

EPISODE 3

[INTRODUCTION]

[0:00:07.9] TF: Welcome to Job Search Strategies with Tiffany Franklin. I'm here to help you market yourself into a better career and open up new possibilities for your life.

[0:00:16.5] TF: Today, I'm going to talk to Chris Murdock who is the Chief Sourcing Officer and Co-Founder of IQTalent Partners which he founded in 2009 and now he leads search execution and client relationships for this 150-person firm. Prior to establishing IQTalent partners, Chris worked with Yahoo's internal executive recruiting team, where he gained in depth experience across the technology recruiting sphere. He began his career working and recruiting and sourcing roles for Heidrick & Struggles and with TMP Worldwide after earning his Bachelor of Arts from Vanderbilt University.

[INTERVIEW]

[0:00:54.3] TF: Chris, thank you so much for being here.

[0:00:57.1] CM: Hey, thanks Tiffany for having me.

[0:00:58.7] TF: Tell me Chris, you know, I've kind of gone over just some of the highlights but walk me through what's your career journey been?

[0:01:04.3] CM: Given that we're talking about job seeking and the way to conduct a job search, I'm going to give you the detail about how I got into it. My whole thing was, I wasn't prepared. I interviewed for jobs with Kimberly Clark, Georgia Pacific, Coca-Cola in sales and marketing and it was so interesting, they would look at my history degree from Vanderbilt and I was competing with people with business degrees or at least economics degrees or degrees in marketing or communications.

They'd always ask me, "Well, what do you want to do, be a teacher?" Yes, I wanted to be a teacher in the beginning but after a while, I kind of realized I wanted to get into sales and/or marketing. I saw a job for a research associate with a firm which had just been acquired by TMP Worldwide, which I had no idea that had happened.

I looked at – I researched executive recruiting, I looked about what — I kind of figured out what a research associate would do, I really got excited about the role. I get into the interview and the partner looked at my resume, looked at me, looked at my resume, looked back at me and said, “If you were my son and I had just put you through four years of Vanderbilt, I would kick your expletive for applying for this job.”

I said, “Well, you’re not hiring me for this job, you’re hiring me for what I’ll be doing in six months when I help you find candidates faster, close searches faster.” And I wasn’t this eloquent, it probably meandered a little bit more than this. “Essentially, I want to help you make more money.” And he hired me and trained me, it was at that point that after about a year of living in Atlanta, I moved to Seattle, got a job with Heidrick & Struggles and after about six, seven months, I was laid off, three weeks later I was hired back and then about less than a year later, they shut that office down and relocated me to Menlo Park and this is where my career definitely got accelerated when I moved to the Menlo Park office. When I realized that I was starting to kind of plateau at Heidrick, I got a phone call from Google. When Google calls, you answer.

I interviewed and it was to find — do diversity sourcing in 2005. They were at the forefront of diversity sourcing and recruiting back then. But when push came to shove, ultimately, I was told that I would never be converted because my GPA was too low. I actually happened to get a call from Yahoo as well. I said, “Sure, why not?” I told them, I was further down the road with Google and they said, “Please come in on Friday, let’s just have an introductory conversation.” I researched Yahoo and everything so I was fully prepared just to have the conversation. I got there, sat down, the gentleman who had called me on the Wednesday, now it’s Friday. He called me, he sits down and we start having a conversation, he asked me a question. I wish I could remember what the question was but essentially, I answered it and he just said, “I’ll be right back.”

He gets up, walks out of the room and I’d never had that happen before and I never really heard of that happening. Before you knew it, a manager level person came in, a couple of directors walked in, a couple of the executive recruiters and then the VP of talent acquisition walked in. And so now, I’m on one end of the room by the whiteboard, they’re all at the end and they’re all lobbying questions at me and I’m white-boarding and I’m answering questions and then there was one question at one point, I think this is when I actually may have sealed the deal.

