

CEO Live

TREATMENT OF JOB SEEKERS OFTEN OVERLOOKED

Posted by Julie France on January 28, 2016

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Phil and Michael Georgenson of PMG Employment Consultants and Ken Lazar of Ability Professional Network reveal interview horror stories and explain why respect for job candidates is a must.

The interview tends to put the job seeker in the hot seat. But the power dynamic can leave those conducting the interview a little too laidback—or even eating their packed lunch.

Father and son team Phil and Michael Georgenson, respectively president and vice president of PMG Employment Consultants, have heard their full share of horror stories from client candidates.

“One thing that we hear a lot is that clients have interviewed with somebody from a company and we’ll ask the candidate, ‘How do you think you did?’” says Phil. “And they say, ‘I don’t know because nobody asked me any questions—all they did was talk about themselves and the company’ and I think an applicant’s sitting there thinking, ‘Well, how can they know (if I’m a good fit)? They didn’t even bother to learn anything about me.’”

Perhaps a lack of questions is better than the illegal sort—which, at the very least, can lead to poor branding.

“Believe it or not, it happens and you’ve got to make sure that you don’t ask illegal or inappropriate questions because even though the average candidate may not be offended, (he or she takes) that as an image of their organization,” says Phil.

Ken Lazar, principal at Ability Professional Network, hopes that such treatment of candidates is close to a rare occurrence.

“Right now it’s a talent-driven market and based on that, companies wanting to attract the best talent on the market really do have to respect the candidates who come in and interview with them,” says Lazar.

Nonetheless, Lazar has heard some surprising interview accounts, bringing a new meaning to “a mouthful of questions.”

“I am shocked sometimes as to what happens during an interview that really could be avoided that I feel is not professional,” says Lazar. “I had one candidate that I personally sent into a company that interviewed and while he was interviewed, the hiring manager was actually eating lunch.”

No matter how disrespectful a lunch-break interview sounds, sometimes the best way to respect a candidate is to not give him or her an interview at all.

“Make sure that you pre-qualify a candidate ahead of time so if they’re not qualified enough to make the effort to come in, they shouldn’t get there because I’ve seen a lot of cases where a candidate comes in and then there’ll be a fact that surfaces in the interview that (the employers) should’ve got to before,” says Phil. “A lot of it comes up in income. You know, a candidate will want an income level that’s higher than what the company’s going to pay.”

Even if a candidate is qualified, their time can be disrespected when interviews aren't consolidated.

“A lot of times there's not a defined process. You know, that's okay if things change along the way,” says Michael, noting that it's not polite when a candidate has to keep returning to an office for interviews with different people—especially when a candidate needs to use PTO days from a current job to do so.

As Phil describes it, if the process goes on too long, it's like letting air out of a tire—little by little, making the candidate less interested in working for a given company and even worse, informing others of the company's poor organization and behavior.

-Julie France

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