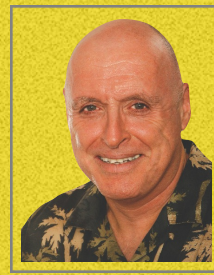


THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



1262 How Do You Test Your Future Leaders?

If you're going to turn over the leadership roles in your organization to people you will trust to make the right decisions, what would you want to know about them? I'm Jerry Roberts and I'll tell you how some corporate executives and business owners see this part of selecting their future leaders, next on The Extra Point.

Last week, we spoke at length about the topic of succession in organizations; that one day, authority and responsibility would have to change hands and how to plan for that.

We know that talent is important. Industry experience and connections count as well. We want the best possible and most qualified candidates we can get. Is there more?

Some companies subject potential executives to psychological testing, phone calls at various times of the day, and even changing the plan to bring them in for the interview. This test can reveal a candidate's flexibility, adaptability, and how they handle unexpected situations.

Ray sent me an item he picked up, which takes executive search in a different direction. Have you heard of Duolingo? It's a tech firm that produces language learning apps, some of which create a gamified approach to the study of languages.

Duolingo's founder, Luis Von Ahn, flies in the company's executive candidates, and sends a driver to pick them up at the airport.

Then, Von Ahn gets a report from the driver on how the candidate behaved during the drive to the company's headquarters. If the interaction between the candidate and the driver wasn't good, that's enough for Duolingo to remove the individual from hiring consideration.

In this case, it amounted to a test of character. If you talk down to a driver, who else will you talk down to?

I've heard of a similar tests that are centered

around a meal with the CEO or company owner. This test can reveal a candidate's interpersonal skills, social awareness, and ability to handle themselves in a professional setting.

The focus is usually on how the job candidate treats the server. If they come off as demanding, cold, or demeaning, it serves as a warning that this individual may be the wrong choice.

If the position calls for the executive to be a face of the organization, or to make frequent presentations, another test is tasking them to make an impromptu talk. This could be about the industry, or any topic they have interest in. Does this person have the ability to think on their feet, and can they handle situations when there is no time to prepare.

We have time for one more, and I first heard about this tactic many, many years ago.

When you go out to eat, do you put salt, pepper, ketchup, tabasco, or anything else on your food before tasting it? If so, you would not have been hired by Henry Ford, Thomas Edison, or IBM — at least that's how the story has been told over the years.

The reasoning here is that adding things to food before tasting is an indicator that you are a person who relies upon assumptions, not facts. That is an issue when it comes to decision-making.

There is a lot riding on an executive hiring, so it's no wonder some leaders want to know as much about candidates as possible.

It's also no surprise that character issues and habits might be the ultimate determining factor for whether one person or another is hired.

One more thing. This is not exclusively for people seeking executive positions. There are similar tests given for managers, supervisors, and other employee levels.
(Con't.)

So, what is it about you that could lead someone to decide against hiring you for that dream job you want?

Can you think of anything?

That's the Extra Point. Be responsible and make something good happen today. For 93.3 and the Ray Gibson Show, I'm Jerry Roberts.

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