They asked me a question, I wish I could remember what the question was but I meandered for like five, six minutes. I paused and I said, “Let me start over.” I answered that question in less than 30 seconds. It was at that point the head of talent acquisition, she gave me the offer on the spot. I accepted and signed everything

before I left. It really showed me who the organization was and I appreciated that. That's all I wanted. The thing is, it was for executive search, which Google wasn't. Google, it was for engineering, which I had never done before but felt like I could ramp up. But this was for executive search and strategic sourcing initiatives and it was awesome. It just clicked. Everyone I met was awesome.

[0:05:58.2] TF: Chris, how did you go about preparing for these interviews and specifically conducting your research?

[0:06:04.5] CM: It was early Internet so 1999, researching executive search, it was pretty basic. This time around, I looked to see who was in executive recruiting. I looked at the HR team, I looked at the talent acquisition leadership. Looked to see where they came from, what companies they worked at prior to joining Yahoo.

[0:06:23.3] TF: I'm so glad it worked out for you.

[0:06:28.6] CM: Absolutely. Thanks to the leadership team at Yahoo, I had the opportunity to attend conferences, speak at conferences, I started writing blog posts, I got involved with the Vanderbilt Career Center after you and I met. The leadership team invited me to do a job seeking presentation to the students and actually, the presentation I created for Vanderbilt, Make Your Own Dore, since they're the commodores, I actually changed it to Door and I've actually done that session at about a dozen schools. It was an opportunity to help them avoid the mistakes that I made.

[0:07:11.5] TF: What was that pivot point when you decided to go out on your own?

[0:07:14.9] CM: I got laid off as part of the downturn and because I had converted to full-time employee, I got a severance package and I called up my buddy Tom and asked him to be my boss essentially, because I have zero interest in doing the finance side of things or the taxes and all of those things. He did that at nights and weekends, I was business development and execution.

[0:07:39.1] TF: You can give some hope to people who are experiencing that right now. What was the difference between thinking, "Okay, I'm laid off, how do I find just another job?" Or do you feel like you needed a lot to begin your own business because some people may have just think you need tons of money or you know, it's a scary endeavor?

[0:07:59.1] CM: Well, in this case, it was the decision I'd made as soon as I was told I would be laid off and I wasn't surprised. They had already disbanded the executive recruiting team and so I kind of saw the writing on the wall and actually at one point, I was asked to stop smiling.

[0:08:17.7] TF: Seriously?

[0:08:19.4] CM: Yeah, because I've always been told by all the thought leaders in the recruiting world that I should hang my own shingle and do my own thing. The thing was, I love my job at Yahoo, I loved my – the team I worked with, they were phenomenal, we were a family and we're still very tight. It was just time. I called up my buddy Tom and Tom even reminded me that we'd even thought about setting up — starting a company in college. When I called them up, that was just a no-brainer and here we are, almost 11 and a half years later.

[0:08:50.3] TF: That's amazing. Tell me what's a day in your life like as, you know, chief sourcing officer and co-founder of your own company?

[0:08:59.9] CM: I talk. I just talk all day long. I give advice to members from my team, I talk to perspective clients, I managed some client engagements so ultimately, I just – I literally talk all day.

[0:09:15.8] TF: How big is your team now?

[0:09:16.6] CM: Pre-COVID, we had about 120 employees and yeah, about 30 contractors so we were about 150 people in total. Now, we have just over a hundred employees and maybe 75 contractors. I mean, we've come back, the business has come back pretty rapidly and we're recruiting for engineers and salespeople.

[0:09:36.1] TF: That's incredible so are you recruiting all over the country or are there any specific hubs that you recruit with?

[0:09:44.1] CM: Mostly, I mean, our biggest – I think I'm going to say, our biggest geographic area is the San Francisco, Bay Area, where we came from but we have clients all across the country and actually, a couple of global clients.

[0:09:56.6] TF: That's fantastic. One of the things I ask everyone who comes on the show is what's the best piece of career advice you've ever been given?

[0:10:04.7] CM: Know what you want. And that's something I didn't pay attention to. My uncle was always very clear, you need to know what you want to do and I didn't know when I started my job search. So know what you want to do.

[0:10:19.4] TF: That's probably one of the sticking points for people is how to figure that out, what was it that helped you find your direction?

