



## INTERVIEWING AS RISK MANAGEMENT

First, let's flip conventional interview advice on its head. While we will cover many ways that you as the candidate can put your best foot forward, it is valuable to first understand what is at stake for the hiring organization:

- **Getting it right.** For the hiring manager, who has probably jumped through umpteen budget hoops to fund this position – even if it is a re-hire -- the margin for error is slim to none. Therefore, a thorough, multi-stage interview process is perceived as the best way to contain risk (along with meaningful reference checking). **Keep in mind that at the outset, interviewing is a game of elimination.** Only when one or two key finalists are selected does the mindset shift to confirmation of favorable impressions.
- **Closing the job requisition.** For the internal company recruiter (not to be confused with an external recruiter), there is an added layer of pressure. In addition to being responsible to the hiring manager to fill this one position, this individual may be working on anywhere from 10 to 50 other openings at the same company, with accountability to several line managers who have competing priorities. Can you imagine needing to screen for the right organizational fit in functions ranging from finance to IT to communications?
- **Finding the time to interview.** Typically, by the time a search is fully underway, the hiring executive is short-staffed and stretched for time. Shutting off the world to spend "quality" time with several candidates is stressful in itself, not to mention investing the time beforehand to thoroughly review each candidate's background.
- **Lack of confidence in interviewing skills.** Even the most accomplished executives can stumble when it comes to conducting interviews that yield meaningful information. They are trying to make a decision based on a very limited – and often stilted – dialogue. While many human resources managers are implementing interview training at all levels, some managers are just better at it than others.
- **Navigating internal politics.** The hiring manager may make the ultimate decision but he or she has to balance several sources of input. That is why so many interviews involve meeting with what can seem like a cast of thousands. The manager wants as much buy-in as possible before committing to a candidate. While in the long-run this also serves the incoming employee, it can be a major source of frustration to candidates who aren't privy to what is happening behind the scenes.



If you're starting to feel stressed, that's the whole point. In order to ace the interview process, you need to have some empathy for the people on the other side of the desk. It may seem like they hold all the cards, but in reality, they are daunted by the process as well.

If you view the interview process with this risk management mindset in mind, you will be lightyears ahead of most candidates. For one thing, you will not take the inevitable process bumps along the way, from time delays to repeated questions, so personally. You will learn to take the initiative in suggesting areas of discussion when the interviewer seems frazzled or time-pressed. And you will actually put your interviewers more at ease in the process, making the opportunity for good rapport and connection far more likely