

The FSTOPS™ Primer

by Pasquale Scopelliti
& Nico Scopelliti

*The
Consigliori
.com*



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http://raybeh.blogspot.com/2010_12_01_archive.html



The FSTOPS™ is the most empowering method of outstanding salesmanship and key account development on the market at any price.

FSTOPS™-driven sales calls net you the best clients and the best searches. This leads to the best openings to take out into the market for recruiting.

With the best openings (and again using the same FSTOPS™ method!) you find the best candidates and build the best relationship to them.

Employing The FSTOPS™ as part of your Talent Broker transformation is to chuck the lever you planned to use on the 200-lb stone and step into a forklift.

But to start, let's change metaphors briefly from a lever to a camera...

The Camera that Captures Your Past, Future, & Present

Every story has a beginning, an end, and a middle.

It's a bit uncomfortable to put it that way, isn't it? The order is simply... off. It's with good reason we go our whole lives thinking of stories as beginning-middle-end; the arrow of time moves in but one direction. It's unnatural to tell stories any way but chronologically.

Unless, of course, you're Quentin Tarantino (writer/director/producer of *Pulp Fiction*, *Reservoir Dogs*, and more recently, *Django Unchained* and *The Hateful Eight*), in which case you do so masterfully and have no qualms about your prologue and epilogue being the same scene. Tarantino will start his stories at the beginning, at the end, or in the very midst of the action without giving you any idea of what's going on, allowing you to piece it all together as the movie progresses.

Another example is the critically acclaimed television series *Breaking Bad*. Just before the title sequence of nearly every episode, they present the aftermath of the episode's climax. You're confused and wondering, "*How the hell did that happen?*", and then they show you the events leading up to that moment. The technical term for this type of literary device is a "cold open," and it's a type of context-less foreshadowing.

Life takes place in chronological order, but our minds are not so constrained. Ask anyone the question, "*Is this precise moment a beginning, middle, or an end for you?*"

You'll find the answer is highly contextual.

*"Well, it's actually all three! This is the morning, a.k.a. the **beginning** of the day. You're interrupting me while I'm in the **middle** of writing an e-mail. And I'm tired of your ridiculous philosophical navel-gazing, so this is the **end** of our conversation. Cheers!"*

But no matter the context or the perspective, the only thing that actually exists outside of our mind is the present. All decisions are made in the "now." They are influenced by the past and they'll surely affect the future, but decisions can only be made in the present. The importance and impact

of a given decision can vary wildly. So, when you go to make one, don't you want as much information as possible? Looking at your beginning and considering your end is by far the best way to make good decisions in the present.

Let's start with some "easy" questions:

1. Where have you been? (Past)
2. Where are you going? (Future)
3. How are you going to get there? (Present)

These questions are universal and can be applied to any part of your life. Simply change the subject.

1. Where has my recruiting practice been?
2. Where is my recruiting practice going?
3. How is it going to get there?

Replace *recruiting practice* with *career, family, marriage, golf game*, or whatever is important to you. Consider how someone might respond.

1. *My career has had its ups and downs. Sometimes I've really enjoyed my work; other times it's been pure drudgery.*
2. *Of late, however, I've felt like I haven't tapped into all my potential. I'm happy with my job, but I feel like there's more I can do, like I could have a greater impact.*
3. *First, I'm going to determine what kind of impact I'd like to make. Then, if I don't already know how to do so, I'm going to commit myself to learning how.*

There are those for whom the example answers above will resonate. Others may need to narrow their depth of field and take a few more pictures to gain the clarity they need to make a difference in their life. Try these on for size:

Past

1. What **Failure** in your career do you regret most? Or if you can't think of any regrets, what one thing do you most wish didn't happen that did, or what did happen that you wish didn't?
2. What **Success** are you most proud of? What's the greatest thing you've accomplished so far?

Future

3. What are you most afraid will happen? What **Threat** are you most concerned about?
4. What **Opportunity** has presented itself that you're most excited about?

