

# Employer's Advantage

## From Jim Sirbasku:

*Get Your Scary Thrills at the Movies!*

**Top Advice:** *10 Scary Hiring Practices*

**Product Focus:** *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde in Your Office?*

**Book Review:** *Scary Meetings End Here*

## Strategies for Winning:

*Cut Your Sales Cycle by Half*

**Case Study:** *Sales Increase Scary Good with ProfileXT®*

**Success Story:** *ProfileXT® Helps Recruit Doctors at Airrosti Center*

## From Jim Sirbasku's Desk *Get Your Scary Thrills at the Movies!*

October is the month of witches and ogres, of apparitions and goblins, of delving into nightmarish scenarios.

As far as nightmares go, nothing is scarier to a CEO than hiring someone who appears to be perfect for the job, and then finding out quickly that he or she is not only NOT perfect, but a train wreck. And this can happen anytime – not just in the witching month. Just a glance at what scary hires can do to a company:

- **Scary hires drive up turnover.**

There are all sorts of causes for high turnover, but one big culprit is stress. In fact, 40 percent of all job turnover is due to stress. And guess what causes stress? It happens most when the person on the job does not fit with his environment.

Consider the individuals in your own company who seem to thrive on multitasking, live for answering emails and phone calls simultaneously, and juggling with finesse two people talking to them at once. As long as they are in control, they are fine. They fit

their jobs. To someone who likes to work alone in silence, these kind of fast-lane jobs would be like a giant, scary roller-coaster ride. And what if the workers who love a fast pace had to fill out endless paperwork? In a word, stress. And what does stress lead to? Turnover. The rule: **Make sure the person, the job and the company culture are meant for each other.**

- **Scary hires blunt production.**

You know the woman with the great resume and references who just went to work in Accounts Payable even though she applied for another job? Your organization hired her because the other job was closed, and they did not want someone of her competence to get away. But guess what? Since she started her job, her department has not met a deadline and repetitive stress injury complaints are up about 20 percent. She doesn't understand the work, she refuses to listen to employees, and she seems totally clueless about the company. All of this is at odds with her resume. That's because the people who hired her forgot the rule: **Know the job candidate well before you hire her. Know her better than she knows herself.**

- **Scary hires are expensive.**

If your CEO was a bad fit and is leaving, remember these figures: Two decades ago, Xerox estimated that it cost them \$1 million to \$1.5 million to replace a top executive. Estimates of replacing the average employee range from \$3,000 to \$15,000. It depends on the job, of course, but figure in the costs of recruiting, interviewing, travel and training. These are all replacement costs, as well as lost time on the job, either when it was vacant or when someone had to let other tasks go to train the new employee.

What about other costs? Organizations spend billions on workers compensation claims. As experts note, vastly more money goes to existing claims than to preventing the problems in the first place. What if someone in your organization was in charge of making sure all equipment fit the job and the workers, that everything was working correctly, and

that all workers knew how to use the equipment efficiently and safely? These all sound like easy fixes, but someone in your company has to keep his eye on the detail.

There is also the overwhelming cost of unhappy workers giving your customers poor service. They can deprive the company of thousands of dollars in future business.

**Remember the rule: The people you thought would advance your company and help it grow can actually cost it millions. This is the opposite of growth.**

So what can an organization do to prevent the trick-or-treat nature of blind, scary hiring? Many solutions are available. For one thing, there is more public information than ever before about candidates on social networking sites, and employers can make good use of this information. These sites can tell us about everything from communication skills to what

the job candidate thinks is appropriate information to reveal about himself.

The best organizations use a number of different tools to make important hiring decisions, from good recruiting to informed job interviews to selection based on more than just a gut instinct to an attractive resume. They do not overlook the importance of assessments in supplying information they could not get otherwise about how well the employee would be suited to the job, other employees, and the company culture.

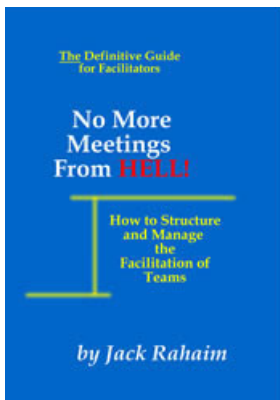
So, enjoy the scary and festive nature of October if that's your style. But remember that fear of the unknown is something best enjoyed at the movies. In real life, you want to know what your organization faces. The workers you hire and train today can minimize the uncertainties of tomorrow.

