Audio Transcript for:

Big Biller Interview with Guy Ross

This is a word for word, unedited, transcript of a live Tele-seminar from Gary Stauble

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Big Biller Interview with Guy Ross

Gary: Hello and welcome to another in our Big Biller series of interviews. I want to welcome everybody to today's session. I'm excited to have Guy Ross as our guest today. Guy is a vice president at Kimmel & Associates. They are in Asheville, North Carolina and they are in the construction recruiting industry.

Is your whole office in the same industry, Guy?

Guy: I guess, about 90 percent of our office is. We also do freight forwarding and logistics and waste management.

Gary: Kimmel & Associates has 60 to 70 people in the company. Guy is a vice president with them, and he's been with them since 1998. He has been a top producer for a long time. He's had six years or better where he was doing 400K to 800K in production which, obviously, puts him in the Pinnacle league.

Obviously, the construction business has been hit very hard, maybe harder than almost any other industry in our country. They've had to adjust to that, and we're going to talk about some of those adjustments, how Guy had dealt with that, and what his work habits and recruiting habits are. I'm excited to have him here.

Just a couple more things about his background, he has an MA in Psychological Counseling and he also has been Consultant of the Year with his company as well.

Guy, thank you very much for joining me today and for taking part in this.

Guy: It's my pleasure.

Gary: Let's just jump right in. We've got a couple of areas to cover but I want to start out talking about general client issues. One of the questions that I get a lot from people is: How do I avoid getting bogged down with human resources or how do I interact with human resources in a way that isn't a big time bandit for me?
How do you deal with that in your business?

**Guy:** That's a struggle. I think of it in a couple of different ways. The HR can be helpful depending on the HR person—if they view you as a threat or if they view you as an ally. If they view you as a threat, then, you have to see—is there a way that I can embrace myself with that individual to make myself an ally?

And the other thing I think about is: If I go through a different avenue or a venue to get the information I want to the place I want it, how much trouble is that going to cause me? How powerful is that HR person (if he is small wheel in the big cog) and I go to the vice president and ... if that doesn't ruffle too many feathers, then, that's what you do.

I was talking with one of my colleagues just last night, and we were talking about this exact issue. She was saying that she reached out to the branch manager and said, "What is it that you want us to do to serve you best? Do you want us to go through the HR department which was in a different state or do you want us to come directly to you?"

Our mindset is: How can we provide the best service to you? And what that branch manager tells me is much more important than the cog in the wheel. If the branch manager says, "Look, everything has to go through HR," then, everything has to go through HR.

But if the branch manager says, "Look, send it to me and cc her or send it to me and I'll get it over to her," then, that's what you do because that's how you're providing the best possible service to your client.

**Gary:** I'm imagining the company is maybe not as big as some technology company, a multibillion-dollar company. Is this less of an issue for the construction industry than it might be for other types of industries?

**Guy:** It depends on the size of the company. If you have one of these large corporations like Bechtel, KBR, or Flour Daniels, that is an issue.
But a lot of the people we deal with don't have HR departments. Some of them do, and if you have to go through HR, you have to go through HR. But being in construction, these are all Type-A personalities. They grab the bull by the horns and they start running.

**Gary:** And then, in terms of working with your clients, is there anything you've done to cultivate deep, long-term relationships with your clients?

**Guy:** The way I operate... this is just how I do things. If you develop a relationship with them through honesty, integrity, and sincerity, that will come back to you. When you're initially breaking that ice, one of the things is to just send them exactly what they're looking for. I think, quite often, we get compelled to send résumés to someone because we feel that clock ticking in our head and we think we're going to either get beaten by the guy on the street or by another search firm.

I think it's more valuable to call someone in two weeks and say, "Look, I don't have anyone that I think fits your bill right now. I'm out here and I'm working hard for you; but I would rather send someone whom I think hits the bull's eye than someone who just hits the target but is way off face."

For me, that's how I show them that I am still in the game and I want to meet their needs and not just sell them what I think they should be buying. It's a tough call to make because you're basically saying, "I don't have anything for you." Yet, I think it lends to your issues of integrity and who you are and I think they respect that more than someone saying, “this isn’t even close, what were they thinking”?

**Gary:** Along with the idea of working with clients, what are the criteria that you have that a client has to meet in order to work with you?