Present

5. What's the biggest **Problem** you're facing right now? What Problem do you think about the most and want solved ASAP?
6. What **Solution** have you attempted in order to solve that problem?

As you may have observed, the key words in bold in the questions below are the foundation of **The FSTOPS™**.

Failure

Success

Threat

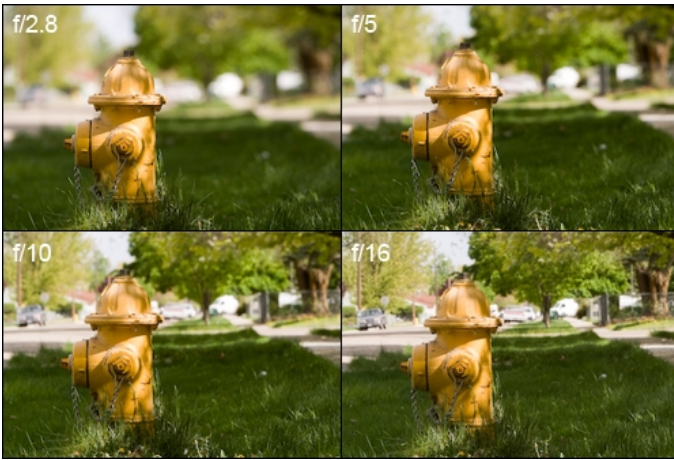
Opportunity

Problem

Solution

I created this decision-making structure originally as a sales and marketing exercise. Since then it's evolved into a tool that my son and I apply to every facet of our lives - and we teach our coaching clients and colleagues to do

the same. They're most certainly not easy questions to ask or answer, but the insight you gain is well worth the humbling effort.



I chose the words before my wife, Kate, (Nico's mom) saw the acronym in them. For photographers, F-stops are the ratios between the focal length of the lens and the diameter of the aperture. Increasing or reducing the f-stops will affect the amount of light that enters the lens and where that light is coming from - that is, the depth of field. It applies elegantly, as

the clarity you seek may require greater or lesser depth depending on your situation and the part of your life (or your recruiting) that you're analyzing.

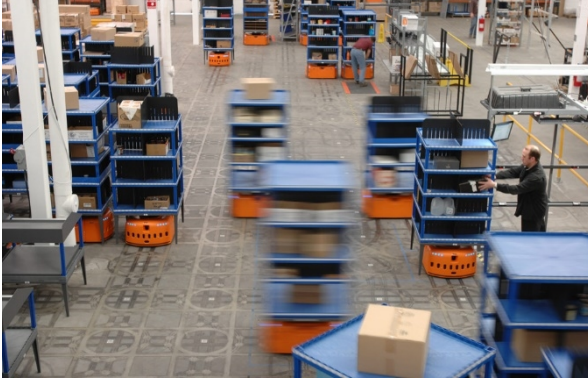
In application, let's say you are working with a hiring manager who is VP of Supply Chain, for example. Consider asking questions like these:

1) What is the most significant **Failure** your company's supply chain has experienced? (*e.g., the derailment that dropped a shipment of hugely expensive quantity of work-in-progress into a river and brought your just-in-time manufacturing network to a grinding halt*)

2) What has been your most shining **Success**? (*e.g., the new distribution center you opened ahead of time and under-budget*)



3) What poses the greatest **Threat** to your ongoing operations? (*e.g., increasing fuel costs and stringent HOS rules causing your carriers to continuously increase their rates, depriving you of cash flow.*)



4) What **Opportunities** do you have that we can invest into or leverage? (*e.g., automation is becoming cheaper every year, enabling your operations to accomplish more menial tasks with robotics and save money on labor.*)

5) What's the most difficult **Problem** you are facing? What's your biggest challenge? (*e.g., your warehouse turnover is dramatically high and you lose a huge amount of money to overtime.*)

6) What innovative and practical **Solutions** can we envision that will make the company more money while making your life easier? (*e.g., pursuing an internal review to find out what employees think about the situation on the floor.*)

The Heart of Ethical Recruiting & Salesmanship

At the heart of selling is a fundamental problem. The problem is this:

How do I, as a salesperson, support my prospects in their process of building a yes or no answer to my product or service offering? How do I BEST support their ability to make the right choice?

