

Interviewing: It's a lot like dating



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Commentary

The months of January and February are the best times of year to look for a job. Companies have new budgets, workers have returned from their holiday vacations and employers have a backlog of hiring that needs to be done. Coincidentally, according to Match.com, this is also a popular time of year for people to be active on online dating sites.

The reality is that interviewing for job candidates can feel similar to dating. The goal – on both fronts – is to find the perfect match. Employers and prospective employees are seeking the perfect fit, the place where each side can envision themselves for the remainder of their professional lives.

Planning the interview, similar to planning a date, can feel like a similar experience. For example, when you know you're interviewing a candidate, you're more apt to dress up a bit more formally for the day to create a positive impression of the company. But when the candidate calls just before the interview to cancel, it makes you feel like you may have "wasted the outfit" and the time. According to Darcel Rockett of

the Chicago Tribune, in the dating world this is called getting "Giamboozled." Apparently 58% of singles can relate to this.

And what about when a candidate does show up to the interview, only to talk about himself for the entire hour? Picture yourself at the start of the interview, exchanging pleasantries and then asking the candidate, "Tell me a little about yourself." Then he proceeds to act as if you're his mother who wants to hear all of the intimate details of his career choices. Then, despite providing several openings for the candidate to ask about the company or the position for which he is being considered, he continues to drone on and on about himself. According to Rockett, in the dating world this is called being "Kanye'd." Apparently 45% of singles have had this experience. Being Kanye'd never bodes well. No company wants a boastful person who is all about himself. We want team players.

Have you ever had a very attractive candidate grace your office for an interview? They may not have the credentials, background, experience or education, but their looks alone compel others to want them on the team. Rockett refers to this as "white clawing." In the dating realm, it's when a person stays with people who are basic and boring merely because of their good looks. This doesn't typically turn out well for either party in the workplace. If the attractive new employee is not com-

petent, the team will quickly complain and demand change.

And, finally, have you ever not hired a candidate, only to have the person connect on LinkedIn and ask for a favor, such as to "like" their page or support their charitable cause? Awkward. Rockett calls this "cause-playing." This means that when a relationship fizzles, the person later circles back and requests a favor. Sixty-one percent of singles have had someone ask for a favor post-breakup.

It's easy to make light of the situations that frustrate human resources professionals and supervisors who do the bulk of the hiring. But those making hiring decisions also know when the right candidate walks through the door. It can be a magical and exiting experience. The feeling is right. It lightens the mood, brightens your day. There is excitement in the air. The right candidate plays no games, displays no immature behavior and is confident enough to pick up the phone and not hide behind a keyboard. They even send a prompt thank-you note. These are the (team) mates you want and who you can see yourself growing old with ... as professionals, of course.

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