Welcome back everyone to episode three of our connecting to people series. We're continuing our interview of Steven Hoban, the service director of commercial services group recruitment division. Last week we were discussing CVs and their structure. It was a long one, but filled with some excellent content, so go check it out. This week though, we'll be discussing how to stand out. We touched on standing out the crowd last episode with your CV, and this can be a huge challenge when you're going up for a sought after position, but are there other ways, Steven, of standing out the crowd beyond your CV?

This is increasingly difficult. I think the way technology plays a role in recruitment now and how everything has become hugely internet driven. It's very, it is increasingly difficult to stand out from the crowd. So the very start of my career, I worked in, you know, a traditional high street branch for a high street agency. And how you interacted with the recruitment consultant.

On that desk, if you like sat there really mattered. So little things like, you know, being punctu for the appointment, being well presented, being organized, bringing the paperwork, they'd asked you to bring all of those things, spoke to you, being organized and efficient, and that's now increasingly difficult to do because you know, the high street.

Role of agency is diminishing or as your career experience expands, they, they play less of a role for all the reasons I mentioned, you know, earlier. So you are now in a situation where your first point of contact is, is through a system that is in many ways designed to block you having any further contact.

So through an agency, I, I would definitely say you can bring it to your attention by even adding a supplement or a note. So say if you're sending in by email, you know, it might just be putting a note on there to say, you know, I appreciate you might not have the time to come back to me if I'm not an ideal match for this rule.

But I would really welcome an opportunity to have a conversation about other opportunities that you may see in the future. So kind of recognizing and preempting that I recognize how busy you are. I recognize you might not be able to come back to me, Brian keen to have a chat, and you might even want after a week or 10 days or so, follow that up with a polite call.

Not Harring call. Cause you know, generally trying to somehow berate the recruiter for not getting back to you is usually not a very good long term strategy for a relationship without recruiter, but empathizing with them and, and trying to get that conversation is probably something you can do. I think if you're applying directly to a company, but gets even, even trickier now, because I think, you know, many of the, the processes you go through.

Where the company is involved, di directly then their, their ATS system for one of better word will be very keen to send you an automated message to say, you know, thank you for your interest in us. And due to the high number of applicants, we will come back to you if we're interested. And, and they're almost specifically designed to.

To prevent you doing anything that can stand out. So I think in terms of standing out the application stage, the best thing you can do is focus on that, that relevance and sorry to go back to it. But that relevance of CV is, is the key thing to get you that chance. Now, when you get interviews, that's, that's a kind of different Keion and there are some things you can do to stand out.

You know, they're a bit, they're a bit cliche, they're a bit. You know, a bit old, hard, but they still work. You know, punctuality is absolutely key. You know, if you, if you get a chance to, to be in front of anybody, then I think the old adage is if, you know, if you're not 10 minutes early, you're lit, but you should definitely be on time.

And, and all we, we all rely on, whether it be public transport or the joys of the motorway, they can always make you late. But. Always, if you do, if you do find that you're running late. So first of all, make sure you're building time to try and minimize the risk of you being laid. But ultimately if you find yourself and you are gonna be late, take the time to give them a call.

People will be forgiven. If you've given them a heads up that you're gonna be laid. Cause everybody recognizes that everybody's late once or twice in their life. But if you just don't tell anybody and then don't arrive for a call or don't arrive, which you know, teams call now probably more likely than a face to face you.

You've probably got three or four minutes for people to be sat on that team's call. And if you log on 10 minutes later without alerting them, I wouldn't be expecting anybody to be on that call still. Um, I think people still. Remember people, you know, in terms of how, how they behave and their attitude, uh, both to, you know, even reception staff, if you're looking to go face to face or your basic levels of, of, of courtesy and, and all of those things are still really important when you, you know, have face to face, remember to thank people for their time afterwards.

Um, And yeah, there's still some of the old school things still, still hold. Uh, they've changed it with teams, environment rather face to face, but, but they still hold, you know, if you, if you find yourself with a call with an agency, um, or, or an employer, you know, make sure that. You put yourself in the best possible position.

