

Decision Time – How Hiring Decisions are Made



by Russ Jones

Ever wonder why a particular individual is selected for a position or promotion? Thought about what that candidate had going for them that the other candidate didn't? Well, it is obvious that

every one of us has wondered at some time or another, what the factor or factors were that tipped the scale in favor of one individual over the other candidates.

When it is all boiled down, the selection of a candidate is based on three criteria: qualifications, chemistry and connectedness. That seems simple enough. But, digging deeper allows us to think through the components of each of these three criteria and begin to see why, as an employer, we make the decisions we do; and if we are the candidate, how we can increase the probability that we become the candidate of choice.

Qualifications

As a candidate, there isn't much we can do here. Enhancing a resume to reflect work, education or accomplishments that are not factual is a quick way to move a candidate's resume from the desk to the trash. But many still try it and most often the stretching of facts takes place in the areas of education and dates of employment.

Assuming that the resume is well written and accurately reflects the candidate, it can also be assumed that the candidate sitting in an interview for a given position is qualified for the position for which he/she is interviewing. After all, the resume has been scrutinized versus the position qualifications and a pre-screening has likely been done via the telephone.

Chemistry

We often hear that a candidate just didn't have the right chemistry if they weren't selected for a position. And if that is the case, the employer probably did the person a favor. It is easy to get caught up in the battle to "win" the job, only to find that we the job won is not really a good fit. It is perfectly logical that we hire people that we like. It is simply easier to attain goals and meet the demands of the organization if we are working with people that we genuinely enjoy being around. We accomplish more if we like all the members of the team. Most of us are not actresses or actors, so why would we

want to be anything on the job that we really aren't as a person? The best advice about developing chemistry is to be polite, show enthusiasm, dress appropriately, be professional, and give yourself every opportunity to win in the interview. And most importantly, be yourself.

Connectedness

This criterion is the wild card. Should the other criteria be equal with the other candidates, this is the final decision maker in the hiring process. Though not typically discussed, the ability to establish connectedness between the interviewer and the interviewee is a significant factor in the interview process and most importantly, it is often the deciding factor as to whether the candidate is hired, or not.

By definition, connectedness is; 1) linked or joined together 2) having the parts or elements logically joined together. In John Guare's play, "Six Degrees of Separation", he theorized that everyone on this planet is just six acquaintances away from being connected to anyone else. So, how do we determine our connectedness? A beginning is to look at social networking websites such as ZoomInfo or LinkedIn; association websites such as ACHE, ASHHRA, HFMA; or Google to determine the background, interests, news stories, press releases, written works, etc. of a particular individual. Evaluating the information about an individual gives us insight into the places and people where your lives may have intersected. Or, the office environment and furnishings where the interview takes place may provide an interviewee with some information about the interviewer that can create conversation around mutual interests. These places of connectedness allow conversation that goes beyond the interview and begin the process of building a relationship. This creates the connectedness that gets people hired.

Several years ago, futurist, Leland Kaiser said, "What do employers want to know about people when making a hiring decision? Who are you really and what can you do?" Qualifications are a component, but ultimately it is the "who are you really" that makes the difference. And of course the emphasis is on the REALLY.

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