5

MOST COMMON
BUSINESS MISTAKES
Recruiting Solopreneurs Make

You were a high-level producer at an agency but you got tired of vanity metrics, pushy bosses, braggadocious coworkers, and giving most of your commission checks away. So you said, "Forget about this! I can go out on my own and make more money and have more time! This will be great. If I can do this job well at an agency, I can do it well on my own, too!"

Not. Even. Close.

Working as a solopreneur in recruiting is **much more difficult** than working in an agency for several reasons:

➔ **There's no back or front office teams. There's only you.**
Of course you can hire help, but that costs money. And if you aren't making as many placements as you'd like, I doubt you want to invest thousands of dollars in payroll and benefits for staff members.

➔ **No one cares about your process.**
I've heard so many recruiters shout, "But, but, my process is different! I have unique ways of sourcing and vetting candidates! When I say I am the best, I really mean it." Unfortunately, *everyone* says they are different and it usually hinges somehow on a recruiting process they say is unusual and revolutionary. Prospective clients and hiring managers don't give a damn about your process. They care about the end result and receiving a solution to their problems.

➔ **The market is very crowded.**
Let's face it: most people who do really well in agency recruiting get tired of the bull$h*t and decide to either go out on their own, transition into corporate HR jobs, or go into a different type of sales role. *Your solo desk is not even a drop in the ocean of what's already out there.*

Established agencies have a brand. And the larger ones have entire marketing teams dedicated to promoting the business. When you are out on your own as a solopreneur, you become the brand. You are the entire agency. If you have a poor brand, you are dead in the water.

So what distinguishes a recruiting solopreneur with an awesome brand and consistent business from one with a poor brand and inconsistent business?

HERE ARE THE 5 MOST COMMON MISTAKES:

MISTAKE #1
Putting your clients and/or prospects up on a pedestal.

I've seen solopreneurs beat their heads against the wall and turn themselves into human pretzels trying to vie for business. They tell themselves things like:

- "The economy is tough right now... I have to take what I can get."

- "If I don't get this search assignment, it could be months before I get another one to work on."

- "I was taught 'the customer is always right.'"

- "I'll connect with these people on social media and like all of their posts and maybe they'll reciprocate by giving me some business!"

The first two statements are limiting beliefs and the last two are just pieces of bad business advice.

MISTAKE #2
Allowing a "race to the bottom" on pricing.

This usually manifests as:

- "If I don't give the client a discount, he'll go somewhere else."

- "The hiring manager said my competitor is working on a 10% flat fee basis. I guess I better do the same thing. She says she'll only work with me if I can match or beat the other people."

- "I make 100 cold calls a day and no one will sign a 25% fee agreement. They all say everyone else is between 15 and 18%."

It's not your job to worry about everyone else dropping their rates or working for pennies on the dollar. You have to understand **your own value** and the value of the service you provide. If you don't understand it first and communicate it effectively, your prospects and clients definitely will not see it for you.

MISTAKE #3
You didn't realize you would be working ON your business as well as IN your business.

Many times, recruiters come from toxic company cultures. Perhaps you were an introvert in an extroverted environment. Or maybe you got tired of going through a list of follow-up calls and leaving one voicemail after another after another because you had metrics to meet. Maybe you had a sales manager who took credit for your good ideas or who bullied you.

It's only natural to want to do the work you enjoy in a healthy place that is conducive to your well-being. People who take the entrepreneurial plunge often want to create a company culture of one so they can work exactly the way they want to. The thing is: when you run a solo desk, you also have to think about the marketing, social media, phone system, IT, CRM, accounting & bookkeeping, business development, P&Ls, legal documents, candidate management, data entry, etc. Most people are good at *some* of those functions, but not all of them. And trying to do all of it on your own, including the tasks you hate, will cripple your business and leave you feeling exhausted.

MISTAKE #4
Dreaming of a magic pill.

- "I can find candidates with no problem. And I'm really good at managing them through the hiring process. But I hate business development. I need to hire a sales guy and that will solve all my problems."

- "I want to find an automated sales funnel that works consistently. I want to pay the money, get it set up, and then have it kick out qualified leads for the rest of my life."

- "I'm going to join a networking club. Everyone meets at the local coffee shop every Wednesday at 6am and they exchange business cards."

→ Think back to your staffing agency days. How many salespeople turned out to be gods amongst mere mortals? Now think about how many of them washed out or got fired *before* the 90 day mark. Hiring someone is not a magical overnight solution. Plus you will have to train, manage, and pay that person. Not to mention if they leave and go elsewhere, your investment is dead and you have to start again at square one.

→ No automated tools or sales funnels work flawlessly forever. You *must* have time, money, and patience to always be testing. I recently spoke with a digital marketer who told me his average cost to book an intro call was $75/person. Of those people who booked, 50% were no shows. So to get a human being on the phone, it was $150/person. Then only 50% of those people hired him, so it became $300/person to acquire an actual paying client. His overall budget for *one* Facebook funnel alone was $3000 per month. And this is a guy who KNOWS what he is doing online! If you have no clue about digital marketing, you could waste huge amounts of your hard-earned money.

→ How many hiring managers in your niche hang out with salespeople at a coffee shop at 6am? 0. I hate to break it to you, but the people in those networking clubs are all in sales and they are all there for the same reason: to try to drum up new business. If you're an early bird who likes coffee and conversation, cool. But if you want to make money, it's a waste of your time.

MISTAKE #5
"I thought this was gonna be easier!"

So you were a million-dollar biller at an agency before you went out on your own. Or maybe you were the top producer in your department and you had a list of loyal clients who *promised* they would follow you if you ever left. Then you got out on your own and:

- No one followed you
- Your phone is not ringing
- The tactics you used before to bill thousands of dollars per month don't work at your solo desk
- You often feel confused, tired, and frustrated
- You have a gut instinct that there **has to be an easier way** and you'd love to find it

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(How many of these mistakes are YOU making as a solopreneur? If you said "zero," cool beans. These are most common, but there are others that can damage your business, too.)

Fortunately, there IS a better, faster, and easier way to build and operate a successful solo desk that allows you to:

- Maintain or even raise your fees
- Make more money quickly
- Break out of a sales slump
- Magnetize ideal clients to you
- Work each day with joy, ease, and clarity
- Have more time to spend with friends and family
- Overcome negative beliefs that hold you back-- even the ones you aren't aware of

READY TO LEARN MORE?

Book a FREE, no obligation, no sales pitch strategy session with me right now by clicking here!

ABOUT SARA CAUSEY

Sara is a coach, trainer, and public speaker specifically niched in staffing & recruiting. She specializes in helping staffing solopreneurs and small recruiting agency owners to obliterate limiting beliefs, work smarter not harder, and substantially increase revenue while also dramatically decreasing stress. After a highly successful and lucrative agency career, Sara started her own solo desk in 2016 and experienced extreme feast/famine cycles, anxiety & panic, depression, tension, and disappointment. She wasted thousands of dollars on methods and tactics that did not work. Having produced millions of dollars before, she was incredibly frustrated by the unique struggles that recruiting solopreneurs face in the modern market.

In 2019, she launched "Your Path to Solo Desk Success," a proprietary, white-glove coaching program for others in the industry experiencing the same problems. Sara built her business, Causey Consulting LLC, from a very small handful of clients to a thriving business in only a few months. She loves watching her coaching clients knock down the roadblocks holding them back and launch into levels of success they only dreamed of !