[0:10:27.5] CM: Well first, I had to fail at a lot of jobs, did a lot of interviews to realize I was not preparing myself properly. I started looking at Monster Postings and I finally saw something that just really resonated with me, the duties of a research associate and the retail. I've been doing retail at Sears from my junior year of high school all the way through college and so I kind of knew the retail world and this job was for a research associate for an executive search firm that focused on retail.

I've been doing research at Vanderbilt, I've been working in the retail industry for a while and so just felt right and then I started researching recruiting and it just resonated with me.

[0:11:12.1] TF: That's great, I'm so glad it all kind of, it's like everything you had been doing came together.

[0:11:17.0] CM: Yeah, I mean also, I've been taking people's personal histories my entire life, my mom would lose me at K-Mart and I'd be over in the food court interviewing old people.

[0:11:28.7] TF: That's hilarious, you were born to be in the job you are now?

[0:11:32.6] CM: All my friends had been teasing me all the time. "Did you get that person's entire life story?" I'd say "Yes."

[0:11:37.6] TF: Yeah, I do that too with career counseling, I'll start talking to people and then before we know it, we're going over their resume, it's a hazard of the job. Speaking of resumes, what do you think makes a resume standout for the right reasons when you are bombarded with so many?

[0:11:53.4] CM: It's got to be clear. I'm going to look at the first 10 lines, make sure I see what I need to see and then make the determination as to whether or not I want to read further into the resume. If I'm not clearly seeing what I need to see for the role that I'm recruiting for, I'm going to pass because I'm looking at potentially

hundreds of resumes and if I don't see a summary or the first few jobs aren't clearly relevant to what I'm recruiting for or what I'm looking for, I'm going to move on.

[0:12:30.7] TF: What's that career summary got to have in it that you know, what would turn you off and what would make you say, "Wow, this is somebody I want to learn more about."

[0:12:40.2] CM: I'll tell you about the first big red flag that I'm looking for. If they have applied to a finance job and they're talking about sales and operations, want to get a job in sales operations in the job that I'm recruiting for that they applied to isn't relevant, the relevancy of the summary wasn't changed to fit the job that they applied to, that's an attention to detail thing and they may have the right skillset but because they referenced the wrong type of job, that's a big red flag.

What I want to see is that they looked at the position description and that they may have changed the resume or didn't have to but because it was already relevant, they have to make sure that they echo and mirror parts of the job description. Don't make assumptions that I'm going to have a thesaurus in my head that's going to be able to equate your experience with the experience it's being sought after by the client in the job description. Do that translation. Make the resume actually tell me why you're qualified for the job, mirror the skills, mirror the experiences that are being requested and let me know that you have them upfront.

[0:13:46.2] TF: Great. Now, for the ones that you do want to keep reading, how long do you spend on a resume?

[0:13:52.7] CM: If they showed that they are relevant right up front, I'll read the whole thing.

[0:13:57.1] TF: Okay, great, do you read cover letters?

[0:14:00.8] CM: No.

[0:14:02.2] TF: I know, I feel like about half and half — when I was a recruiter about half recruiters read them, half the recruiters could care less but you never know which half you're going to get.

[0:14:12.3] CM: Yeah, no, I don't read the cover letters. Because they're also often – they're not as easily skimmed as a resume is, or scanned, it's just because of the sheer volume. A lot of times though the email, if you're emailing someone, the email kind of serves as the cover letter.

[0:14:31.9] TF: Okay, if you're doing that and I get this question a lot, how long should that email be if it's serving as a mini-cover letter?

[0:14:40.0] CM: Two or three paragraphs.

[0:14:41.4] TF: Okay.

[0:14:42.0] CM: If you put bullets in, if you can bullet things, even better.

[0:14:45.7] TF: Perfect. By the way, you said something about scanning it, are you using applicant tracking scanners?

[0:14:50.9] CM: No, scanning like down the page.

[0:14:53.3] TF: Got you.

[0:14:54.6] CM: Just with my eyeballs, the original Google search algorithm.