**Guy:** In today's day and age, I have probably less than there was two years ago.
The guideline that I try to lay down is just communication. What I tell people is: "Look, I'm out there more or less marketing for your company. You are a good company. This is why you should make a career decision to make a move towards that company. And if I send résumés and it takes a week and a half for me to get any kind of feedback, then, I think it's an indication of how that company operates. So if I get into that company and I need to make a change or I need a response, then, it's going to take a long time for this to happen.

And when I'm talking with my candidates, I say, "As soon as I get feedback, I'll get back to you." And when I'm talking with my clients, I say, "It's important for me to have that open line of communication. I don't need a lot of your time, but I need to know if this is what you're looking for. Did I miss the mark?

This is what I'm thinking. And I'm going to continue to send you this because I think this is what you're looking for unless you give me the feedback that "Well, it's not quite right. I want someone who comes from an Ivy League school" or "I want someone who has worked for these companies in the past. And if I don't get that from you, Mr. Client, then, I can only work as hard as I can, but I'm working in a vacuum." That's the thing that I ask for the most.

**Gary:** Let's say you have that conversation the first time you start working with them, and they agree to that open communication, what do you do if the other end of the line goes dead? Let say, you've submitted a candidate or two candidates, then, it goes dead. How do you try to remedy that before deciding to give up or move on? Do you have sort of a process you go through or x number of phone calls or send a fax or smoke signals or whatever?

**Guy:** It comes down to a couple of issues. One, I'll leave a couple of voice mails for them at work. I'll try to reach out to them on their cell. I'll shoot them an email, usually, with a sense of humor saying, "Look, we talked about this. This is what's going on." I'll try to break the ice without being overly aggressive with that person. But I'll let them know that I need this help and this is why I need the help.
It also comes down to my bottom line. How many other job orders have I got going on? I try to make a straight line between me and the money. And if I see that someone, i.e. a client, is getting in the way and they are off task, if their sense of urgency has changed or whatever, then, I say, "Okay, is it better for me to spend my time chasing those persons just to get feedback or should I look at some other avenues for me to get money to help support my family?"

So I'll leave a couple of voice mails, leave a couple of emails; and then, if that's the best thing I have going on, I keep going. But if they're not responding for a reason... and what I've found is that if you send the right person, they're calling you back. If you hit the bull's eye, they're going to call you back.

Gary: Yes, unless something has changed or the urgency has dropped out or something.

Guy: Right, for some reason that we don't know.

Gary: Marketing is a big issue for a lot of people based on what's happened in the last couple of years. It's always an issue, actually, in almost any market but particularly in a down economy. So what are your thoughts about marketing? I want to ask you a few questions.

How much time do you spend marketing? Do you have a sense of how that looks in a typical week?

Guy: This was how I was trained. I will market via a candidate; and that candidate is going to be an A-plus candidate.

You're selling vacuum cleaners. If you don't have a vacuum cleaner, even with all the work that you've done talking to your potential client about how good you are in what you do and the service you provide, you're not going to make as much money as if you already have a vacuum cleaner and you're talking to somebody about it right then and there.
I just do bullet points in my head and in my verbal presentation... he's been with this company for 10 years. He's degreed. He's worked on these kinds of projects. Again, we're in the construction industry so we talk about projects and specific stuff.

He's done three hospitals; most of them have been ground up, over 200 million dollars. He was the lead guy. He had P&L responsibility on those projects.

Just quick bullet points because, at least, in our industry, the guys we're dealing with don't have a lot of free time. So the quicker I can get to the point and get the interest sparked, the quicker I can get to the money. That's what I think.

**Gary:** Most of your marketing calls sound like marketing a candidate if it's through a new prospect.

**Guy:** Correct.

**Gary:** So how do you start off that call? Do you go right into a presentation or do you talk about your company first? How does the first part of your candidate marketing call sound like?

**Guy:** I'm kind of a bare bones guy. I'm straight to the point. I introduce myself. I tell them this is who I am, this is what I do, this is what our company does, and this is the purpose of my call. Probably, within the first 30 seconds, I get to the meat of the matter. That's the way I operate.

