



Q & A with Troxeil Senior Vice President of Sales, Mark Barber

The Renaissance Network Case Study Series

PRESENTED BY:



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- Mark Barber, SVP of Troxell

The Business—Troxell Communications, Inc.

As a national leader in education technology and audio-visual solutions and services for K-12 and Higher Education, Troxell offers a one-stop shop of today’s leading technology brands to help support active and collaborative learning in the classroom. Its strong relationships with leading technology manufacturers, services-oriented approach , and aggressive growth strategy enable their education customers to successfully execute on their technology strategy and ensure success for teachers and students.

The Situation

TRN: What were Troxell's obstacles and goals prior to engaging The Renaissance Network (TRN)?

Mark Barber: Our human resources department felt that we were not screening or producing the level of candidate that Troxell needed. We would post on jobsites such as Indeed and Monster, and then bring candidates through a clunky hiring process that consisted of sourcing, prescreen interviews, and background checks. Everyone would interview great, onboarding would go well and then you realize that it wasn't quite a match. It just wasn't working.

We also needed to stabilize the sales team, specifically the East and Southeast regions, because we were constantly rolling through candidates and losing revenue.

So our primary goals were to improve the efficiency of the recruiting process and increase stability in our sales team. We also wanted to partner with a company that understood sales and technology and the unique challenges of the education market.

TRN: How did your strategic relationship with The Renaissance Network develop ?

MB: It is expensive for us to hire a new sales rep and put them through training and onboarding, so we wanted to minimize how many times we repeated the process. While the responsibility for training and onboarding fell on us, we needed help finding talent that could assimilate into our system.

So we began testing a few different recruiters, including TRN.

From the beginning, it was a strong partnership. As the TRN relationship developed, HR and I agreed that the quality of candidates was better. Retention was also a big concern, but as we continued to work with TRN their ability to analyze candidates in greater detail helped our retention rate rapidly improve.

In the last three years, we have really honed our strategic intent which gives us clarity on direction, whitespace, and territories. We developed an open dialogue with TRN and, as we continued working together, we developed a rhythm that we weren't getting with other recruiters. We were also getting a good mix of candidates with different skillsets and backgrounds, which I think is important.

Over the years, TRN has helped us improve our processes. We've gotten better at onboarding new employees because TRN checks in with new employees in the first six months, giving us useful information that our employees might not have shared with us before. This greater transparency helped us deal with any problems head on.

By hiring candidates through TRN, I saw that our partnership was producing the desired results. We have since decreased the time it takes to ramp up our new employees.

TRN: Which part of the TRN hiring process is particularly valuable to Troxell?

MB: It's the expertise they've provided on our overall structure, processes, candidate quality, and the discovery calls. TRN's ability to understand and analyze a potential territory, highlight any potential challenges, and then provide valuable insight make hiring the right candidate simple.

Instead of telling you what you want to hear, TRN presents the facts so you can work toward finding a realistic solution. This open collaboration has been especially helpful when we're planning to expand within a territory. The region-specific advice I get from TRN has provided greater awareness in the market, which is important when going through the decision-making process.

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TRN: How has TRN personally helped you as a Senior Vice President of Sales?

MB: When I was a hiring manager, TRN really managed the hiring process. Their ability to find and filter people to interview was invaluable. Their reach, interview steps, and assessments helped filter out “professional interviewers,” improving our efficiency. I appreciated getting a qualitative report on already vetted candidates which gave me time to evaluate them in detail. It was a beneficial partnership because TRN handled the hardest part of the process.

So we ultimately chose The Renaissance Network because we liked the quality of the candidates, the open communication, and the TRN employees that I deal with day to day. They keep us on task and push us to meet hiring deadlines. Having someone you trust handling all the operations and logistics keeps us from missing out on good candidates. The other recruiters were just not as good as TRN at project management, process, and service.

Finally, I know that I can call anyone in the organization for help on an issue. TRN has a very high-quality skillset of the employees at the organization, so every touch that I have is positive, professional, and solution driven. I value the quality of candidates we get and, ultimately, the way TRN represents our organization.

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TRN: What has been your experience working with TRN on candidate contract negotiations?

MB: Contract negotiations can sometimes be a contentious subject between recruiters and clients, but TRN provides good indicators of candidate expectations early in the process and we get solid indicators of candidate interest at the right compensation level. The initial information gathered by TRN’s recruiters really helps us adjust to make sure contract negotiations are smooth and our compensations levels are correct.

TRN: What has working with Lisa Sacchetti, CEO of The Renaissance Network brought to your process?

MB: Lisa brought a couple of things to the process starting with experience in the EdTech industry which is key to finding qualified candidates.

The second part was putting some structure to our processes which is what we've long struggled with in years past. Before TRN, it was left to our Regional Vice Presidents to manage the process in addition to our normal roles. We were being asked to check whether jobs had been posted, find out if HR had had any interest, review resumes, set up meetings, and perform interviews. Being able to pass that function off to experts like Lisa and TRN allowed us to better focus on the business.

TRN: Can you provide some examples of territories that improved through The Renaissance Network's hires?

MB: In 2016, we had rolled through a couple of West Coast reps and our business there was declining, dropping by about \$1M in two years. We considered other options, including moving an inside rep to the field. We ultimately hired one of TRN's candidates who went on to grow the business to \$5M a year, achieve President's Circle status, and receive the Rookie of the Year award.

We also placed a TRN candidate in one of our large Southern territories and they took our business there from the \$100Ks to \$4M.

So if I could describe a TRN candidate in one word it would be "drive"—as in the drive to succeed. That's the stuff I love to see.

The Results— An overview of The Renaissance Network & Troxell Partnership

MB: First, partnering with TRN enabled us to access quality candidates within the Education industry and upgrade our sales team, resulting in increased sales which was the end goal.

Overall, we understand each other and we've been able to achieve a good working relationship. TRN has improved our understanding of the market. They've also done a good job understanding what Troxell wants in its candidates. The relationship is so easy that I can request "candidate x" in a territory or "candidate y" in another and TRN knows the talent available in those regions and can act accordingly. They have created a productive relationship with us and I am confident every time I go to TRN for a new hire.



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