*Jim Sirbasku, CEO  
Profiles International*



**Courage is resistance to fear, mastery of fear, not absence of fear. - Mark Twain**

## BOOK REVIEW: Scary Meetings End Here



Conducting a business meeting while everyone stands is not a new practice. Smart managers started it for the very good reason that meetings can often drone on without any obvious benefit. Similar to standing-only meetings is the theory that coffee break meetings, where decisions get made on the spot, are just as effective as sit-down sessions.

Author Jack Rahaim suggests, in a new book, that meetings don't have to be as dreaded as a root canal. In *No More Meetings from Hell: How to Structure and Manage the Facilitation of Teams*, this facilitator demonstrates his knowledge about why meetings fail and how to keep failure at bay. Everyone who deals with groups can benefit, he believes, and to prove it, he offers a list of nine potential beneficiaries that appears all-inclusive. Hint: if you are a parent or a teacher, this book is for you.

Rahaim, as founder and president of Jack Rahaim Consulting, is intimately familiar with his subject matter. He provides his services in the areas of strategy, processes and information systems to the health care, high technology, chemical processing, communications and financial service industries. Before he started his own business, the author spent more than 20 years in the technology industry. He

lives in New York and is a native of Massachusetts.

Rahaim's premise in *No More Meetings* is not merely that meetings are huge time-wasters. Many are, he says, but he believes another reason so many people run away from formal office gatherings is that inept facilitators control them. Thus we arrive at the core of his message – how to effectively run a meeting so that you actually accomplish something. That means you must have an agenda to begin with.

He encourages his readers not to be scared off by incompetent facilitation. Most meeting facilitators have been so bad, he writes, that anyone who is even slightly better than the norm will be celebrated. To prove his point about meeting facilitators from hell, he offers a list of several he has personally observed. Office workers will nod in grim assent when reading his descriptions of "The Empty Vessel" and "The Trojan Horse."

Anyone who wants to improve facilitating skills and trade glazed eyes for engagement at the next meeting should try this book. And workers who have attended too many poorly led meetings from hell can give it to their team leaders as a Halloween present... anonymously, of course.

**NO MORE MEETINGS FROM HELL: How to Structure and Manage the Facilitation of Teams**  
Author: Jack Rahaim  
128 pages  
Publisher: CreateSpace  
ISBN-13: 978-1438202624

## STRATEGIES FOR WINNING: Death Valley- Cut Your Sales Cycle in Half\*

Would you like to save time, shorten your sales cycle, and close a larger percentage of first-time appointments? This sales technique requires no time or effort to implement, and it will dramatically improve your success rate.

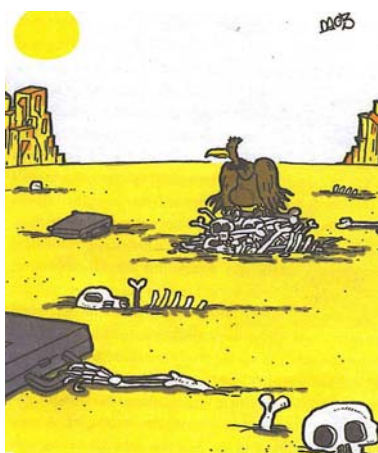
First, let us take you back to a sales meeting from your past. You met a prospective customer for the first time on a

Tuesday, and absolutely everything went as planned. You effectively engaged the prospect; everything clicked personally; your discovery process uncovered her needs clearly; and you discussed an outline solution that excited her. All in all, the call could not have gone better. You agreed with your enthusiastic future customer that you would summarize the discussion in a proposal within days, and call to follow up a few days later. Sounds like a perfect meeting, doesn't it? Sounds like you got another sale!

You returned to the office, the clock now ticking. Since you didn't have a busy week, you started on the proposal on Wednesday, and you mailed it on Thursday. No point calling Friday – she would not have had a chance to absorb the proposal yet, so you decided to wait until the next week.

The next Tuesday, you left your first voice mail. Several voice mails followed in the next few days. By Friday, now some 10 days since your meeting, you breached the voice-mail defenses and actually got your prospect live. She had a "chance to glance through it but not really give it the attention it deserves" (you know she hasn't even looked at it yet but that's OK) and requested that you call early next week to follow up again.

