underpin our client’s knowledge that we are working professionally for the best result, not to ramp up a percentage based fee!

Pre-empt a counter offer

It is almost axiomatic that the person you want to hire is sufficiently successful that it is not going to be an easy decision for him or her to decide to accept your offer. Analogies with contested takeover bids are highly relevant in this context. While your preferred candidate is considering whether or not to move, the present employer has the chance to make a counter offer which will trump yours. So **make your offer as difficult to refuse as possible**, – and remember that money is only part of the story. Even modest people like some status or other expression of appreciation, so do look at all the aspects of making your offer as irresistible as is appropriate.

Hiring bonuses can be good value

Hiring bonuses can be good value. In commercial fields, the “golden hallo” can make good sense. A lump sum on the table shows the successful candidate how keen you are to have him or her to join you, but it does not add an ongoing burden to your annual payroll costs.

Always remember the spouse

We observe that the main earner in a family may be comparatively unconcerned about where the new job is located, but to the spouse this can be the difference between a happy life and misery. Friends, school, universities, entertainments and so on are properly material to the lives of families. You can help by providing information on the area where the job is located and the facilities available. And it helps to show yours is a friendly and welcoming organisation by being generous with invitations for spouses to come and look around – and with social invitations as well where appropriate. And do remember that the spouse’s career may be a key factor. And that the lead breadwinner is not necessarily the male.

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