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“POOR INTERVIEWER BEHAVIOR CAN COST YOUR COMPANY DOLLARS, CANDIDATES”

Interviewing is where "the rubber meets the road" in the hiring process. It is where future relationships are formed which set the stage for individual, team and organizational success. Professionals currently in job search report that they are still experiencing less-than-professional interviews with hiring managers they are meeting with. This includes not only questioning that is illegal, but discussions or interviewing styles that are inappropriate or downright offensive to candidates.

Questions to females about their intentions for marriage or having children still abound. Or, they are asked about what their husband does for a line of work. Both genders are still asked what they like to do outside of work. This questioning may seem innocent enough, but can put someone in an uncomfortable position if they feel that the privacy of their personal life or preferences is being probed.

Some managers think that they can get away with inappropriate lines of questioning or self-serving behavior behind the closed doors of their office. After all, it is only them and the individual candidates who are "witnesses" to the discussion. And while some lines of questioning may ultimately generate legal action, more frequently the company is negatively impacted by the silent loss of good talent from the pool of candidates who would be willing to work for them.

An emerging trend that adds to that loss of candidates is that stressed and frustrated managers are venting and airing their "dirty laundry" about their management and the organization. This is not the way to impress and entice someone who is evaluating them and their organization. Are they purposely using this tactic to discourage someone they don't like from pursuing the job? Or is their level of frustration far greater than their insight about basic human behavior and motivation? Either way, the result is the same: the desirable candidates are swiftly running the other way.

Unfortunately, when a company loses good candidates, they usually have no way of knowing or proving that it was the interviewer who was the cause of the loss. Candidates are not likely to reveal their inappropriate discussion with another employee of the organization or report their experience to someone in Human Resources - they do not want to offend or to burn any bridges. They are more likely to more discreetly move on by withdrawing their candidacy or declining an offer.

On a long term basis, this will result in the organization bearing the costs of longer times to fill their positions and generating undue stress for workers picking up the slack until a new person is hired and trained. More important, it will compromise the quality of individuals available to and willing to be hired by the organization.

As the talent wars escalate, organizations cannot afford to lose good talent or be forced to hire less desirable talent by default. The ignorance of the management team is no excuse. Human Resources needs to partner with senior management, (who can actually be some of the worst offenders) to be sure that those who are interviewing on behalf of the company are trained and monitored on an ongoing basis. What is said, and how it is said needs to have legal and respectful boundaries understood and practiced by everyone who is a part of the interview process.