Job Order Qualification: Thirty Questions to Ask Your Client

The first order of the day is to determine the level of urgency attached to filling the position. This line of questions will allow you to assess the real opportunity for your Agency and prioritize resources and efforts accordingly. Don’t be tempted to skip ahead. (Frankly, if the Client has been looking for 6 months, interviewed 30 candidates from 9 different agencies and "can afford to wait for the perfect match" - my level of interest is going to plummet and I’ll wrap things up quickly from here.)

1. How long have you been looking to fill this position?
2. How many people have you interviewed for this position?
3. What are the consequences of this position remaining unfilled? (This is a killer question for determining level of urgency!)
4. If I found you the perfect candidate today, could you interview him tomorrow and have him start on Monday? If not - what are your timescales?
5. How many companies are currently submitting resumes for this position?" What is your pipeline looking like right now?
Let's continue and pursue a line of questioning to examine the type of candidate we are looking for from a skills and experience perspective:

6. What is driving the need for the hiring of this individual? (ie: new project, replacement, deadline, etc.)
7. Please tell me about the project or projects he would be working on?
8. Can you elaborate on the business initiatives/problems that the successful candidate would be involved in solving?
9. What are the "deliverables" for this position over the course of the first year/duration of the contract?
10. Please can you give me an overview of the technical skills you are looking for in suitable candidates? What are the "Must Haves" as opposed to the "Nice to Haves"?
11. Are you seeking candidates with specific domain knowledge? (Healthcare/ Finance/Technology, etc.)
12. Are there any other additional skills you are looking for (soft skills, communication/writing etc.) Perhaps you could describe one of your employees who is currently successful in this position? (Continue to probe and look for "hot buttons" that you can sell into later).
Now it's time to add some color to the picture by looking at his work environment:

13. What size is the team he would be joining?
14. Would he be reporting directly to you?
15. What size is the company, (revenue and employees) how many locations etc.?
16. Can you tell me a little about the culture of the company - and any differentiators that may help us in attracting high quality candidates when we are headhunting? (In other words - how does the Client “sell the opportunity” when he identifies a candidate that he wants to hire?)
17. What attracted you to the firm?
18. Are there any opportunities for a flexible work schedule or work from home days?
OK, now let's get some facts and figures:

19. What is the ceiling on the compensation for this position? Client: ‘$90k, tops.’ You: ‘So Mr Client - if I found the perfect candidate for 100k - would you still be interested in seeing him?’ Check employee benefits package.


21. Are you open to candidates who need an H1b transfer? Do you sponsor Green Cards?

22. Do you have a job spec? “Great – what’s your email address – I’ll drop you a line right away so you can send it over”
Now it's time to determine the hiring process and set expectations:

23. What kind of turnaround can I expect for feedback on Resumes? (Push for same day or 24 hours max.) Advise Client that great candidates are scarce and will be snapped up by the competition.
24. What is your process for interviewing/hiring? (phonescreen/screen/skype/face to face, etc).
25. How many interviews is standard before offer (and with whom)?
26. Shall I submit resumes directly to you?
27. What are the best days/time of day to schedule interviews with you?
28. Would you consider hiring over Skype (for out of state candidates - means you can broaden the Search)
29. Confirm your Client's contact info, job title, address and email. Ask him for his Mobile number "in case I need to get hold of you in a hurry".
30. Thank your Client for his/her time!

Confirm with your Client that you have a solid understanding of the position and repeat back to him the salient points of the conversation so far. Explain your Recruiting process and set his expectations on submission of resumes.
If you are supremely confident and have a solid pipeline of candidates in mind already - ask for some time in his diary next week to set up interviews!

That’s it! Let’s do this thing!

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