And along with this question is the quandary of precisely how it is that a prospect goes about constructing a yes or no decision. The FSTOPS™ model offers the answers to these questions and quandaries.

The six question areas of The FSTOPS™ are the actual manner in which a prospect comes to - constructs or builds, if you will - his or her yes or no answer in response to your offer. All the time you are doing your FAB, or using any other sales technique during your presentation, the prospect is contemplating these six areas, usually without knowing it, and of course without this structure!

We salespeople and recruiters all too often suffer from the challenge of getting ourselves to simply shut up and listen to the prospect, the candidate, or the potential client. We are time-fillers. We are talkers. We all know we should ask more questions and listen more. But it isn't as easy as it sounds. After all, usually we want the prospect to stay around us more than the prospect wants to. And usually the prospect is careful about how much he or she is willing to tell us. So, the job of opening the prospect up is often more difficult than most outsiders can imagine.

How do we get out of our own seller's point of view and into the perspective of the prospect? Again, not as easy as it seems it ought to be, right?

With even the most rudimentary understanding of the FSTOPS™ we can begin to change this right now. As you will see in straightforward and clear detail in just a few paragraphs below, the mere act of asking any question that simply employs any of the six FSTOPS™ areas – and then shutting up and actually paying attention to the prospect's answer – you will be providing your prospect with the chance to uncover and discover the actual factors driving their best possible decisions. You will have begun the process of shifting your point of view from yours as the seller to the prospect's perspective, which is, of course, the position of purchasing decision maker.

With the FSTOPS™ in hand a salesperson learns how to honorably deal with all resistance and enter into the true heart of the matter in every single sales encounter, or to opt out of that encounter. In fact, I better go ahead and show you the underlying emotion that goes along with, underneath, actually, each of the six question areas. Here are the core, and a few secondary, emotions:

SHAME – Regret and Remorse

PRIDE

FEAR – and even Dread

DESIRE

ANGER – Frustration, Anxiety and even Rage

JOY – Satisfaction, Relief and even Peace

No other sales structure offers the access to and understanding of your prospect's emotions as directly, simply and powerfully as the FSTOPS™.

Here is the critical difference.

The purpose of an FSTOPS™ conversation is NOT to sell your product. No, it isn't. What then can it be?

The purpose of every true FSTOPS™ conversation is to help a prospect build the very best possible answer, to build the best possible decision for him or herself, from their point of view and best interest – not the seller's.

In working with the FSTOPS™ we are forced to come straight to terms with the ethics and morality of our professional function as recruiters and salespeople.

In the first place our prospects can never have the data we have and so they will always need our help in procuring the relevant information they need to create their decision. But information, as we know, is not the true source of decision. Rather it is the emotional response to that information and to the situation at hand.

Even if the prospect had all the information we have there would still be an obstacle preventing him or her from making the best decision possible. That problem is the fact that we get our thoughts and emotions all mixed up. Our thinking and our feelings are separated, and we do not know how to organize these thoughts and feelings in the most beneficial manner. No individual can do this for him or herself. An outsider is needed.

That is where the FSTOPS™-empowered seller comes in.

With this simple, but so powerful structure in hand you can support your prospects in building the best possible decisions for their lives that they will ever build.

The FSTOPS™, when mastered, provide you with a truly amazing professional tool and empower you to become the very best service provider for decision construction there is.

This is awesome power.

The FSTOPS & Breaking Out of Transactional Recruiting

The first and most important reason why my model is so important is that it will help YOU make the best decisions you'll ever make, if you simply use it. Let's go there right now. You're an Executive Recruiter, and you are interested in breaking up over the \$200,000 barrier, and becoming a Talent Broker consistently performing in the \$200,000 - \$400,000 range every year.