[0:15:00.0] TF: What kind of email messages from candidates would impress you? The tone of the message, the length of the message, we just talked a few paragraphs, bullet points, how can they show that they can add value to you?

[0:15:13.0] CM: I'll first off say, I'm not impressed if you write like three pages. That doesn't impress me, it shows that you're just telling me a bunch of stuff, there's nothing hooking me if you're telling me everything. Why should I talk to you? I like short and sweet, I want to know that you're relevant and I want you to feel confident that you are relevant and I want you to show me that there's some confidence there, minus ego.

[0:15:36.2] TF: Got you. That kind of balance there where I'm assured about what I can deliver but I'm not overconfident.

[0:15:42.3] CM: Yeah.

[0:15:42.3] TF: Okay, should candidates initiate contact with you on LinkedIn?

[0:15:48.4] CM: If they can't find my email address or they're unable to get an introduction, sure. I totally believe in, if I'm going to email people through LinkedIn, I should be just as emailable or inmailable. Absolutely. It could be assumed that recruiters live in LinkedIn, but not all the time. So, there may be a delay. I'll respond you in email probably faster than I will a message on LinkedIn, sometimes.

[0:16:17.2] TF: Okay, what are the pet-peeves that candidates should avoid for you personally?

[0:16:22.2] CM: Getting too personal too soon. I've had candidates reach out and say, "Oh your daughter is so adorable" and the picture of my daughter and I is on Facebook and that's just some creepy stuff. Don't be creepy, I tell all the job seekers that you should kind of look up the people that you want to interview, look them up on LinkedIn, don't be creepy, don't start referencing stuff that they didn't necessarily tell you.

[0:16:47.7] TF: Got you. That makes sense like you know, "How was your family reunion?"

[0:16:52.9] CM: Yeah, that's weird and that's creepy. I've had candidates do that because they didn't understand that just because it's on my Facebook page or — you don't want to get too personal, you want to keep it professional.

[0:17:03.0] TF: What about LinkedIn though? If you were, if they also went to the same school or they worked at Yahoo or they were in one of the same groups, that's a little bit different with LinkedIn versus the super personal other ones, right?

[0:17:15.7] CM: Show me the affinity that we have. Affinity is, what do you have in common with someone? If we have Vanderbilt in common or a person in common or I was a history major and you are a history major or you had an English minor. Having that affinity makes me care, it will make me want to respond.

I do the same thing with candidates, if the candidates I'm reaching out, potential candidates I'm reaching out to, show some affinity for the product or the company that I'm recruiting for, I'll reference it, because I'm trying to show them that, "Hey, you put it out there that you liked this kind of stuff, come do it for my client." They

should do the same thing, feel comfortable doing the same thing. Just make sure that it doesn't cross that line into creepy-stalkerdom.

[0:20:00] TF: Got it, that makes a lot of sense. Now, one other question I had for you. What platform do you usually connect with candidates on and as far as them getting prepared for interviews, which one should the really be practiced in?

[0:20:08.2] CM: All of them. Every company's different, Zoom seems to be the most prevalent, for the video platform but we have clients that use Teams, we have clients that use other video services like through RingCentral, which I still think is Zoom you should install Teams, you should be – you should install Zoom and then just be prepared for others and make sure that you tried it out ahead of time.

[0:20:34.9] TF: Any tips for those video interviews?

[0:20:38.5] CM: Don't fidget. If you're a fidgeter, take all the pens off your desktop. Just because it's very visible. I mean, they're just staring at you. At least if you're in a – a lot of times when you're in person, people will look away. But in this case, they are looking right at the screen and watching you fidget, watching you sit in your chair. Just don't fidget, don't do it, it makes you look nervous.

You can be the most confident person in the world and delivering a phenomenal tidbit of information, but if you're fidgeting, it will distract the person that's interviewing you. Another thing to do would be to make sure you silence your cellphone, nobody cares if you've got kids screaming in the background or a dog barks, that's normal. But I think making sure that you've got a somewhat of an interesting background and I don't – I'm not a big fan of the virtual backgrounds, do the blur before you do the virtual background.

