

A full-page background image of a football player in a black jersey and white helmet, running with the ball. The player is in the foreground, running towards the viewer. The background shows a large stadium filled with spectators under a dramatic, cloudy sky at dusk or dawn. The player's jersey is black with white sleeves, and his pants are white. He is wearing a white helmet with a black face mask. He is holding a brown football in his right arm. The overall mood is intense and action-oriented.

THE TRANSITION GAME

“Because nothing is more important than closing ...”

By Vincent Scaramuzzo, Ed-Exec Inc.

In the July 2015 issue of *Career College Central*, we talked about how candidates really don't like to – and should not have to – wait for offer letters. Now we visit another crucial step of the hiring process where many key hires “fall off” during transition.

Once an offer letter is signed and a start date is set, hiring managers, human resource teams, internal and external recruiters all collectively seem to exhale in relief. Mission accomplished. But this could not be further from the truth. Granted, you are 90 percent of the way there, but as we saw in last year's Super Bowl, the game is not over until you cross the goal line.

It is during this crucial time that many hires can be lost. A lot happens here – especially if the candidate is relocating. Here is a basic checklist that can help keep your new hires on track and, more importantly, have them super enthusiastic and ready to start work on their first day.

- The direct supervisor and at least one other member of your executive team should call the candidate and welcome him or her to the team once the signed offer letter has been returned. Be sure to space these calls out. Ideally, the first should come the same day the acceptance is received. The second call should be timed right around when you think resignation is happening – it helps deter counteroffers. The general rule here is more communication is better than less.
- Human resources should reach out a week or two later and start providing your new hire with any paperwork that can be completed in advance.
- Be sure to include your new hire in any conference calls or company webinars. Nothing helps cement new hires in place better than getting them involved and essentially “working” before their start date.
- Make sure an action plan is in place for the new hire's first week. New hires can have second thoughts if things seem chaotic week one. Keep in mind that during this stage, they still may have other offers coming in that they need to turn down – let's make it easy for them to do so.
- Take the person out to lunch the first day or two on the new job. Also plan to have another colleague take them

out later that week. A little bonding early on goes a long way. In addition to these suggestions, if your new hire is relocating:

- I recommend assigning someone as the new hire's “point person” for all questions and assistance relocating. This point person can easily “calm” a stressed-out candidate (and his/her family) quickly.
- Make sure to recommend some areas of town and schools that are desirable. Take the new hire on a quick tour when you can.
- If you offered the new hire a relocation package, do everything possible to pay large bills directly (moving/temporary housing) and reimburse other receipts quickly. Don't leave new hires waiting for money – it may cause them to lose confidence in your company.

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- Find out when the candidate will be in town house hunting, etc. Make sure to go to lunch and show the person the area. This is a great way to gauge how the move is going.
- If there is a major league sports team in town, invite the new hire's family out to a game, or at least give the family some tickets once everyone has moved in. It is important the family knows mom or dad has a great new job and works with some pretty nice people.
- Be flexible. It is stressful and difficult to relocate. Forget your PTO plan. Give your new hire some extra days off or half days as needed so he or she can tend to things on the home front.

Recruiting great candidates is always a huge task and hiring them even trickier – but closing is the most important part of any good hiring process. Keeping a smooth transition plan in place can ensure you win this transition game.



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