**Gary:** And what kind of reception do you get with that type of call? Do they pretty much assess what you're saying based on whether or not they're interested in that candidate you're describing or are they just closed off, in general, half the time? What do you find when you lead with that kind of approach?
Guy: It all depends on my client or the potential client. Do they have a need and is there a sense of urgency? That's where my industry is suffering because there's not a sense of urgency due to the financial situation of banks not lending any money at this point in time.

Getting back to your question, it all goes back to the client because I bring an A-level candidate to that person, and that company is making a decision—is this a strategic hire that can help our company grow? And, if not, is there something else that we have a need for? And, if so, then, we shift gears and start talking about that. If they don't need anything, they don't need anything.

Then, I just say, "Well, is it okay if I touch base with you in 45 days to see if things have changed?"

Gary: You've been with this company for 12 years. Obviously, the last two years have been different than 10 years prior, is there anything, in general, over that 12-year period that you've done that has allowed you to penetrate deeply into your niche market where you have broad client relationship? Any particular things that you've been able to do to penetrate that niche?

Guy: No, nothing of that nature. What I go back to is providing quality candidates. Everyone says that I'm bringing good guys to the table; but if you really do bring a good guy to the table, then, they will remember that. And if you can provide their company with a difference maker or someone who can either save their company money or save them time in a project where, i.e., they bring some more money or help them bring in more business, then, they will remember that Guy brought so and so in here, and that guy done a bang-up job.

For me, the best thing I can do is to make sure that I bring quality people to the table.

Gary: Great! In terms of preparing for a marketing call, let's say, a candidate marketing call, do you have a process that you go through if you talk to a new candidate who sounds like somebody you're going to market? How long does it take you to prepare that presentation?
That's another thing where people get stuck—preparing to make their marketing calls or planning to make their calls where they either don't do the planning or resist it because it takes a lot of effort to plan out who you're going to call and how you're going to present the candidate. How do you handle that preparation part for the calls?

**Guy:** This will be construction-specific; but the way I look at it is—okay, what does this individual do (and I guess you can relate it to any industry), and then what is it in that industry? What are the companies that would be interested in this individual?

For example, if I've got a guy who has done a number of school projects, what companies do school projects within my market sector? Then, I'll come up with a list of companies that do that hard-bit school project work; and there are a number of companies that don't do that. So, by calling those companies, I'm completely wasting my time and their time as well and I'm showing my ignorance to the marketplace.

So, I try to focus on: Who is my target market? Again, it's got to be a good guy especially if I'm doing cold-call marketing. And then, I come up with some bullet points. I'll probably come up with four bullet points: He's a degreed project manager. He's been with this company for the last 10 years. He's looking to make a move. He just came off a x number-dollar project.

When you leave names of companies he's worked for, if they are quality companies, it's going to land again to your credibility and the quality of the candidates that you have in hand.

**Gary:** One other thing that comes up a lot is voice mail. You make the marketing call; you've got your presentation ready to go; and you get voice mail 60 percent of the time. What kind of message do you leave if you're marketing a candidate? Do you leave a full description? Do you just say, "Call me"? What type of message would you leave if you were making a marketing call?

**Guy:** It depends on the day and how I'm feeling, I guess. Sometimes, I just hang up and I'm not going to leave a message. I do it in a couple of different ways.
Sometimes, once I get voice mail, I realize that I can either leave a bullet-point marketing message: "This is who I am, this is why I'm calling. This is the purpose of my call" and then, go bom, bom, bom, bom....

What I'll say is: "I'll try to give you a call back next week. I realize you're busy, etcetera." And then, I get off the phone because no one wants a three-minute voice mail. They want to get to it and get moving.

So, I'll either do that and make a ticker system for myself so I call them back in eight days. But, again, if what I leave on that message is something that they need, they're going to call me back. If they don't need someone, then, what I'm doing is probably annoying them and trying to pry that door open; and they are not opening that door on their own.

So that's what I've been doing lately.

**Gary:** In terms of the social networking sites, do you use LinkedIn much or is that not really a part of what you do?

**Guy:** I am on LinkedIn and I use it to a certain extent. I was just talking to someone about this yesterday. It can be such a drain on your time because you'll do a search, and then you start looking at connections, and then you start going here, here, and there. And then, three hours have gone by and you haven't made any phone calls.