The key to this evolution is that you must transform both your conversation with your clients and candidates, and even more importantly, their perception of you and the value you create.

You don't have to master the entire method all at once, and fortunately it is tremendously forgiving. In fact, if you can just remember the terms: *Failure, Success, Threat, Opportunity, Problem* and *Solution*, you're already off to an excellent start.

If you simply use any one of those terms in any question, you'll immediately begin to transform both your conversation and your clients' and candidates' perception of who you are, what you do, and the value you create.

It may be hard to believe it's that simple, but it is. The questions cut right to the core of any matter at hand, and apply 100% perfectly to either the hiring process or the job search process.

Even just one such question can pivot an entire conversation. And at first, that may well be plenty. As you gain experience, however, you'll begin adding more of the boxes in, and will become more and more thorough as your comfort grows.

Myself, I always ask all six questions, and in the order presented. I call that the "Orthodox FSTOPS Method." I believe in it utterly, and elsewhere I'll discuss that fully. But in the learning process you should NEVER worry about that. Any question you use, no matter how inexpert it may feel, will move your conversation and relationship forward. There are only two requirements that must be met to gain the benefit.

1. After you ask, you must stop speaking and be silent. Don't worry about it if you crack and end up filling in the silence. That's okay, but

it won't get you what you want. Sooner or later you have to learn to wait for the answer.

2. You must then listen carefully and take notes while you listen to the answer given. It is critical that you focus on the answer, and on understanding it. This means you have to STOP thinking about what you're going to say next, and focus 100% on what your prospect, client or candidate is saying.

These two steps will turn you from a transactional recruiter into a consultative one, immediately. Additionally, they assure you that you've stepped out of your own perspective and into the shoes of the person you're speaking to. More than for all the other many benefits the method creates, the reason it's important is that it puts you in the position of a true Talent Broker, the very moment you begin using the FSTOPS method.

The Power of Listening

There is a spectacular confidence conveyed when you actually listen, as opposed to perpetually speak and then plan your next words, never really hearing what is said in between your own verbiage. The more you actually listen, the greater the respect you'll gain, and more.

One of the most compellingly attractive things a professional can do is truly listen. If you look up the Declaration of Independence of America, one of the things that jumps out is that King George III REFUSED to listen to his colonists or address their grievances.

So also in selling and recruiting at the higher levels. The more you listen, the more people know that they've been heard, the more they'll like and respect you, and the more they'll desire to do business with you.

And not just single transactions, but ongoing, growing amounts of business. Consider the competitive advantage this gives you. As you truly listen, and do so in a manner that is satisfying and fulfilling to your clients and candidates, they will come to trust that you care, that you understand, and that you're able to find the right solution to their problems, and move them forward.

More, as your quality of listening rises, your quality of performance will, too. You will create better matches, that truly thrill both clients and candidates. Not only will this make them vastly more satisfied that they fees they paid you were actually bargains, but also that return on investment from working with you tremendously exceeds that available from your competitors.

I could go on and on, but the last benefit I'll share is speed of placement. As you serve a single client over multiple positions, you will come to know the client and their unique hiring practices far better than could ever occur on merely tactical transactions. This will enhance the communication and will absolutely reduce the time to fulfillment.

As I said, there are many other values too, but these should be enough for you to begin to see how far reaching the impact of FSTOPS™ usage will be, once you get started!

The Transformation

I want you to picture that you've been using the FSTOPS Method for about a year now, and have grown comfortable asking all six questions in a single conversation.

First, picture this as a daily skill mastered on the telephone.

Now, a year in, I want you to picture going to meet with a client face-to-face, and imagine how much more in control of the process you'll be, having such a method completely internalized.