Monday would look too desperate so you waited until Tuesday to call again. Another week went by. You



finally got her on the phone again, and this time your once enthusiastic prospect sounded anything but enthusiastic. Nowhere near as excited as when she suggested that you prepare the proposal! This time she told you she'd "get back to you" and as time passed by, your prospect slipped away, never to be heard from again.

*What happened?* You fell into the biggest trap in sales. You wandered unwittingly into Death Valley – that dry zone that stretches from the first contact to proposal follow-up. All around are the bleaching bones of the countless millions of salespeople who preceded you. Another thin-on-the-ground opportunity bites the dust.



The conventional wisdom in selling suggests that this is an unavoidable consequence of selling – one of the elements in the "numbers game" that you just have to learn to swallow. Not true!

### A Simple Solution

Make one simple change to your sales call right now and you can fix this problem forever. Every single time you meet a prospect, make the next appointment before you leave. That's it – simple but highly effective. Suppose it's your first appointment and you have agreed to prepare a proposal. Don't leave without looking for an appointment to meet with the prospect again to bring the proposal back in to talk to through, within days if possible.

There are a couple of possible responses when you try to set the next appointment for a few days later.

#### 1. The Prospect Agrees

You are already winning. For a start, you've qualified the prospect's interest. If he is prepared to meet you again, his interest looks genuine and you have immediately hacked a few weeks off your sales cycle. Also, your positive initial meeting won't have time to slip his mind. When you next meet, he remembers why he was so enthusiastic about what you had to say, how you planned to meet his pressing requirements, and why he asked you to prepare a proposal. What salesperson would not close more of those deals than the Death Valley specials above?

#### 2. The Prospect Declines

"You know, the rest of my week is just completely full." You suggest early the following week, but "next week is even worse." She suggests that you "simply mail in your proposal." It seems now as though she does not want to solve the problem you recently discovered. Maybe you haven't uncovered her real

**Two things scare me. The first is getting hurt. But that's not nearly as scary as the second, which is losing. - Lance Armstrong**

issues and proposed a satisfactory solution. Or perhaps she is not the decision-maker. Or she doesn't have the budget. But even this is good news, because now you have information you did not previously have. If you feel you have got the right person, right requirements, and an existing budget, then you can flip back into the discovery process and try to recover. If you've got the wrong person, then you can probe for the right one and start over. If it's simply a hopeless case, then slap yourself on the back – you just saved yourself the time, energy and effort, and the disappointment of eventually watching another one bite the dust! Now you can spend your time on more worthy prospects.

You gain information, clarity and time when you ask for the next appointment during the current appointment. Implement this simple change to your sales process right away and soar over your competitors' bones in Death Valley.

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**Keep your fears to yourself, but share your inspiration with others.** - Robert Louis Stevenson

## PRODUCT FOCUS: Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde in Your Office?

Do you sometimes wonder why two employees who both seemed promising when they were hired do their jobs so differently now? When you hired them, you might have thought of them as twins, since they appeared to be identical in their career aspirations, their training and their experience. But since the two came on board, they are like Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.

Let's call them J and H. You could not be happier with J, as he performs with consistent excellence each day. As a manager, he is responsible for keeping his team focused and productive. His meetings always have an agenda. They begin and end on time. He keeps his door open to employees – which could mean that he is socializing instead of working. But that is not the case. He always meets his project deadlines, and so do those he supervises. He eagerly learns new skills and arranges appropriate training for his direct reports. His work sets the standard you want everyone to meet.

H came into your organization at the same time and has similar responsibilities to J. But you've heard frequent reports of uncompleted projects, and your investigation shows you that virtually every time, they are H's projects. Meanwhile, the accounting department is frequently clamoring for paperwork that he has not completed. He says he does not have it, but you wonder how he could know. His desk is a

mess, covered by piles of paper. This apparently does not matter, because you can never find H there anyway. He manages to disappear whenever you are hunting for him.

Perhaps H has other problems and would not do well at any job in your organization. But it could be that his poor performance is just a matter of not fitting well into the job. Had you used ProfileXT® job match patterns when hiring J and H, and paid attention to their scores, you likely would not have hired H. Or perhaps you would have found a more suitable position for him in some other part of the business.

ProfileXT uses job patterns to determine the fit of a candidate for a job. These patterns are designed to reflect the characteristics of those who have proved effective in the job.

## CASE STUDY: Sales Increase Scary Good with ProfileXT®

Managers, get out your crystal balls. No time like the present to peer into them and see what you can do about that issue of turnover and performance.