I think it's a good prep tool but the best thing I can do is be on the phone. I know a lot of people within my organization who use it a good bet and maybe I am just not savvy enough to figure out how to extract that information quick enough to get back on the phone. But I think it's a powerful tool.

**Gary:** It's funny because I just had that conversation also with another person within this series; and he was saying the same thing. He looks at LinkedIn as something that his researcher should be working on.
So a lot of recruiters are very tied into LinkedIn. They have it open just like they have their database open all day on their desk. Somebody said that the best social media tool is the telephone.

**Guy:** Yes, I watched that.

**Gary:** I really think that's true. In terms of generating leads for searches, how do you find out about openings? What do you typically do to find out about openings in your market?

**Guy:** The telephone—how's that? If you're on the phone and you're talking to people, you talk to them about when the construction industry was good; you talk to them about projects that they're doing, projects that are coming up, what's next, what they're bidding on, and that sort of thing.

The other thing you can do is when you're talking to high-quality individuals who are out there interviewing, talk to them about what they're doing and who they're interviewing: How did you get in there? What that through another search firm or was that something you heard about? Was that a courtesy interview?

Try to find out who is interviewing that way. And then, call and introduce yourself to the people if you don't know them or call and re-establish your connections—hey, I heard you, guys, are looking for someone.

**Gary:** I was just thinking that with finding a lead, sometimes, if you've been doing this a while, you do it organically as you're in conversation with the 20 people that you talk to per day. That's actually the best way to come up with them.

**Guy:** I've been on a couple of those sites like Indeed, and they've never been effective for me. But I do know some people who have found things on there, and if you act quickly enough, you can get going; and that can be helpful. But, for me, I would rather, as you say, do it organically through a conversation.
Gary: Let's switch gears a little bit and talk about being a producer and getting from a starting level or a mid-level recruiter to where you've gotten to which is top-level production. You, obviously, started out as a rookie, at some point. Is there anything that was a big idea or kind of a light bulb moment prior to billing in the 400K range? Was there anything that sort of clicked for you, an idea or just something you heard that made a big difference for the jump in your production?

Guy: I guess, the thing that I think about that I go back to is providing quality service. And I don't want to beat that drum too much. But if you can't provide high-quality individuals, then, you are not going to be able to bill.

So the big idea is cold call. Recruit as many people as you possibly can, get to know your market better than anyone else, and take ownership of that market. And provide high-quality candidates for the clients.

The hiring authorities you're dealing with are meeting with other hiring authorities and they probably talk if it's a golf outing or if it's at some kind of convention or something; and they talk about struggling to find quality people. If your name comes up in that conversation, that's gold.

So the better service you can provide in sending A-level people to the right groups, the better it's going to work out for you.

Gary: You've gone back to that several times. And I think what's interesting to me is that you, obviously, believe what you're saying. You believe in the fact that you recruit high-quality people, which is probably why you keep going back to that because that's something that is true and authentic for you.

The way that comes through in marketing, you're probably not aware of half the time because what springs to mind for me is that when I coach recruiters or owners about marketing themselves, a lot of times, it comes up where...
As a matter of fact, we're talking about this next month in our program, this idea of how do I differentiate myself from my peers because trainers like me are always telling people, "Make sure that you stand out from the pack" or "Do something to differentiate yourself."

Well, a lot of times, I will hear, "We all recruit programmers." So I recruit programmers but I don't know if I recruit crème of the crop programmers. So that belief in the fact that you know and that in the fiber of your being you are recruiting top-level people for your clients, that's just going to ooze out of you in terms of your confidence, in terms of what you'll put up with, and in terms of how you present yourself and the pride that you take. There are just a lot of intangibles that's going to benefit you because you believe it. So it's easier to sell to somebody else.

Guy: I would also tell the audience out there that I've got to kiss a lot of frogs to find a prince. It's just about talking to as many people as you possibly can and understanding what your clients are looking for.

Right now, the marketplace (at least, in our marketplace) is so competitive because the unemployment rate in construction is probably over 20 percent. It could be between 20 and 30 percent.

When I'm talking with candidates, I talk to them about—what separates you from the other guy I'm sending in there? And listen for that answer. I firmly believe that the first answer is usually BS or a superficial answer. And what you have to do when you're recruiting or qualifying is to drill down a little.

