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A FIELD GUIDE

“just send a few cvs over and we’ll see.”

game one of six.

and the line that gets you
out of each one.

swipe →



the spec-call

THEY SAY

“just send me a few cvs and we’ll see.”

WHAT IT IS

a day of your work. for free. filed under “just seeing what’s out there.”

IF IT’S REAL

a real one comes with a signed-off salary and someone upstairs asking why it isn’t filled yet.

THE LINE THAT BREAKS IT

“i can. but cvs at a role nobody’s committed to is usually how these stall. give me a clean run and i’ll bring you people you’d actually hire. worth doing properly, or shall we leave it?”

THE METHOD

they all break the same way.

you just saw one broken. doesn’t matter which game you’re in, the same three moves get you out of it.

1 **name it. gently.**

2 **give them a fork.**
in or out. you’re fine either way.

3 **ask the one question they can’t waffle past.**

you can’t win these.
you just step out.

the fire drill

THEY SAY

“we need someone on this yesterday.”

WHAT IT IS

urgent for you. not for them. you’ll drop everything, and the feedback will still take a fortnight.

IF IT’S REAL

real urgency answers your emails at the speed it demands of you.

THE LINE THAT BREAKS IT

“happy to move fast. can you hold two interview slots this week for it? if the diary can’t move, it’s not urgent, and that’s fine, i’ll pace it honestly.”

the hedge

THEY SAY

“we’ve got a few agencies on it.”

WHAT IT IS

four agencies, the same twelve cvs, and not one of them actually on the hook.

IF IT’S REAL

a real one tells you exactly who else is on it. and doesn’t look thrilled about it.

THE LINE THAT BREAKS IT

“most do. how’s that going, better people, or just the same names faster? what’d make you back one of us instead of four?”

the phantom

THEY SAY

“we’re definitely hiring for this.”

WHAT IT IS

a role no one’s signed off. floated to test a salary, or just to look busy.

IF IT’S REAL

real roles have a start date and someone losing sleep about the gap.

THE LINE THAT BREAKS IT

“great. just so i back the right horse, is the budget actually signed off, or are we still at maybe? both fine, i just work them differently.”

the fee grind

THEY SAY

“your fees are a bit high.”

WHAT IT IS

making it about your fee so nobody has to say whether the seat’s worth filling.

IF IT’S REAL

a client doing the maths on the empty seat argues the rebate, not the fee.

THE LINE THAT BREAKS IT

“compared to going direct, or to the seat sitting empty? happy to talk fee once we know it’s worth filling properly. is it?”

the slow yes

THEY SAY

“looks great, let me run it past a couple of people.”

WHAT IT IS

all the warmth of a yes. none of the date.

IF IT’S REAL

a real yes puts the next meeting in the diary before you’re out of the room.

THE LINE THAT BREAKS IT

“of course. who exactly, and what’ll be their first objection? let’s get you armed for it, and put a date on when you’ll know. if that date passes quietly, i’ll take it as a no, no hard feelings.”

BEFORE YOU GO TRYING THIS

two ways to get it wrong.

saying it needy

say it tight and keen, they hear someone who needs the deal. say it calm, they hear someone worth backing.

crying game at everyone

most clients aren’t even playing you. they’re busy, or they’ve been burned. call it too fast and you just look paranoid.

stay calm.
and only call it when it’s real.

THE REAL MOVE

stop the game before it starts.

by the time you're breaking one, you're behind. ask this lot early and most never get going.

- why's the role open, and what happened to the last person in it?
- what's the empty seat actually costing you a month?
- if i bring you the right person, how fast can you really move?
- who signs this off, other than you?

get straight answers,
and there's nothing left to play.

AND THE ONES YOU PLAY

you're running a script too.

happy ears

you heard a yes because you wanted the brief. “sounds good” was a maybe in a nicer coat.

the grovel

it got tense, so you went soft. “any little thing you've got”, “whenever suits”. that's the fear talking, not you.

the chase

they went quiet, so you chased them for a month instead of just asking the one question.

spot your own game first.
it's the only one you can do anything about.

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THE BIT UNDERNEATH

first, you have to not need it.

every line in here only works if you mean it. and you only mean it when this isn’t the deal keeping your month alive. you can only break a game you can afford to lose.



THE NUMBER NOBODY SAYS OUT LOUD

1 in 4

that’s how many of the roles the typical recruiter takes on ever get filled. give or take. and that’s if you’re good, and a bit lucky.

the other three were never going to fill.
the whole skill is knowing which is which.

every game is just a slow maybe in a nicer coat.

and a slow maybe is a tax. you pay it in hope, and in emails that start “just circling back”.

a fast no is a gift.
you get your afternoon back.

a brief is just a brief.
the prize is the client who backs you to fill it.

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the naturals do all this without thinking.
ryvr is how everyone else does it on purpose.

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which one's on your desk right now?