So you can be attentive for that call now, you know, it has become the new norm that I think anybody at any level might at least once in a team's call apologize, cause their dog's gone nuts or the Amazon man's arriving. So the, the world has become a little bit more informal, but you know, try to make sure you're somewhere where.

you can connect and, and you it's relatively quiet where you are. Or if, if you know, there's gonna be a disruption, maybe an apology for that disruption in advance, these things are still important because you know, somebody is taking their time to, to speak to you. So you need to recognize that. I think.

Amazing. Thank you. So now more than ever, it's increasingly difficult to stand out. At least in the early stages, perhaps in an interview can make more of an. That being said, has anyone ever done something that made them stand out to you during your time looking at CVS or during an interview?

It's a tricky one because I, I, I've kind of met a lot of people over the years. Um, uh, you know, being a recruiter, but I know if I speak more, generally, it is still, I think. Probably a huge factor that people don't prepare enough. So, you know, people either, either feel like they can perhaps just wing it when, to the get when they get to the meeting or they, they. Think they've prepared, but they haven't.

But if you have a candidate who you speak to, I I'll tell you actually, no, I will give you an example. So I was recently speaking to a candidate, um, and we, we are looking for them for this particular project we've got, and they are actually based in a different country at the moment, potentially coming over to do some work.

And when I asked them what their salary expectation was, they. How to explain that they'd actually research comparable salaries for their level of experience and their level of role. And then when not explain to me based on that, the kind of minimum that they'd be looking for now, the fact they've gone out and done that research for what that salary might created in a different country is just, it's just an example of how preparation can work.

So, you know what you'll often see is. The inevitably the, the, the interviewer will ask you at some point, you know, what do you know anything about loss? And, you know, if you are stock answer to that is, you know, well, I had a quick look at your CV, um, sorry, a quick look at your internet or your website, but, but no, not generally.

Then that kind of says to me, is the interviewer well, so you knew in advance, you were coming to maybe, but really you, you haven't gone even remotely out your way to. To look at anything about our organization. Whereas if someone was to turn around and say, you know, yes, I've explored your, you know, website in, in data.

I can say that obviously you work significantly across the world and actually you have four main divisions in the UK. And I, if I can understand things correctly, I'll be interviewing for this division, which is based here and does this, then, you know, all of a sudden you think, and somebody has, has taken a bit of.

To, to come, you know, likewise, you know, when someone gets to the end again, sorry, I'm thinking of more examples now, but when you get to the end and somebody says, you know, have you got any questions? It is possible during the interview. They've, they've answered every question, but it's really good. If you happen to prepare and bring a few with them, I.

Even if they do then answer all those by saying something like what actually I specifically wanted to ask about your benefits package. And I specifically wanted to ask about promotion opportunities, but actually you've covered both those in the interview. You're demonstrating again, that you came prepared to have a, you know, a meaningful conversation about the opportunity and it is important that interviewees take an active role in.

Interviewing process, you know, it is a two-way straight, it's a, it's a two-way interaction. And yes, I know the individual made either, you know, in personal standard circumstances might desperately want that job, but you still should take an active role in the interview as if to say, well, I'm, I'm not saying you the other way.

And you look, you know, So laid back and arrogant that, you know, you'd be doing me favor by employing me, but there there's certainly a middle ground of actually I'm I'm seriously here because I wanna find out if this is the right job for me, as well as if I'm the right person for you. And that always impresses.

You know that someone's taken that time. So as suppose to summarize, prepare, I know it's an old adage. I won't do the cliche about failing, prepare, and preparing and fail and all that. But showing, showing that you've taken the time and interest and done some research about the organization, about the role, you know, potentially looking up the individual on LinkedIn.

Finding out a little bit about them, um, be on time, be well presented now. Well, presented doesn't mean, you know, I don't believe in the old adage now that you can't have tattoos and all of that sort of stuff. That's not what I'm talking about, but you know, there's still a certain level of looking prepared and, and presenting yourself well.