What's that, you say? The crystal ball has not worked for you in the past?

That's not surprising. But, as one retail company discovered, you CAN predict performance before you select a candidate. You can do this without casting a spell or stirring a cauldron. You do need the magic word, however: ProfileXT®.

In this study, a retail organization wanted to decrease turnover and improve performance of corporate account managers. For 22 months, the company studied these issues with the help of ProfileXT.

### Participants

The company used 370 account managers, and gathered turnover rates throughout the 22-month duration of the study. At the outset, turnover was approximately 65 percent. Managers used performance ratings and average annual sales ratios to identify top and bottom performers, placing 12 in each group.

### Job Match

Next, the ProfileXT helped to develop a Job Match Pattern using the results for current employees – 12 top and 12 bottom performers. The company discovered that top performers averaged an overall Job Match Percent of 84 or higher. In recruiting and interviewing, the company used this percentage to find a level of match for selecting new employees.

### By the Numbers

At the end of 22 months, turnover dropped to 23 percent and saved the company an estimated \$525,000. By using the job match system to

determine potential top and bottom performers, the company estimated an increase in sales of more than 1,000 percent.

Other numbers:

- Original turnover was 65 percent (55 employees gone out of 84 originally hired).
- During the study period, turnover dropped to 23 percent (20 employees gone out of 86 hired).
- Turnover savings, determined by the company-set average of \$15,000 per employee hiring cost: \$525,000.

### Summary

Adhering to a well-developed Job Match Pattern helped the company to cut turnover and save money and training time. The determination of top and bottom performances before hiring enhanced sales. No guesswork, no relying on your gut, no using only a resume and interview.

Most importantly, no crystal ball was necessary.

**He who fears being conquered is sure of defeat.** Napoleon Bonaparte

## 10 Scary Hiring Practices (Avoid these like a black cat!)

1. Recruiting people who are just like you
2. Picking the first candidate who walks in the door because you dislike job interviews
3. Asking questions about marital status, number of children, religion, race
4. Failing to check references and other information on resume or application
5. Talking too much and failing to listen
6. Posing questions that require only yes/no answers
7. Hiring based on your comfort zone rather than candidate's qualifications
8. Searching in too small of a pond
9. Delay in hiring after you find the best candidate
10. Offering job based only on gut instincts

**We gain strength, and courage, and confidence by each experience in which we really stop to look fear in the face... we must do that which we think we cannot.** - Eleanor Roosevelt

## **SUCCESS STORY: ProfileXT® Helps Recruit Doctors at Airrosti Center**

Editor's Note: Airrosti Center is nationally known for its sports medicine and rehabilitation treatment practice. Airrosti stands for Applied Integration for the Rapid Recovery of Soft Tissue Injuries. Its certified providers go into accredited sports medicine facilities throughout the country. Airrosti trains, manages and places these experts, who offer rapid, consistent patient outcomes. Thus, Airrosti has a significant effect on costs, helps avoid major surgeries and aids the patient in a quicker return to normal activity. The organization's CEO is Kelly Green.

Here, Brenda Reynolds, director of Human Resources, talks about the Airrosti-Profiles relationship.

### **Q. When Did Airrosti begin using ProfileXT?**

A. Earlier this year, we wanted additional resources to aid us in the recruitment of doctors. We invest a significant amount of money and time in our interview process and we wanted to determine if the individuals we were considering had the specific characteristics to be successful at Airrosti.

### **Q. What results have you seen?**

A. After first identifying the thinking style and behavioral traits of our most successful providers, the ProfileXT helps us use that information to identify specific areas for us to focus on during the interview process. We would have otherwise never considered these areas. We have been extremely pleased with the results.

### **Q. Has the PXT changed your thinking on the issue of job fit?**

A. We have had candidates who appeared to be a suitable match initially, but after reviewing assessment results and following up with the detailed interview questions, we ultimately deemed them not suitable. Conversely, we have had candidates who initially appeared to be questionable, but upon review, were determined to be a good fit. They have proven to be successful.

### **Q. What additional features helped you?**

A. The initial training, on-going customer support and usefulness of the Profiles on the Web system make this one of the most user-friendly recruitment tools I have ever used, and I have been in human resources more than 17 years. I recommend the ProfileXT and Profiles International without hesitation and will continue to include their services as an important component of our recruitment process.

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