



The Market Intelligence Capture Sheet

Every recruiter conversation is an opportunity to learn how the market is actually buying. Your objective is to uncover patterns you can use to sharpen your positioning, target companies, and future conversations.

**Don't use search firm recruiter conversations to ask, "Do you have anything for me?"
Use them to understand what the market is buying—and how it is defining value.**

The Recruiter's Market Read:

These are particularly valuable because they force the recruiter to move beyond the specific opening:

- What are you hearing from multiple clients that you think executives should be paying attention to?
- What has changed in the market over the last 6–12 months?
- What are companies becoming more selective about?
- What are they becoming more flexible about?
- Where are you seeing a disconnect between what executives are positioning themselves for and what companies are actually hiring for?
- If you were advising someone at my level who was beginning a search today, what would you tell them to understand about the market?

Do not bombard and interrogate the recruiter. Be selective with your questions.

Here are additional questions to consider:

Demand & Hiring Patterns

- What types of roles are you seeing the most demand for right now?
- What mandates are companies hiring for repeatedly?
- Which functions or leadership areas are receiving increased investment?
- What industries or company types are hiring most actively?
- Are you seeing more growth, transformation, turnaround, cost-reduction, AI, M&A, or operational mandates?
- What business problems are prompting companies to create these roles?
- Are companies replacing someone, creating a new position, or consolidating responsibilities into one role?

What Companies Are Actually Buying

- When you see a search like this, what is the CEO/board/hiring executive really trying to accomplish?
- What are the **2–3 outcomes** they need this person to deliver in the first 12–18 months?
- What tends to separate the candidates who get serious consideration from those who look qualified on paper?
- What experiences are clients treating as **must-haves** versus “nice to have”?
- Are companies looking for someone who has already done the exact job, or are they open to adjacent experience?
- What backgrounds are getting the most traction in these searches?

Positioning & Candidate Differentiation

- When you see executives with my type of background, what makes one profile immediately interesting to you?
- Where do candidates with my background tend to get pigeonholed?
- Is there anything in my background that you think I should be making more visible?
- Conversely, is there anything executives tend to overemphasize that isn't actually differentiating in the market?
- If you were introducing someone with my background to a client, **what would you lead with?**
- What would make you hesitate to put someone like me forward?

Search Dynamics

- How are companies defining the level of these roles—VP, SVP, C-suite?
- Are mandates expanding or narrowing once the search gets underway?
- What typically causes a search to change direction?
- How many candidates are clients generally interviewing?
- At what point in the process are candidates being eliminated, and why?
- Are companies relying primarily on retained search, internal recruiting, referrals, or a combination?

- What kinds of executives are search firms proactively approaching rather than waiting for them to apply?

Compensation & Scope

- What compensation ranges are you seeing for these mandates?
- How much variation are you seeing based on company size, PE ownership, growth stage, or scope?
- Are companies trading title for scope, equity, or compensation?
- What does the actual scope look like behind the title?
- Are there meaningful differences between what companies are calling a VP, SVP, President, COO, or C-suite role?