

FILD

RECRUITING. BUT BETTER.

Building a foundation for hypergrowth: A conversation with Nancy Soni of recruitment firm FILD

It's many a recruiting leader's dream to build a rapidly-growing, high-performing recruitment firm from the ground up.

And it's a dream that **Nancy Soni** has realized in **FILD**. The CEO and Founder's tech recruiting firm has grown to more than 20 employees in 18 months, with plans to double in size by end of year.

Nancy recently shared three of the most valuable lessons she's learned along the way. We're thrilled to share them here:

1. Build your brand around your most important differentiators

LinkedIn: What differentiates your brand identity from the other recruiting firms out there?

Nancy: Our top priority is to build the brand of the company and make sure that clients and candidates really respect who we are and what we're trying to do. Most recruiting firms pitch and provide services -- and that's it. We're a bit different in that 90% of our business comes from venture capital firms and the startup space.

Our priority is to build our brand around the value that we provide our clients -- we focus on quality rather than quantity. We *don't* throw a bunch of resumes in front of our clients. We want to send them a couple of candidates who are really strong fits.

LinkedIn: Can you share some examples of steps that you're taking to build your company's brand identity?

Nancy: We regularly sponsor events in our biggest markets: Los Angeles, New York, and San Francisco. For example, we were the only recruiting firm at Disrupt, which is mind-blowing to me.

A big area of opportunity is that FILD is a brand new company -- so we can build its presence from the ground up. I knew from the very beginning that LinkedIn would be an important part of this process -- LinkedIn is the first place that professionals go when they're curious about a new opportunity. We knew we needed to be present in this ecosystem, and since launching, we've grown our follower base to over 15,000 professionals.

2. Choose tools that help you grow and scale

LinkedIn: Tell us about the tools you use to build your business.

Nancy: Our model is very specific. We work with experienced recruiters and make sure that they have the right tools. We also make sure that they are trained on what tools to use when. It's a selling point for us: every recruiter gets access to LinkedIn Recruiter, TalentBin, Connectifier and so on when they come onboard. That's one of the reasons recruiters are so interested in working here.

The benefit of being a new company is that we are building our systems and processes from the ground up. For example: we use HootSuite to make sure that content is posted regularly on social media, to build our brand presence. We use LinkedIn to build 1:1 personal connections with candidates.

You don't go to a construction site and say "Okay, I'm going to bring one tool." You have to have a power drill, you have to have a hammer, you have to have a flat head screwdriver and a Philips head screwdriver. We train every single recruiter on how to use these tools effectively.

LinkedIn: How has LinkedIn help you scale your business?

Nancy: We're a new business, and people often tell us how shocked they are to hear how much we've grown in such a short timespan. People always ask -- how have you grown to a team of 20 within a year and a half? Believe it or not, this year, we'll be at 40 or 50. It's because we invest in the right tools.

The biggest benefit of having LinkedIn Recruiter is that we're able to work collaboratively together as a team - through shared searches, project folders, and so on. Our recruiters can focus more closely on finding awesome candidates and making strong connections.

LinkedIn: That's incredible. What would you say is your ROI on using LinkedIn Recruiter?

Nancy: Between January and May 2014, we've made 19 placements through Job Slots on LinkedIn and another 18 through LinkedIn Recruiter. With an average ROI of \$25K per placement, we've generated \$925K in revenue as a result. When I look at the numbers, LinkedIn is the clear winner in terms of providing value and high ROI.

3. Focus on long-term relationship-building instead of short-term gains

LinkedIn: How has your firm generated such impressive results over such a short time period?

Nancy: It sounds counterintuitive, but our approach is actually to focus on long-term ROI. I'm a big believer that if you do the right things over and over again, you provide value, and your clients love what you're doing, they'll come back.

We focus on building relationships with both clients and candidates so that our referral engine is inbound on both fronts -- on the client side, most of our business comes through referrals, and on the job seeker side, we work with many passive candidates.

LinkedIn: How does LinkedIn help you build stronger, long-term candidate relationships?

Nancy: LinkedIn helps us take the time to build relationships and get to know our candidates. Instead of sending them generic communication, we can send them highly targeted, personalized messages. Our brand is about building relationships for the long-term and not being short-sighted.

At the end of the day, the experience needs to be more about your candidates and less about you as the recruiting firm. When candidates and clients see the value in what you're able to provide, your growth will be astronomical.