The analogy I give is like when someone says, "What kind of music do you like?" and everyone says, "I like all music."

You don't like all music. You don't like classical music and head-banging metal music and punk music and R&B and jazz. I mean, you just don't.

So when someone says, "Oh, I save money on a project," well, how did you do that?
And if you can get a story out of the guy and then extrapolate enough information that it's a good story, then, what that guy is doing is he's giving you selling points and marketing points for when you're out there marketing your services to whatever group it is.

On this one project I was running, he ran into trouble with a subcontractor, and this was how he resolved the situation. He saw that this problem was coming up. He averted the problem, and he probably saved 10 days on their schedule and 10 days on a hundred million-dollar project is x number of dollars.

So if you can give someone an analogy or a story, I think it would sink in a little better with a hiring authority.

Gary: Yes, absolutely. I love that idea of getting a story. That's great. Let me stop us for just a second. I'm going to recap some of the points. I usually recap a couple of times on these calls to give people a time to catch their breath and take some notes on what I've heard so far.

Here's what I've heard so far from Guy. For those of you listening, if you want to take some notes, this is what I've gotten so far.

The thing that has come through is that honesty, integrity, sincerity, and a bull's eye focus on finding great candidates is really the thing that has made Guy successful.

In terms of what he looks for with his clients, the primary thing is open communication and timely feedback. And what's interesting is that he explains the reasons why they should do that and why it's in their interest to give him timely feedback. And he makes that friendly. He might tell a joke when he has to follow up about that to keep things light, not an aggressive style of policing them but showing them why it's in their interest to call him back.

He also talked about candidate marketing as being the primary way that he gets new business. Again, that goes back to the focus that high-caliber candidates are really what's going to build a reputation, build repeat business, and bring more job orders.
Along with that, it's providing difference makers. I like that idea of providing difference makers. That might even be something that could be a part of the marketing materials.

"We provide difference makers." That's something I wrote down as well.

He also talked about a bulleted approach to candidate marketing calls so that it simplifies things. You just get accomplishments, creating bullets, and lead with those.

You also talked about taking ownership of your marketplace when recruiting candidates. You said that you've got to kiss a lot of frogs in order to find a prince—screening candidates deeply, listening for exceptional people, and then drilling beyond the first answer that they give you when you ask questions such as: "What did you do to stand out from your peers? What have you accomplished? It's going beyond that, digging deeply, finding a story, and getting them to tell a story that's compelling that you'll be able to repeat to your clients regarding that candidate.

And those are actually the selling points that you're going to use when you get a candidate. By asking follow-up questions, you get them to give you those selling points.

That's where we are so far. Guy, this is great. I'm enjoying this and we've got a lot of questions we could go through but we'll just keep going and see how far we get here.

Is there anything that you had to stop doing if you go back to when you were just starting out as a recruiter where you made a jump to a higher production? Was there anything you realized you had to stop doing in order to make that jump?

**Guy:** What I've seen through the people that have come to work here who have not succeeded is... I think when people struggle, it's usually they who struggle. And when I say that, I think it's usually something that they are doing that gets in the way of the relationship between them and i.e, the money.
They want to come across as authority when they're really not an authority in their subject matter, if it is marrying a candidate that is not that good of a candidate, and you're just marketing the wrong guy; but I think the most important thing is not being able to identify quality people. We have training sessions here, and one of the things that I give a presentation on is qualifying individuals and being able to identify a quality guy from a non-quality guy.

And if you tarnish your reputation by sending out non-quality guys, you can only bill so high or you'll only get so many returned phone calls.

Gary: Maybe we should switch gears and talk a little bit about recruiting because I know that's something that you've got a lot of passion for and that's a specialty of yours. Just in general, where do you typically find your best candidates? Are you using referrals or do they come to your website or is it postings or online things like Monster? Where do you find your best candidates?

Guy: The best candidates are working, and they're not actively looking. The best way to find a quality guy is through just hard-core cold call recruiting. And when we talk with people, we try to talk to them about their career and their career ambitions and not talk to them immediately about a golden opportunity because the grass isn't always green on the other side.