[0:21:38.7] TF: Yeah, I agree with that because people turn and then their ears disappear, something like that, it always looks kind of funny.

[0:21:44.2] CM: It's distracting. Anything you can do to reduce distractions is ideal.

[0:21:50.3] TF: Yeah, one thing I have clients do sometimes if they really can't get past the fidgeting is to record themselves with their phone just short little videos answering questions so that they can go back and see what it's like so then at least they're aware of it.

[0:22:04.2] CM: Yeah and the other thing that I mean it takes a minute to get used to, your first instinct is to look at the screen. You really should, when you are talking you should look into the camera because that shows confidence. They're going to see you, they're going to see your eyes. They are going to be looking at you in the eyes not you looking down at the screen.

[0:22:25.4] TF: Yeah, it depends where your camera is too so it is definitely easier if it is a little higher rather than the one at the bottom of the screen too.

[0:22:33.3] CM: Yeah, keep it up top if at all possible.

[0:22:36.6] TF: Other questions about that, so when people are – have you noticed more companies doing the asynchronous interview? For people who aren't familiar with that, that's when they will have the video interview as kind of a phone screen or initial screen, but it's video and it's not a live person asking the questions, but a prerecorded person but then you're live answering them being recorded. Are a lot of companies that you work with using that or is more of an actual person on the other end?

[0:23:06.9] CM: In our experience, we only have one client that has done that and that was a while ago. It was for high volume roles, we typically don't work for roles where they're hiring a 100 people against the same role, you know, so people that are recruiting for call centers aren't using us for that and that is typically where I've heard about the asynchronous video interviews for sales development representative roles, call center roles where they have to go through so many candidates to fill up a class that they intend to use those technologies.

[0:23:43.0] TF: That makes a lot of sense. Now, one thing that I've noticed with clients, some of them are so excited to get into a company that they will want to apply to like 20 positions or something, which I remember from my own hiring committees that I've been on that can be a red flag. How do you perceive that and what advice do you give to someone as far as the magic number of positions to apply for within that one company?

[0:24:08.9] CM: You're going to hear me say this word quite – you've probably heard me say this word quite a bit – relevance. If they are all relevant, it doesn't matter how many you apply to ultimately. You know, if they are all relevant but with different groups, you know they are not going to fault you. In fact, recruiters are probably going to – whoever responds to you first gets to stay claim to you for their job and their division or their segment of the business. However, if you are applying to finance, marketing, sales, customer support, I

can see that as well. Not all of those are connected, those are not relevant, to you. That's spamming. They are just going to get delete or they're going to say not a fit.

[0:24:52.8] TF: Because they will see everywhere that you've applied for that company too, right?

[0:24:57.9] CM: Correct and I had a candidate, at yahoo, who had applied to almost 200 jobs at Yahoo and he had – he felt very strongly that he was qualified to do all of those jobs and it was all across the board. All across the board, and it was just a big no.

[0:25:17.9] TF: That makes sense, so find again — be able to say why you are relevant for that particular role. What's your favorite thing about recruiting Chris?

[0:25:27.0] CM: I get to talk to people.

[0:25:30.5] TF: It all comes back to talking.

[0:25:32.1] CM: It all comes back to talking. I have always enjoyed getting to know people, building relationships. It is one of the reasons why we pivoted from being a commission-driven recruiting firm, to a billable hours firm. Because it allows us to build longer deeper relationships with our clients. We're part of the in-house recruiting team. We're not just seen as this high-cost vendor, we're really engrained in what our clients need. We're part of the team, we just happen to be on demand and by the hour.

[0:26:07.8] TF: That's great, so what on the other side is the most stressful part of recruiting for you?

[0:26:13.6] CM: Talking all the time, no I'm just kidding. No, I did – the most stressful part for me ultimately now that I'm not necessarily recruiting all the time is managing and leading the team. The pandemic has definitely made that very stressful to the business side but when I was doing a lot of recruiting, the balance between managing the expectations of the candidate with the expectations of the hiring manager not all the time do they align.

