

6 critical recruiter questions for hiring managers

A strong client brief is the essential tool for connecting organisations with candidates who will add significant value to their business.

But for Tim Venn, General Manager, Projects and Operations at Davidson, the key to producing a comprehensive brief is understanding not just what the client wants in a candidate – but also what an ideal candidate wants from their prospective employer.

“When taking a brief, it’s really important to focus on getting all the information that credible candidates will want,” he says. “However, it is also very important to find out all the key selling points of the role that will make the job attractive to candidates in a very competitive and skills short market.”

“Clients are focused on filling a gap in the team, rather than competing for talent with other similar vacancies.”

Why is this role vacant?

The first question any good candidate wants answered is, why is the position vacant?

“If someone has been dismissed or there is a toxic culture, a candidate may not want to get involved,” says Venn. “Exponential growth and success necessitating new hires, however, is a good news story.”

Who are the leaders in the business?

“Candidates are attracted by the opportunity to work with industry leaders or experts. Iconic figures in a team act as magnets to the best talent.”

Venn cites a classic example from the civil engineering sector. “If the senior engineers have designed a key project, like The Metro Tunnel Project, then this is exciting for a candidate. That’s the kind of thing that makes people want to work for a company, and is often more important than salary.”

What are the projects the candidate will be working on?

From experience, Venn knows that, for example, engineers love to work on big infrastructure projects, medical people love to work with cutting edge medical processes, and IT staff love to innovate with new technology.

“It speaks to whether a company is doing interesting work, which is a big attraction for the best candidates.”

What will success look like for the candidate?

Good candidates will often view a job opportunity in terms of the short-, medium-, and long-term possibilities with a company. At Davidson, recruitment professionals often mirror this by creating a Davidson Success Profile with a client, detailing what the client counts as success within certain time frames.

“What will success look like after three, six and 12 months? If I bring success to a company, what’s in it for me? A good candidate will be thinking about a meaningful career with a company, and will want to know how they can grow, learn and develop.”

What is the client’s commitment to the details?

Clearly, a recruiter needs to ask questions regarding salary, hours, culture, business values and flexible work arrangements. “The current trend is towards a much more flexible working environment, with work from home and flexible hours arrangements.”

“A good recruiter will also gain some commitment from the client around when they will interview, when they will make hiring decisions, and when the candidate will commence employment.”

What does the candidate think of the role?

Interestingly, according to Venn, when the process reaches the interview stage and the candidate is performing well, clients very rarely ask candidates what they think of their opportunity.

“If an interview goes well and the client is interested in the candidate, I would advise all clients to test close the process with a question like, ‘how does our role compare to other positions you are considering?’. This allows the client to gauge the level of interest of the candidate.”

“Ultimately, the most important thing we do is to represent our clients accurately and positively in market where there is strong competition for the best talent.”