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Frontline Analysis by the MRINetwork Team of Global Search Experts

What Red Flags Could Your Team Be Giving Off in the Interviewing Process?

During the typical interviewing process, most companies focus on identifying red flags and weeding out candidates who are not ideal. While this is a necessary practice, employers should also give consideration to the red flags their team members could be waving, and how this may be deterring future hires. As the executive, managerial and professional labor market has become overwhelmingly candidate-driven in the last few years, more employers are realizing they must overhaul their interviewing procedures, to attract top performers who frequently have several job offers at their disposal.

The main goal of an interview is to provide both the hiring company and the candidate an opportunity to determine if there is a mutual fit. On the candidate's end, more emphasis is often placed on the tangible insight they can gain from the meeting, including how interviewers respond to certain questions, inconsistencies with how various team members discuss the potential role, and the aspects of the job that are emphasized vs. those that are minimized. On the company's end, the assumption is the candidate has most of the required skills to take on the open role. The focus from their perspective is more about cultural fit, intangible insight and the overall impression left by the candidate.



In light of the fact that employers must now attract and recruit in a candidate-driven market, they should be thinking about the lasting impression they are leaving with prospective hires. "Companies really need to transition away from interview methodologies that are solely focused around what the candidate is bringing to the table, and think more about how they are presenting themselves to applicants," says Suzanne Rice, director, U.S. franchise development.

Rice suggests the following for companies that are looking to revamp their interviewing process:

Provide direct responses about the role and the company. Candidates will see through vague or evasive responses. If the position has experienced frequent turnover or ongoing challenges, be honest about the issues and discuss how the role has been restructured. This is an opportunity to show that thought has been given to the position and its overall purpose in the company strategy, rather than just trying to backfill the role.

Demonstrate an enjoyable working environment. Candidates are looking at everything from their potential workspace, dress code and how team members interact with each other to work from home policies, office amenities and perks. Avoid any negative discussion of past or current employees, and don't be dismissive of subordinates who may be briefly introduced to candidates. Use every opportunity to show a fun workplace, engaged employees and why you like working for the organization.

Maintain consistency. No matter what team members are tasked with interviewing, everyone should be on the same page about the responsibilities that will be assumed in the role. If the candidate receives conflicting information about the position, they have no choice but to assume this confusion will continue if they take the job.

Promote opportunities for advancement. Most candidates look at how a new role will provide them with new growth opportunities. Employers want someone who will remain in the position for a significant length of time, but it's important not to forget to discuss any training or upward mobility programs, providing viable examples of how employees can advance within the company. Future employees want to feel their new employer is invested in their professional development.

Regardless of how your organization approaches the interviewing process, the main goal should be to leave candidates with a positive impression. "Not every candidate will be right for the company, but their ability to talk about their interview experience in the marketplace and potentially disseminate info that presents the brand in a good light, is invaluable. The 'interview' should be approached not only as a way to qualify potential new hires, but also leveraged as a marketing opportunity to communicate why the organization is a great place to work."