That's pretty stressful — because the client, you know, the hiring manager wants to fill the job but the response rate might be too low and we're contacting the right people but you know, they're just not getting back to us in a high enough volume to get enough people into the process, so that's stressful and then there are times when

we get a ton of clients, candidates for the client but then the client's unresponsive. It's that balance of managing expectations that is pretty – it can be stressful, not all the time does that actually happen.

[0:27:14.4] TF: For people that, you know, they're conducting their own job search, they are either working somewhere now or maybe they got laid off and they're looking for something, should they be also reaching out to the search firms to become part of their candidate pool or does it work another way? What is the best advice you can give for them in that regard?

[0:27:34.2] CM: Well, the first thing you want to do is you do want to identify the firms that are recruiting in your geographic area and in your functional area. A lot of times on their websites, they will have the ability to upload your resume and you know, to get into their database, same thing when you apply. You know, it's the same process as when you apply to a company, directly to a company, but with the search firms and the recruiting firms, it's about timing.

They may not have a role for you at that time that you're looking but getting on their radar, building a relationship with the firm is important because they may not have something for you now but it might be two, three, four, five years in the future but at least you're building that relationship.

[0:28:18.2] TF: How do you build that relationship just through that initial outreach with your resume or is it trying to network with them, what's the best strategy?

[0:28:27.6] CM: Being there is an open networking, so if they ping you and you're not interested referring people that's always helpful and then there is other instances where the relationship is just getting on their newsletter, having a notification sent to you when they do have a job that's notified. Sometimes, the relationship just means that you are signing up for their stuff. You are paying attention to their podcast, you are paying attention to their videos, their newsletters, stuff like that, having that relationship and being responsive when they do call, that's very helpful.

[0:28:58.8] TF: Fantastic, pivoting back to the interviews, what impresses you in an interview? You know we heard about your story and what you did to impress others, with all of the interviews you do now, what are things that stand out to you for all the right reasons?

[0:29:11.9] CM: Quiet confident, that's number one. It's okay to be proud of what you've accomplished. Make sure it doesn't go into ego – you know, you start getting into that egotistical realm of "I, I, I." It really impresses me when somebody accomplishes great things but never once mentions me or I or my. They say, "We did this. We built this." You know, those are the types of things that I – that really impress me that even with impressive people, typically have impressive people helping them, and I want to hear that.

[0:29:48.6] TF: Great tips and then how can candidates follow up with you after the application or the interview without being annoying?

[0:29:57.4] CM: Polite persistence. You know, if you call me out and say, "Hey man, I emailed you my resume yesterday and I didn't get a response." That's rude. It's putting me on the defensive. I really don't want it. It send the wrong message. But following up, you know, sending me – if you email me or contact me on LinkedIn. Like Tiffany for example, you sent me an email but for some reason, it wound up in my spam and you very politely like a couple of days later send me a message on LinkedIn, you know, asking if I got your original email and I found it eventually.

Not all the time it's a no-response, somebody ignoring you. Sometimes it's like okay, it's in the spam, it's in the clutter folder and not all the time do we check those, as recruiters. Knowing that that could potentially happen, you do a follow up like you did, Tiffany, you were so polite and you were like, "Oh sorry –" you were halfway apologetic.

[0:30:52.8] TF: Thanks, Chris.

[0:30:54.3] CM: Because you didn't want to be annoying. And so you were – you know, you kind of reference that you'd sent me an email and then you ask, "Should I be sending you emails to this email address or another email or should I just contact you here?" And that's the proper way to do it. You know, follow-up, don't be accusatory, ask questions to get the ultimate result, which is a response.

[0:31:16.0] TF: Fantastic. Well, I'm glad that worked out because I had a feeling, I know you always respond to emails so quickly and so I thought, "I wonder," and I had that happen with somebody else. It went into their spam, so be sure to check your own spam as well and I know I have to do that myself.

[0:31:31.0] CM: It was on purpose. I purposely had it go into spam.

[0:31:36.7] TF: Got you.

[0:31:37.9] CM: I didn't.

