

Alan Davis & Associates Inc.



Gone Fishing

By: Alan Davis

I just can't seem to get recruiting off the brain!

Our family stayed with some close friends for a few days this summer at their cabin on a small lake a few kilometers west of Kazaboua, Quebec. As usual, my two youngest kids asked me if I would take them fishing. I agreed, of course.

So we set off in the pédalo boat, the kids paddling like crazy and me loafing at the back. We tried trolling with big lures, little lures, different coloured lures, in the middle of the lake, around the raft, at the edges of the lake, at the bottom of the lake and just below the surface of the lake. The only thing we didn't try was fly fishing. The result of all this effort was a resounding zero. Not even a bite. Dad's credibility with his kids (and with the assembled guests) was very much on the line.

So dad had to come up with a solution very quickly. I instructed the kids to quietly peddle over to the part of the lake where the incoming stream was situated. I had them drift by the stream quietly. A challenge? Yes, but we managed it.

The lake at this point was quite shallow, so we were not expecting to catch anything big. We fished with small worms on small hooks about 3 feet below the surface. To everyone's surprise, my bobber suddenly disappeared and seconds later, a huge bass leapt out of the water, trying to shake the hook. We were so unprepared for this event, that we didn't even have a landing net in the pédalo. Trying to unhook the fish without the net would probably have killed it – not the desired result.

So we very slowly peddled back to the dock towing this huge fish behind us. By the time we got back to the dock, the fish was exhausted – so was dad! We managed to get the fish into the net, unhook it, measure it, and put it back in the water, and pushing water through its gills until it recovered sufficiently to swim away quietly. Seemingly, and hopefully, no worse for wear.

Apparently we had set a new record for McCauly Lake bass at 3 ½ dock planks (the only available metric).

So what does this have to do with recruiting? Or is it just another fisherman's boast? The answer is that there are many analogies between fishing and recruiting which become obvious when you are sitting on a lake with too much time on your hands.

Firstly, if you're in the right pool, with a hook in the water, you have a chance at catching the prize that you set out to catch. The converse is also true. If you're

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fishing (or recruiting) in the wrong gene pool, you absolutely will not snag the candidates that you need to recruit.

Secondly, if you have the appropriate bait - or in the context of the recruiter - if you have a sufficiently compelling value proposition in your recruiting message, you have a good chance of catching the prize.

Lastly, if you have hooked the prize, there is every opportunity to lose it before it gets away, or before the new incumbent joins your organization.

What it comes down to, when all is said and done, is process. The process of catching bass on the lake, and the process of recruiting excellent candidates must be well thought out, and exquisitely implemented.

In spite of work intruding on a family fun activity, I thoroughly enjoyed the fishing with the kids! They had no idea that while dad was catching the bass, he was in fact working.