And if you can talk to someone about where they are in their career and kind of embrace yourself with that individual, then, they are going to trust you. And when someone trusts you, they're going to open up and give you information, i.e., "I have five people here in my office. I don't see career advancement because there are three people in front of me who are two years my senior; so that next step is probably going to go to them instead of me.

I made a placement just recently where the guy said, "Look, I'm a senior-level estimator. The guy who is the chief estimator is probably three years older than I am. He's been here for 20 years. He's not going anywhere."
So I try to plant seeds when I'm talking with these guys about—what is it that you want to do? Where do you want to go with your career? Is that an option for you within your org?

If it is, that's great, and I would highly recommend you stay there because people reward longevity and loyalty. But if it's not, then, do you want to be kept apprised about other opportunities?

And then, find out what it is that they want to hear about. When I call them, it is specifically about things that they have talked to me about in the past—"Look, I want to hear about these kinds of opportunities."

Again, when I'm marketing, if I call a candidate who is a quality guy and I give him a chance and an opportunity that is beneath him or is not what he's looking for, then, I'm wasting his time. The next time I call him and leave a voice mail saying, "Hey, I've got something I want to talk to you about," he's not going to be anxious to call me back.

**Gary:** It's interesting. You said that you don't start off a conversation with a new recruit by saying, "I've got a job." You start out by asking about his career, is that correct?

**Guy:** And let me say that that's not a hundred percent of the time. Sometimes, when I've got a hot job that I have to fill by the end of the month, and I have pre-qualified people through our database or one other avenue or it's come through a referral, I do that. So I'm not saying I'm a purist and that I never do that.

Generally, it's better to build that relationship because, otherwise, all you're doing is selling to someone who's very busy and who probably isn't interested. But if you get to learn about them and build up that trust, then, they will relay more details to you.

**Gary:** How does that sound? If you make your introduction, you call someone who has never talked to you before, you get him on the phone, you want to recruit him for a particular position, you make your introduction, when you get to the part where you say, "The reason for my call is..." what do you say at that point?
Guy: I tell them, "This is Guy Ross. I work for Kimbell. We are an executive search firm that specializes in construction. Would you be interested to hear about a career opportunity either now or down the road at some point?"

Gary: So you lead off with an open-ended question about their interest level as opposed to "I've got a hot job."

Guy: Right. And they say "no" 90 percent of the time.

"You would never want to hear about something? I mean, if something great opens up, you would never want to hear about that?"

"Well, you know..."

And then, once I break that ice, I say, "Okay, I respect what you're doing right now. Is this a good time for you to speak or should I try to call you back at a different time?"

You have to be respectful of what they're doing. They might have a time deadline and they've got to get something out by nine o'clock. And I call them at 8:45. They're not going to give me good information at that point.

Again, it just shows respect for the individual. So I'll say, "How about if I call you back at lunch or after work or whatever?"

And then, at that point, I go into, "Well, how long have you been there? Where did you go to school? What is it that you want to do? Where do you see your next step?" And then, I say, "What is it that you want to hear about?" because I tell people, "If I call you with something that you are not qualified to do or you're not interested in, I am wasting your time and I am wasting my time. So what kind of things do you want to hear about?"

And, a lot of times, I'm calling them completely out of the blue and they haven't thought about that. But some of them will.
And then, I'll tell them about what I've heard them tell me through active listening, and then give that back to them and say, "Okay, this is my analysis. You've got a degree from Purdue. You've got three years in the business. You work for a large company. With most of the projects that you're working on, you're still going to be a small cog in a wheel. Would you want to hear about an opportunity at a smaller company where you can be a bigger fish in a smaller pond?"

And they say, "That's exactly what I want to hear. Guy, you're a genius!"

**Gary:** You repeated back what it was that you heard. You listened, and then you repeated it back to them.

**Guy:** It's through active listening, yes.

**Gary:** It's that psych background coming through.

**Guy:** Exactly.

**Gary:** Let's say that you make that call. The person is receptive. You do have a particular position in mind, and they say, "Yes, I am interested." Where does the call go from there? Do you take the time right there on the spot to go through your entire interview? Do you schedule a separate interview? Do you do it over the phone? Do you do it in person? How does that happen once they say, "Yes I'm interested"? Maybe that happens in three minutes of you talking.