[0:31:40.6] TF: I'm like hey now. No, it's like it's been a while but not that long, Chris. Tell me — or actually, one more thing about that follow-up, how many follow-ups are okay? Is it one? After they've had the interview, they've sent their thank you and is it maybe a week later just send a, "Thank you again for this opportunity. I wanted to see if there is any additional information you would need from me. I appreciate the time to connect with you," or something like that?

[0:32:10.1] CM: It depends on the timing. If they tell you that, you know, we're hoping to fill the role in the next three to four days, you respond, you follow-up a lot faster. If you don't get a response to an email but you didn't have a conversation with them on LinkedIn, pivot to the one on LinkedIn, just in case. Again, just in case the message got caught in spam or was accidentally deleted, go back to the original message.

The other thing I would say if timing isn't of the essence, send a thank you card. Just a little thank you note to the person. You know, you got the work address, you can send something to the company's address to them. I have every thank you note I've ever received from a candidate whether I hired them or not, I still keep them.

[0:32:57.6] TF: That's huge. I know sometimes with jobs I really want, I will of course do the email one within 24 hours just to make sure it's timely but then follow-up within that week to make sure that they get a formal one too just because I feel like it stands out now since not as many people write the actual handwritten thank you notes these days.

[0:33:18.6] CM: Correct and that's why anything you can do to kind of separate yourself from everyone else. I've seen candidates that had the same background and you know it is essentially the coin flip to see which candidate was going to get the job and an hour after the decision was made to move forward with another candidate, but no phone calls have been made but a hard copy thank you note came from one candidate, the candidate that wasn't going to get the offer and they switched.

[0:33:47.0] TF: Wow, that's huge. The value of a thank you note.

[0:33:50.1] CM: Yeah, because again, the person put themselves, you know, separated themselves from a candidate that was a mirror image, experience-wise.

[0:34:00.1] TF: Now, what if they are interviewing with four people, do they need to send four separate notes to everyone or how does that work?

[0:34:07.7] CM: If possible but at least to the hiring manager.

[0:34:10.5] TF: It's funny. I remember my story with that is, with Vanderbilt, at the end, I think there were 14 people over six hours and I think it took me a couple of hours but the day afterwards, I wrote 14 thank you notes. But I got the job so that's my thank you note story. I definitely see the value.

Two more questions and then I will let you go because I know you're a busy man. As far as questions for the candidates to ask, that can be super important, what are some things you want them to ask about in the interview and what things should they avoid?

[0:34:43.9] CM: It's less about what to ask me because every job, every company is different. I think ultimately, you need to have your questions prepared in advance. It can be questions about the company, the culture. It could be questions about the role and how does it – you know, work with such and such a group. Again, there aren't specific questions, but I always think that you should have a list of questions ready to go.

Now, where I see people fall down when it comes to the questions is when they over-prepare and they think, "I have to ask this question. I have to ask this question." But those questions might have been answered. Don't ask those questions because they're having to repeat something, repeat themselves.

[0:35:26.4] TF: That's one of the things I talk to people about too because when you're meeting maybe with 10 people over the course of a day like little meetings here and they all tell you some of the same things and you want to have a bunch of questions ready but then maybe what do you say as far as how many to ask, maybe three or so, three or four depending on timing?

[0:35:46.7] CM: You should have your questions arranged in the order that you want to ask them from most important to the least important. You may get through them all, you might not so that's why you put them – that's kind of why you rank them, in order. Typically, because you may have five minutes after an interview to

ask questions, you might have 20 minutes. Ultimately, every situation is going to be different, every company is different, every role is different but making sure that again, it comes down to are you asking to ask the most relevant questions upfront, have the least relevant questions at the bottom.

[0:36:19.1] TF: Then watch the body language of your interviewers to tell when they're ready to wrap it up.

[0:36:23.8] CM: Yeah, the body language. I mean it's a little different with video now but if you start seeing them like checking their watches or they are grabbing their phones, yeah, you lost them.

[0:36:33.5] TF: Last thing, any negotiation tips for candidates? You know, with things being kind of tough and a lot of layoffs out there, can people still negotiate and how should they go about doing it?

