

HIRING – A CANDIDATE’S PRESPECTIVE

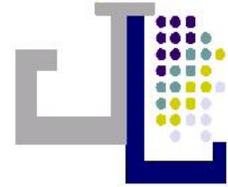
Executive Summary

It's a seller's market for many communications professionals, and the rules of the hiring game are changing. A recent study of the hiring process conducted by an executive search and consulting firm, showed that today's job seekers are more critical and more particular about the hiring process and the companies involved. The results provide a wake-up call for industry, suggesting a needed shift from the traditional emphasis on helping job candidates to interview more effectively, to helping the company's interviewers.

Key Findings

The most prominent findings related to dissatisfaction with the hiring process and first impressions of prospective employers:

- There is strong agreement that the interview process is an indicator of how the company operates (70 percent of respondents). That is, candidates translate such interviewing factors as what kinds of questions they are asked, the look and "feel" of an office environment, and some intangible signals about a company's culture into a snapshot impression of what it is like to work there, not just interview there.
- Candidates overwhelmingly feel that "what kinds of questions I am asked" is the best way to tell from an interview what a job will be like.
- Candidates tend to withdraw from the hiring process most often (40 percent of respondents) because of negative impressions or perceived poor fit with the corporate culture and values ("not comfortable").
- Job candidates are also highly frustrated (27 percent) when there is no position description, or the description they hear differs from one interviewer to another.
- Most candidates (82 percent) would prefer to initiate the interview process with a phone call prior to an in-person interview.



- The number one frustration during the hiring process occurs when the interviewer is not prepared or focused, followed closely by not getting feedback on their status after the interviews. Candidates don't object to the length of the process as much as to being left hanging, not knowing where they stand (see figures below).

Frustrations During the Hiring Process:

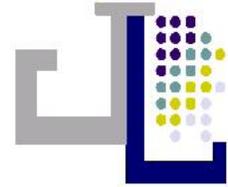
- 38.9% Interviewer not prepared/focused.
- 37.7% Lack of feedback/status.
- 27% No concrete or inconsistent position description.
- 23.8% Being kept waiting an unreasonable period of time.
- 23.3% Next step is unclear.
- 17% Process too long and complicated.
- 14% Interviewed by two or more people at same time.
- .5% Little/no opportunity to ask questions.

At the same time, job candidates today feel freer to drop out of the hiring process if it takes too long. This trend may mean that candidates are sometimes hired on the basis of "hanging in there" as much as for their suitability to a position. Surprisingly, fewer than half of the respondents (46.6 percent) interviewed think prospective employers appreciate the time and energy candidates put into the process

Conclusions and Recommendations

Responses to this survey reflect a pronounced interest in corporate culture and values, honesty, and clarity. Employers can benefit from the recommendations made by these professionals:

- Know what you are looking for, and communicate expectations clearly.
- Keep candidates informed about the status of the process.

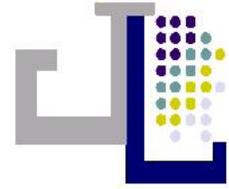


- Don't let the process go on too long.
- Keep promises and be honest about the job.
- Make the time-frame and procedures clear at the start.
- It is ironic that the major complaint of candidates for jobs in the communications field about the interviewing and hiring process is lack of or poor communication. These individuals, by virtue of their career choice, are more sensitive to and critical of communication styles. In this tight employment market, the more experienced communicators can demand more from prospective employers. They tend to relate the conduct of the interview and hiring process to the operation of the company, and to the level of the company's interest in good communications.

This is good news for employers. A few key changes in the interviewing and hiring process will greatly increase their chances of attracting the top communicators:

- Treat job candidates more like prospects than applicants. Let them know you appreciate their time and energy. Keep them informed about how the process will proceed, where they are in the process, and where they stand in consideration, if possible. Return phone calls.
- Establish a strategy early in the process that is known and followed by all who meet with job candidates. Be certain that interviewers - particularly when human resources people do the interviewing - are fully briefed on the position, the expectations, the salary range, and the timing for a decision. Avoid having more than one person at a time interview the candidate, if possible.
- When interviewing communicators, good communication skills really count. Interviewers should be straightforward and as specific as possible. They can gain points with prospects if they are willing to hold an initial telephone conversation briefly outlining the job and the hiring process, and assessing the prospect's interest. Eighty-two percent (82%) of the respondents felt an initial telephone conversation was helpful.
- Remember that the interviewer is selling the company.

The Bottom Line



Many years have been spent coaching job seekers in the skills of interviewing and selling themselves; it is time now for the employers to polish their skills and improve their hiring practices if they are to compete for today's top professionals. In this case, some work today will pay off handsomely tomorrow, as the global economy accentuates even further the importance of communication in all its forms.