Beyond that, picture that you've been invited to meet with a boardroom full of executives, and that you're able to employ the method for the entire group. I assure you, if you can get the group thinking and answering these questions thoughtfully, you'll open up conversations the likes of which they have never experienced before.

Now let's bring all of this down to your daily tactical life.

As a Talent Broker, you'll build a deep and productive relationship to both clients and candidates that empowers you to move through your market in your DIG in a completely new way. You'll have confidence of your knowledge, your reach and your value proposition. No competitor will be able to match your contributions to all you serve. This converts into tactical power for finding, opening, serving and closing placements. This tool will change the value, and therefore the power for performance that you bring to your tactical work each and every day.

Consider your average fee, right now. Let's use, for example, the number \$20,000.

This is 10 placements at the Executive Recruiter level. Assuming we do NOT raise your fee average (which we are VERY likely to do!), peak performance as a Talent Broker will call for 20 placements.

Is that possible? Yes! What's more, the FSTOPS can help you visualize it, as well as make it real. Simply picture that there are 20 hired candidates you've placed, all of whom you have answers to each FSTOPS question. That is actually only 120 boxes filled in.

Of course, you'll have used the method many, many more times, as those are only the candidates you placed. You'll have worked through the six question 100s and 100s of other times too. But the FSTOPS boxes that represent your \$400,000 year are on those 20, with only 120 answers.

Your hiring managers will be fewer in number. Let's just conservatively call it 15 hiring managers, although it may well be fewer. This converts to only 90 FSTOPS answers. Again, in your prospecting, if not many 100s then at least many 10s of FSTOPS conversations will have been completed.

And we should pause on that point. With every prospect you take through the FSTOPS, you learn both about that company as well as about your industry itself.

It is one of the great powers of this method that it turns you into a learning machine, in each and every pass through the six questions. It makes your day more interesting, energizes you and absolutely informs you in ways that, again, no competitor could ever match.

Last for the moment, let's turn away from work just briefly. When people begin learning to master their FSTOPS, they rapidly discover their power to help anyone in their lives, in any context. You see, the FSTOPS simply empower better decision-making regardless of what kind of decision is under consideration. More, they empower a sense of truly being heard that no other method can equal.

You will find that as you rise both tactically and strategically in your work via this method, you will also rise in the effectiveness of the help and love you give to all you encounter, in every walk of life, and wherever you are.

On the next page, I'll provide you with an easy form you can use to start your journey.

The FSTOPS™: Simple Form
Created by Pasquale Scopelliti, www.TalentBrokerProgram.com

BAD

GOOD

PAST

1. Failure/Regret (Shame)

2. Success (Pride)

Benchmark

Benchmark

FUTURE

3. Threat (Fear)

4. Opportunity (Desire)

Benchmark

Benchmark

PRESENT

**5. Problem/Frustration/Anxiety
(Anger)**

**6. Solution/Satisfaction/Relief
(Joy)**

Benchmark

Benchmark

“ Pat is not only the top Executive Coach in the Recruiting industry, he is a visionary in developing systems to Monitor Performance and then having the ability to make decisions that could impact that Performance through the Lock-On Report™.”



JON BARTOS

Jonathan Scott Intl.

“ Pasquale as a business and life coach knows no equal.”



ALAN SCHONBERG

*Co-founder of Management
Recruiters International*

“ No other business consultant will care more about your business than Pasquale.”



JIM LUZAR

*Sales Consultants of
Brookfield*

“

I have worked with Pat since 1996 and no client, candidate, AE or PC has been responsible for helping me put as much money in my pocket during this 20-year stretch as Pat Scopelliti.”



PAUL MILLARD

The Millard Group



Learn more at www.TalentBrokerProgram.com

Email Pasquale & Nico at info@theconsiglieri.com



“As the best prepared and best read counselor, Pat has been without peer as an advisor to the best of the best. Most of whom were not in the top 1% when Pat took them on, but were within a year or two of his engagement.”



MARK REDNICK

Sales Consultants of Dallas