



## Over Deliver Because It Is Not about You

By [Harrison Barnes](#)

Several years ago, I was in the midst of opening up various legal recruiting offices around the United States. In my sheer enthusiasm for the business, I would bring new recruiters from around the country to Los Angeles and have them live with me for several months while training them in my method of recruiting. The new recruiters would sit in my office and I would observe them recruiting and critique their performance. I would have dinner with them each night and discuss recruiting as well.

While I am not good at a lot of things, I do believe I am [good at recruiting](#). I love the business and have a natural talent for it. That is one reason why I took the practice of recruiting and the training involved so seriously. Some recruiters lived with my wife and me for up to four months while being trained.

Recruiters would generally start the job with all sorts of questions about fundamentals.

- They would have questions about the proper sorts of candidates to send to law firms.
- They would have technical questions about different law firms.
- They would want to know various company procedures and so forth.

I would happily share and teach all of this information; however, in the weeks and months that I would train each new recruiter, I really was never all that concerned with fundamentals. For example, I knew that the recruiters would learn about various law firms in due course. I knew that I could teach them how to present candidates to law firms most effectively.

What I was most concerned with was something far deeper and more significant. There was one thing that I knew would either make or break these recruiters and determine whether or not they succeeded. By the time each recruiter was done being trained, I knew and could tell many, many things. I knew if they would succeed at the job. I knew if they would last at the job. What I knew, all came down to one thing:

*Whether or not the person believed the job was about them - or was about others. The more the recruiter truly believed the job was about others, the better they did.*

"None of this is about you," I would always tell people. "It is 100% about others and has nothing to do with you."

Less than 30% of all the recruiters I've hired, worked on, and trained ever "got" this. A few people understood this naturally (most do not). My training would generally hit the new recruiters with this message from multiple directions and in unexpected ways. I might have them read self-improvement books where this was an underlying (but not direct) message. Generally, sometime during the final week or so of the training, I would try to deliver them this message in a serious way. I might bring it up in the evening while we were sitting by a fire and there were no interruptions. I felt the message needed to be taken in, pondered, and slept on. The reason for this was that I felt the message was incredibly important and something that needed to be absorbed and fully understood.

In fact, I felt the message was the most important [career lesson](#) the person would ever receive.

When recruiters "got" this message, their career and life changed. They would very quickly start doing exceptionally well and making all sorts of placements. They would be referred to others. Their entire career would just get fired up in a real hurry. People who understood and practiced this mantra almost universally did very well.

The power of this message was so strong that two recruiters working together in the same office might have results that were 180 degrees different. One recruiter might have fifteen people interviewing at one time and be making placements at a rapid clip. Another recruiter might be lucky to have anything going on at all—despite having access to the same resources as the other recruiter.

*It is all about the other person and never about you.*

What does it mean when I say people believe the job is about them? It means people are focused on their needs and wants. They focus on things like

- How much money they make
- Working too hard
- Giving too much of themselves
- Whether others in a similar job are making more money than them
- How others in their company are doing compared to them
- How much free time they have
- Hobbies and pursuits outside of work
- How they are perceived by others
- Not being taken advantage of
- The prestige of other people they are working with
- The quality of their benefits

People who are focused on themselves spend a lot of time worrying and thinking about stuff like this. In fact, they generally spend just as much time thinking about these sorts of things as they spend thinking about their jobs and the people they are serving. When someone is focused on things that have nothing to do with serving the people they are working for, they get predictable results.

When a job is not about you, everything changes. If a job is not about you:

- You take time to prepare an exceptional work product.
- You see things from another person's point of view constantly.
- You think about the other person's needs while you are working and not your own.
- You take the time to meet people and form alliances.
- You communicate with people in a way that they can tell you care about them.
- You write articles, give speeches, and do all sorts of things that people focused on themselves do not.

The world provides rewards (money, status, and so forth) in direct proportion to the value you provide. You will simply provide more value to others when you are focused on giving and concerned about the welfare of those you are working for.

There are essentially three types of people and businesses out there: Those that over deliver, those that deliver what is expected, and those that under deliver. People who over deliver generally believe the job is about others. People who under deliver generally believe the job is just about them.

In your current and past jobs, you certainly have been promoted, let go, or remained stagnant based on whether you over or under delivered. In terms of the businesses you frequent and like, the odds are very good that you are most comfortable with those which over deliver. Your personal success, like the success of most businesses, comes down to whether you over or under deliver.

In my job, I speak with people who are unemployed and have lost jobs all the time. I also speak with people who are incredibly successful all the time.

- The one constant I have noticed when speaking with the most successful people is that they make "over delivery" incredibly important in their work.
- In terms of speaking with the most unsuccessful people, they make under delivery the most important thing in their careers.

The laws associated with making money, getting ahead, and being successful - all really do come down to over and under delivery. Most people who believe that a job is about others, over deliver. Most people who believe the job is about themselves, under deliver. Do more than expected, work harder, give more, and you will simply do better in life. There's really no question about it.

In your career, one of the most important things you can do is to get a reputation for over delivering as opposed to under delivering. Everything in your career and life—and how you will be known--generally comes down to whether you over deliver. You need to be focused on what other people want and need. Being focused on the needs of others and not yourself is crucial in any pursuit.

I love reading biographies of incredibly successful people. I like doing this because studying the lives of successful people teaches me lessons that I can teach others about their own careers. Most biographies start out in the person's childhood and then go from there. One of the most interesting parts of these biographies is reading about the work ethic of the people. The great successes are always are people who over deliver and are concerned about others. They can see what other people want and could use and make this a priority.

I also love reading stories about successful companies. Successful companies also get the reputation for being focused on others and anticipating others' wants and needs.

To truly reach your potential, you need to over deliver--be focused on others and not yourself.

## **THE LESSON**

You are rewarded in direct proportion to the value that you deliver, meaning that you have to deliver in order to reach your full potential. You will provide more value to others when you are focused on giving. People who under-deliver view their jobs as being primarily about them, while those who over-deliver see their jobs as being about others. Strive to develop a reputation for delivering rather than under-delivering.

---

<https://www.harrisonbarnes.com/>