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“INEFFECTIVE INTERVIEW PRACTICES NEED TO BE UPDATED”

Given the critical importance of hiring the right person for the job, it is ironic that supervisors, managers and business owners are so frequently ill equipped and unprepared for the interview process. Candidates today are pretty savvy and often better prepared for the interview than the people interviewing them!

This long-running employer's market has forced candidates to be ultra-prepared to be competitive to win the job. Ready to showcase their accomplishments and sell themselves into the job, they are disappointed and discouraged to experience interviewers who are not adequately prepared, focused or trained in having an effective interview dialogue.

Here are some of the out-dated, employer-focused interview practices that need to be abolished. Not only are they ineffective, they may likely "turn off" the candidate of choice from wanting to work with that manager or for your company:

The "canned" interview: The interviewer has a standard (and typically outdated) set of questions that he or she will ask each and every candidate. While consistency is desirable in the hiring process, the questions are not always relevant to assessing a person's capability and fit for their particular position. Rigid or set-in-their-way interviewers will ask this canned set of questions rotely: question / answer; question / answer; question / answer. This creates stilted interaction rather than a balanced and purposeful dialogue with the candidate.

The "blabber-mouth" interview: In this case, the hiring manager uses the interview time for unstructured non-stop talk. Since many managers are not comfortable with the interview process, they stick with what they are comfortable with: talking about themselves, their career at the company, etc. When they have more time to "kill" they will offer a tour of the operation as a time filler. While this can give the candidate a decent perspective about the manager and the company, there has been insufficient time taken to build a relationship or to probe the candidate's abilities, motivations, and ideas.

One candidate emerged from such an interview and stated, "He didn't ask me many questions about myself. To me, that's pretty scary. I wonder on what basis he will make his employment decision! It also makes me wonder what kind of person this would be to work for...."

The "stress" interview: This approach, commonly used for high-pressure sales or customer service jobs, is where the interviewer grills the candidate to see how he or she will react, under the guise of simulating how the person will respond under pressure. In actuality, this approach serves mostly to indicate a person's tolerance for an aggressive, controlling or verbally abusive interviewer/manager. It is not an indicator of a candidate's ability to respond appropriately and effectively to stressful situations.

When the interviewer asks such confrontative questions as "Why haven't you gone further in your career by now?" or "How soon will it be before you go after my job?", it becomes clear that the intent is not to evaluate, but to intimidate. This interviewing behavior is neither respectful nor productive and cannot be justified under any circumstances.

As the economy gets healthier, candidates will not need to compromise their standards to "get a job", as is the situation today. Employers who are not strategically preparing themselves to be an employer of choice by preparing their supervisors and managers to be effective interviewers will be losers in the current and future talent wars.