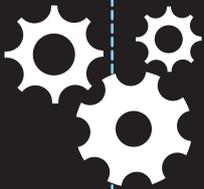


SELLING YOUR COMPANY AT INTERVIEW



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Anyone who has been involved in team-building will know interviews are a two-way process. The best candidates are vetting employers as much as being vetted by them. So, it's important for employers to recognise the need to sell their own organisations if they are to attract the best talent.

In this increasingly competitive market place, companies must learn to focus as much on their employer branding as they would the branding of their company's products and services. Selling your job, team and company is really about selling your brand promise - the functional (we pay well) as well as the intangible (we're passionate about our work) dimensions.

Know your customer

As in any selling or marketing process, it is essential to gain a clear understanding of your customers' (candidates, clients, recruitment consultants) needs, and to build a picture of what your competition is offering. Without this information it is extremely difficult to know how best to position your company and its attributes. Asking a candidate where else he/she is currently interviewing and at which stage, is invaluable information to the interviewer. It not only provides you with an idea of the timescale within which to act in order to capture the best talent, but perhaps more importantly it provides insight into how the candidate is regarded within the marketplace: their level, status and maybe how highly they regard themselves.

It also lets you know who the competition is and determine what elements of your own role and organisation you need to sell; for example if you're up against another blue chip you may need to increase the starting salary. If your competition is a weaker brand, they may be able to offer more senior and more autonomous roles. Either way, you need to know what you're up against, so why not ask candidates about the nature of the role with competing brands.

More often than not, they will be forthcoming with this information, and digging deeper in this way may also uncover other candidate attributes i.e. consistency in their job search may suggest they know what they want, rather than blanket bombing the market in the hope to find something else.

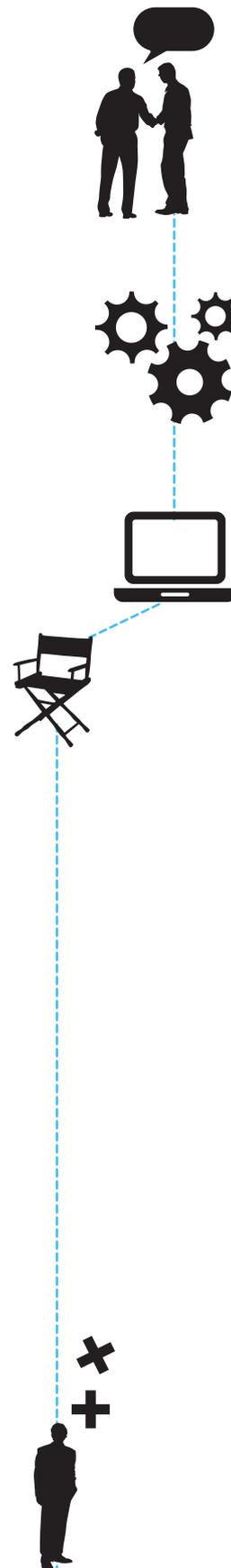
Understanding your candidate's motives for seeking change is the single most important learn from an interview process. It will enable you to sell your opportunity better to them; this knowledge will also go along way towards determining whether or not the candidate is a fit for the opportunity you have; as well as revealing the likelihood of them hanging around should they be successful.

Know your product, its brand and its strengths

Understanding where your brand ranks against the competition is equally important. In an increasingly brand conscious world, the strongest candidates are more likely than ever to base their decision on the kudos of the brand they have before them.

Brands act as psychological triggers to candidates of every level. Graduates in particular target strong employer brands.

A company with a great reputation is more likely to provide great training and a stamp of credibility which can hold a candidate in good stead for years to come. So making good play of your brand is key to winning the best talent. If you know that your brand is not as strong as the competition, then you may have to be more imaginative in the way you sell your company; pay more attention to the nature of the role, the dynamism of the team, the strength of leadership or the clear career path offered. There are also definite steps you can take to enhance the reputation of your company, for example focusing effort in submitting entries into various industry awards can help strengthen your brand equity.

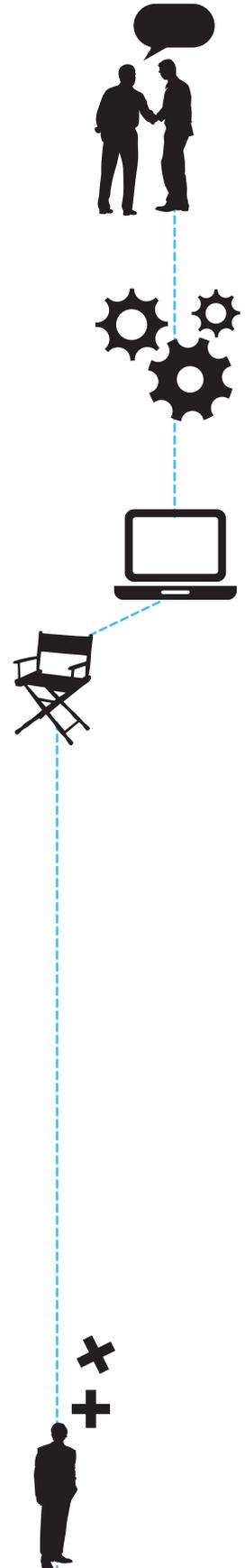


It's time to sell

The Holy Grail of course is to lever your company into that illustrious echelon, 'employer of choice'; where strong candidates gravitate naturally and in turn create a self-fulfilling promise - the best talent always goes there, because that's where the best talent is. Andersens was the most obvious exponent of this phenomenon in the 1990's; a CV with that brand on could open the door to many future opportunities and candidates knew it, so in some ways Andersens didn't have to sell itself, the myth had been created and served the purpose.

But of course achieving that status starts with getting the right people in the first place, and that is achieved by understanding what the people you want, desire, and then matching it. The new generation of so-called millennials (those who have graduated around the time of the millennium) are more savvy and assertive than their counterparts from yesteryear and are not shy about asking in interviews 'what can you do for me?' The onus on the interviewer to sell his/her organisation has never been so strong. It really is time to sell.

In conclusion, it's imperative to understand the real reason behind every candidate's decision to seek employment with you. Only then can you sell your job, your team and your company in the right way.



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