[0:36:44.7] CM: Again, do the research. Know your value but also at the same time, asking for more money or more equity just because your dad told you, you should ask for more money, doesn't mean you should. If you can justify the ask, if you can justify for what you're negotiating, so if you are asking for more salary, a higher salary, be prepared to justify it. Not every state allows you, you know, companies in certain states are not allowed to ask you what your salary was.

They can ask you what your guidance, is or you can voluntarily tell them. Because what ends up happening is, if they offer you a 140,000 and you know, say that is your base salary then you say, you wrote a 150 in your last job, well you say, "Well, I'd rather be closer. Is there a possibility of getting closer to 150, which is where I was previously?" That's a justification, but if you were at 120 and they're offering you 140 and you're trying to get more and you can't justify that ask, you shouldn't do it. Because you know, we as recruiters or HR people or even hire managers are going to go like, "How can you tell me you want more money? You were making 120." Or, "I know what that company pays and it's not as well as us."

[0:38:04.3] TF: Should they have, maybe, if it is justified, should they have a few bullet points that succinctly show what their value is and what they can do for the company's pain points?

[0:38:15.2] CM: Yes, have the justification ready to go. Typically, when you talk to a recruiter whether it's an in-house recruiter or an agency recruiter, if you tell them why it's low or you can say, "Well, if you can't come up on the salary, not all the time can you." As a recruiter or an HR person or hire manager. But you can

change the equity component, ask for that. Just say, “That would make me feel good about making this decision because then I’ll have more compensation on the backend, with the equity.”

[0:38:44.4] TF: What are your favorite tools as far as researching the salaries and compensation?

[0:38:50.9] CM: Salary.com, you can look at –

[0:38:53.8] TF: Glassdoor, all of that?

[0:38:55.6] CM: Glassdoor, yeah a bunch of those resources are out there and then one last thing, vacation policies are standard. They are typically non-negotiable, yet I still get candidates that say, “Well, can I get four weeks of vacation instead of three?” the vacation policy is a policy. This is actually a pet peeve I should have brought up earlier but I thought since we had this topic about negotiations toward the end, just assume you can’t negotiate for more vacation time.

[0:39:27.1] TF: Okay, what if they want to try and negotiate salary and something? Is it best to only negotiate one thing or does it depend on the negotiation or something like that? Maybe if they are trying to negotiate some work from home time or something like that?

[0:39:43.1] CM: Put it all together, don’t go back and forth.

[0:39:45.1] TF: Okay.

[0:39:45.8] CM: Again, if you can justify it, do it.

[0:39:49.1] TF: Well, I have really learned a lot as I always do when I connect with you and appreciate your time with this. Are there any last-minute things you want to share with everyone before we head out?

[0:40:02.0] CM: I always say be nice to recruiters but it really comes down to a bunch of things. I’m an open networker, I fully believe in recruiting good karma and so I try to help everyone that I can. I try to give advice where I can, make connections where I can but not all the time will. Again, it comes down to timing, if I don’t know anyone that’s looking for someone with your skillset, I’ll tell you, but I will also be here to assist with introductions, helping you find email addresses of people and again, finding those relevant people to reach out.

Once you land, do the same thing, recruit good karma. Be an open networker, be there for other job seekers. Don't be that person, you know, we all have those friends that got a significant other and then bailed on their friends, don't be that person, you know? Be there. Be open.

[0:40:55.7] TF: Treat people the way you want to be treated.

[0:40:57.2] CM: Yes, because again, you may be looking for a job in the future and need their help. The more you're open to helping others, the more likely they'll be open to helping you.

[0:41:06.8] TF: Thank you so much for your time Chris, it's been great catching up with you.

[0:41:10.2] CM: No, thanks Tiffany for this opportunity to hear myself talk and again, everyone that's listening can find me on LinkedIn and send me a connection request.

[0:41:18.9] TF: Fantastic, thank you.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

[0:41:20.3] TF: Thank you so much for listening. I really appreciate you and I hope you have found this helpful. Please go to tjfcareercoach.com, my website, so you can get more advice to help you in your job search and I hope you all check out more episodes of Job Search Strategies with Tiffany Franklin. Thank you again.

[END]