

CHRIS DEALS WITH IT

episode notes




EP 61 - Working With A Recruiter with Andrew Stahl

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 *AI Statement: All elements of this episode are products of the author, Chris Kreuter, and his guest, and made without any use of AI tools.*

My guest today is Andrew Stahl, who founded his Executive Recruiting firm in 2014. This year, his firm celebrates ten years of service to the global rail industry. I'm proud to have been counted among their many clients, having their help to land a previous, but wonderful position at a firm that fit my skills, personality, and career aspirations at the time.

Andrew and I have a two-part conversation. This episode introduces the ins & outs of working with a recruiting firm. We learn about the important role they play in railroading and other

industries. We'll take into account the perspectives of candidate, recruiter, and employer.

Then in Episode 62, we explore the amazing industry of railroading and public transit where we've both enjoyed rewarding careers.

Andrew Stahl

Growing-up on a small farm outside Springfield, Oregon, Andrew started college on a violin performance scholarship. Later gravitating to economics, he earned B.S. (with honors) and later a master's degree from the University of Oregon. As a graduate student, Andrew studied rail industry issues concerning market power effects, merger synergies, captured shipper rates, and marginal cost estimations of individual rail movements. His thesis consisted of an operational, funding and demand analysis of Amtrak.



Moving to California post-schooling, he oversaw the development and structuring of derivative contracts for a start-up financial exchange. Later work called for a move to Chicago, hub of the futures and options business. Keen to enter the rail industry, Andrew became an Executive Recruiter. Once learning the trade, Andrew formed his agency to make an individualized, positive mark within our growing transportation industry.

Stahl Recruiting continues to make an impact every day. Handling business with honesty, integrity and ethics, his global team brings forth top talent to the rail and infrastructure community.

Having also spent time in the auto industry, Andrew maintains a continued draw to all things automotive, with particular passions for racing, auto restoration and road trips. Other interests include music, film, military history, philosophy, and causes supporting those in need.

About Stahl Recruiting

- **Industry-Focused Expertise:** Stahl Recruiting is a specialized executive search firm dedicated to the North American rail industry. Founded in 2014, they leverage their deep industry knowledge to connect top talent with leading organizations across the continent.
- **Leadership Placements:** Stahl Recruiting focuses on mid-to-senior level managerial placements, including Directors, Vice Presidents, Board Members, and C-Suite executives.
- **Broad Rail Ecosystem Reach:** Their reach extends across the entire rail ecosystem, placing candidates in positions with a variety of companies. This includes freight and passenger railroads, bridge and engineering firms, technology providers, railcar lessors, suppliers, and any organization that contributes to the success of the rail industry.

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/stahlrecruiting>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/stahlrecruiting/>

Website: <https://www.stahlrecruiting.com/andrew-stahl>

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Focused on the rail transportation and infrastructure arena, Stahl Recruiting retains specific industry insight and relationships to engage and recruit senior executives and board

 <https://www.stahlrecruiting.com/>



Working with a recruiter

- Why would an employer decide to hire a recruiter instead of using a job board/posting?
 - It's tough to find the right people

- Filling a role is a job in itself - the time & effort can be considerable
- Costly to fill a role with the wrong person, or someone who isn't a long term fit
- Need to identify someone with the right skillset - needs are often very targeted & nuanced
- May not have robust HR resources - or those resources aren't geared towards upper-level managerial hires, which can be a greater challenge
- A firm may not want to tip off their competitors to the movements they're making
- They may be planning to replace a high-level person inside the organization who is underperforming, and don't want to tip that person off
- Putting an advertisement on a job board or website will yield a very low rate of qualified candidates, since requirements can be so specific
- A lot of the ideal candidates for a role are likely very happy & successful in their current roles - they're not on the market searching for opportunities.
- Utilizing a firm with strong relationships with potential candidates can help introduce candidates that might otherwise not apply. This can further their careers or provide a better fit for their needs & goals.
- Serving as the intermediary between firm & candidate
 - Both sides have a personality & mindset
 - Personal chemistry & synergies that are key
 - What is the firm's forward trajectory? What issue are they trying to solve by placing a candidate in this role?
 - What's off the resume is often very much as important as what's on it
 - The candidate often has something in mind regarding the next step in their career
 - They may also have a spouse with their own career, children in school, need to stay close to parents, or other unique needs
 - The skillsets & core requirements definitely do matter

- Multiple conversations need to happen to ensure both sides will mesh (like a dating service in a way)
- Goal is a long term fit!

How recruiters make money

- Hiring firm pays a fee - Typically based on role's salary
- Typically done on a retainer basis: Hiring firm puts down cash to help put in the effort to conduct the search
- Payment structure can vary in many different ways
- No direct cost to the individual candidates - other than time & effort
- If a candidate must travel for interviews with the hiring firm: Hiring firm usually pays for airfare, hotels, meals
- While tied financially to the client, have to be mindful of the fit for the individual
- Typically offers a 90-day guarantee (negotiable) - but probability of it not working out is very slim.
- A big part of their business comes from referrals

Other important points

- Every conversation is confidential: Individuals & hiring firms
- Never want to jeopardize someone's current position for the sake of a conversation
- Typically the person placed, if successful, can rise to become a hiring manager in the future - so maintaining a strong, positive experience for the candidate is always a key!
- For job seekers: A lot of the jobs are not posted - They're put out to recruiters!
- No matter how hard you look, you'll never find those opportunities
- Go to recruiter websites, call them on the phone, reach out via social media.

- No obligations, financial costs, or long term commitments and everything is confidential
- Onus is on hiring firm to do background checks, drug testing, or deep dives on social media
- If there's not a good fit for a type of position or person - might point people towards recruiters better suited for those position.

Maintaining relationships

- Works within an industry that tends to be very insular: Everybody knows everybody
- The importance of reputation: Must be earned
- Establishing a base-level of trust is vital
- Pillars of trust: Honesty, Integrity & Ethics
- Why Andrew & his team keep in touch with people:
 - Acting over a long arc
 - Keep in contact through phone calls, e-mails, texts, Christmas cards, referrals
 - Enables opportunities to get caught up on life developments & deepen relationships
 - Also ensures relationships don't become transactional
 - Make time for people regardless of if there's an immediate business opportunity
 - Perspective taking from across the industry
- Processes they use to manage all these relationships:
 - Calendar reminders
 - Attending industry events: ~75% of communication is non-verbal, so the ability to sit down with someone face-to-face is valuable!
 - Take copious notes - lots of conversations in a day

- Track notes in a database system: CRM (Customer Relationship Database):
Ensure confidentiality of the system!

Episode Quote

From Paul McCartney of The Beatles:

| *In the end, the love you take is equal to the love you make.*