**Guy:** I'm in North Carolina. The market sector I work is in Southern California. We don't do any face-to-face work. If the individual says, "I am interested," then, I go one of two ways. One, I say, "Look, to get the ball rolling, what I need to do is get a copy of your résumé. If I can get you to email that to me, then, I'll be able to have more pointed remarks about this position."
So I'll either try to get them to send the résumé to me; and then, when I'm having that conversation, I try to get a commitment from them with regards to "well, when do you think you can send that to me? Do you think you'll be able to get that? Can you do that at lunch? Is it at home? Do you have to update it?" to let them know that I'm serious about this and I'm going to probably call them and harass them about it for a while.

"Try to get that paperwork over to me and once you do, I can have a more pointed conversation about this." And they usually say, "Yes, that's cool" and, hopefully, get the paperwork rolling.

And then, I may lead with some other things about the opportunity and say, "This is why I'm giving you a call. Look, I'm looking for a mid-level estimator who wants to go to a senior estimator level. You'd oversee three people. You'd be doing educational projects or healthcare projects" or whatever it would be.

And then, I'd drill into what their motivation would be—"Why is it that you are interested?" They are either dissatisfied with what's going on at work or it's just about money which is always a red flag or whatever the issue is.

**Gary:** I'm thinking, as you were talking, about just the rhythm of phone calls like how many calls you make or how you keep yourself on track with phone time. Do you have a particular indicator that lets you know whether you're making an average number of calls or whether you're below average for that day or whether you're above average? Do you have certain parameters for yourself or just ways that you track your time on the phone?

**Guy:** Our company does have boards and we've got a board that says you made x number of calls, and you were on the phone for three hours yesterday or whatever it is. And I'm a low-tech guy here so I just have a little scratch pad and I say, "Oh, I made 10 calls. I can go to lunch now."

I try to be on the phone for between an hour and a half to two and a half hours a day and making around 45 calls. That's my goal. Sometimes, I do better; sometimes, I don't.
And so, the ninety minutes to two hours, whatever that period is, those are actual minute’s connect time on the phone.

Guy: Correct. I think if you're on the phone for too long, you're just talking and you're not making as many contacts as you can.

Gary: So the company, obviously, has call tracking software; and then, they post those totals daily.

Guy: Right.

Gary: Interesting. And so, in terms of finding candidates, you said that the best types of candidates are employed somewhere. How do you figure out who you're going to call? Where do you get the names of those people?

Guy: That's the million-dollar question. I guess, I think about my job orders; and then, I target the companies where I think those individuals will be coming from.

As an example, I was doing a search. I was looking for a director of HR. Then, I thought, okay, these are the 45 companies within that certain area that do this kind of work. So I just made a list of all those companies, and then called and asked for the director of HR at every single company.

So, I guess, it stems from what it is that I'm looking to do. Again, how am I going to make the money? What takes me closest to the money?

So I will make my call list from the job orders that I'm currently working on.

Gary: Will you actually call them? Let's say that Company A is who you're working for and Company B is a competitor where they would like to have people come from. Will you call Company B and ask for the names of people so that you're actually doing that by phone to get the names? How does that typically work as far as finding out? If you know what company you want people from, how do you get those names?
Guy: Yes, that's what I'll do—just call on the phone and say, "Hey, who is your director of HR?" and they will forward me to someone and, depending on the day, I will either get that name and write it down and make a plan to call them later on during the day or have them put me through right then. It depends on what's going that day.

Gary: That's something that I think is a bit of a lost art, being able to call into a company and get names. If you're able to do that, your competitive advantage is much better than somebody who doesn't know how to do that.

For anybody listening, if you don't know how to do telephone sourcing, it's worth figuring out; and the reason is that you can walk into a client meeting with a prospect and tell them, "We can target source or target recruit from your competitors. Tell us where you want to see people from and we'll go out and recruit people from those companies."

That's a very powerful marketing position. I've always looked at that as detective work.

If you have to hang up the phone because you freeze, then, that's fine, too. You just do what you can to get names.

Guy: It is anxiety-provoking, needless to say. And that's why people don't do it. It's hard. What I used to tell the recruiters who work for me is: The reason that people pay us a handsome fee is because it is hard. Otherwise, they would do it themselves. Yes, it's hard but that's what we do. If you can't cold call recruit, you can't make any money here.