Um, and then, you know, at, towards the end of the interview, Take part in the interview, ask questions and then thank people for their time. And these, these little touches do you know, do, do make a difference. I think.

Brilliant. Thank you. Is there anything you yourself have done to stand out?

Well, I think, you know, very early in my career and I, you know, I don't know if this is exactly thing, but what I, I was put in a temporary job and it turned out that it was. On Monday, this is my first work experience post uni actually. And I was put in a tempera job and it turned out that instead of it being Monday to Friday, it was Monday and Friday, which obviously was no good to me. So the lady formed me up. Um, a lovely lady actually still remembering pat Al she formed me and, um, told me and I, and I had said, well that that's not good to me, but she said, so I stopped the job, but I actually felt that I'd been a bit rude.

I had hadn't meant to be, but my accent was still quite strong at the time. Uh, so I went in there and I actually apologized to pass. I said, pat, I didn't mean to be rude, but obviously working two days a week, ed doesn't really work for me. So we then had a conversation. And that conversation led to her finding me another job.

And ultimately it led to me starting to work for that organization in my first ever recruitment job. So, you know, I'm not, not seeing that, what I did was anything special, but I'm seeing for recruiters, particularly having candidates that recognize what their job is and the challenges they. And being polite and courteous stands out a long way with recruiters with clients.

I think I'm not always sure what the response will be, but if it's directly, um, With a, an employer. It might be more difficult for the reasons I mentioned, but I don't think there's anything wrong. And it also does make you stand out if after you find that you have been unsuccessful for a job is to go back to ask for feedback so that you can improve on things.

Um, and also again, use that as an opportunity to. You know, can we have a wider conversation about, you know, how, how we may be able to work, you know, how we may be able to help me going forward? So again, it's just those little things, but certainly when dealing with an agency, I think it is a recognition that, you know, recruitment is a tough job.

Um, that's not say other jobs aren't, but, uh, recognizing the strains and stresses that a recruiters under that sort of level of currency can really engage them in terms of trying to be partners on, on how to, you know, how to look for you. The only other thing I think that that I've personally done is when I was going into a different role.

I hadn't done that sort of role before I'd done something related, but that not that sort of role. Um, I, I kind of said to the manager, you know, one of the things that they highlighted was I hadn't worked in that specific area before. Um, and I, I, I did have the luxury of actually relocating so I could afford to do this.

I'm not too sure. It's a wise strategy if you are currently in work. But I, I turned around with him and said, well, give me a go. Cause I believe I can do this. Um, and if it doesn't work I'll after six months, then, then you can let me go. And. So that sort of sharing of the risk, um, I think, you know, helped me out in that instance.

Now I'm not saying you might be as, as cavalier as that, but it might be recognizing for example, that if you want to change your career direction into something that you haven't done a hundred percent, then, you know, not maybe moving for a parity of salary or even in some cases, if you afford a slight drop.

Then that's how to transition your survey from your experience, sorry, from one area to another. But again, you know, that that might be a different conversation. Uh, likewise, I think for people entering the marketplace for the first time, again, depend on the job and depending on the individual circumstances offering to volunteer, um, I did some work where it was actually a friend of a friend and he'd finished a course on.

I think it was some sort of digital graphic design course in the, the town we were living in there. Aren't the, the huge amount of major agencies that London had, but he didn't want to go to London. And this allows to network, I suppose, as well. Saw his, his sister actually working for me. She mentioned him and I, I connected him with somebody who I knew who ran a digital agency.

And that conversation started off with him, uh, volunteering a couple of days a week to build up his portfolio to the point where he'd saved up enough money to go to London and ultimately ended up with him working for two weeks voluntary and then securing a permanent job with. Well, I suppose that's an example of how networking can work as well as volunteering can work if you're in a highly competitive candidate at marketplace.

That's great. Thank you so much, Steven. Well, that wraps up this episode on standing out. It was quite a short one this week, but we thought you could use a briefer off the last week's episode. Catch us next week, where we will be finishing this interview and discussing our final chapter interview. Make sure to tune at the end of the month as well, to hear the full unedited interview.

See you then.