Gary: I'm just curious about your office set up. Are you in an individual office? Are you, guys, in a bullpen situation? What does your physical layout in your office look like?

Guy: It's a little of both. Personally, I'm in a private office; but there are areas where there are a number of people in the same room, maybe five or six. And there are pros and cons to both of those. I mean, there's a lot of electricity in an office where there are five people calling and a lot of peer
pressure—I'm not on the phone but that guy is. I should get my butt on the phone.

And there are, obviously, advantages to having an office with a door and a ceiling as well

**Gary:** Some of it, I think, is personality because, for me, I get energy from having my head down buried to what I'm doing; and I get distracted by voices whereas other people get energy from those voices. So it just depends partly on your personality, too.

**Guy:** Right.

**Gary:** Anything else before we wrap up that you would tell to someone who has been hit hard by the economy and who is frustrated with their plateaued production and who is trying to figure out how to break out of a comfort zone and get back to a stronger production? Anything that comes to mind that you might tell somebody, a junior recruiter or somebody in your office who is struggling a little bit?

**Guy:** If you know the answer, call me and let me know. Where else are you going to be able to do this kind of work? Do you like doing this work? If you really don't like doing the work and you hate coming in and you feel like that phone weighs a hundred pounds before you pick it up, then, think about something else because this is a hard job. And whenever I hire a recruiter, I tell them that this is really, really hard. It's not an easy job. And if you want an easy job, go to work at a department store and sell cosmetics or something.

But it's probably one of the most exciting jobs. I can't think of doing anything else because where else can you sit down with a phone and a phone book and try to carve out a niche for yourself?

It's all on you. It is a hundred percent on you to find candidates and find clients and match those two up. For me, if someone call me and says, "Guy, I need an estimator who can do hospital work and they've got to live in Southern California," heck, I live in North Carolina. How am I going to find that guy?
As you've said, it's that detective work and that challenge that motivates me to get that done. So, with regards to taking the next plateau, I guess, I would ask people to have someone mentor you who has been here longer than you have (and I've had some great mentors) and have them listen to you and ask yourself, "Is there something that I'm doing that is getting in the way of me being successful? What I'm saying on the phone (if you record your phone calls), is it something that I'd say on the phone? How do I come across?

Look at the résumés you're sending for this particular job. And if you're sending crap and you've got a good mentor, they'll say, "Look, you're sending crap." You have to be able to figure out why you chose to send those people.

And if can't understand that, then, you should probably go work for the city or go work for a department store or something.

**Gary:** Excellent! Let me do a second recap of what I've heard so far. We talked about finding candidates, and you mentioned that the best candidates are happily employed, that you use cold call recruiting to find out who they are and you will actually call in to the companies and ask for the people doing what you need to locate.

And you talked about finding out about your career first by talking about their ambitions first, and then pitching a job afterwards.

You talked about asking them what they want to hear about so that when you do make a second call to them, targeted information, you're giving them descriptions of positions that are going to be something of interest to them.

You also talked about showing respect during that call, maybe having them find out if they're able to schedule it at a different time, if they're able to talk privately, and asking them what it is that they want to hear about on an ongoing basis.

You talked about repeating back to them what you heard using active listening to get their confirmation and the buy in that you're on the right track.

You've also talked about some of the habits in your office, that you shoot for 45 calls a day, 90 minutes to 2 hours of connect time. You talked about
posting those calls or the results of yesterday's calls publicly on the board. And you also talked a little bit about either loving the business or struggling, and it's probably not the right fit for you which I think is great advice.

And I talk to people who really struggle with that. And if somebody is not happy doing what they're doing, it's going to be very tough to overcome those challenges. I think you do have to love the detective work and love the challenge of finding people in order to be a great recruiter.

Guy, thank you so much for taking the time to join me this morning. I'm sure it's going to be helpful for people to hear your story, and I appreciate you being here today.

**Guy:** it's my pleasure. I enjoyed it.
ABOUT GARY STAUBLE:
Gary Stauble is the Principal Consultant for The Recruiting Lab, a Consulting Company that provides Recruiting Professionals the Training, Tools and Systems to make More Placements with Less Effort. Gary offers several Free Resources on his website at www.therecruitinglab.com.