

CORPORATE CULTURE INFLUENCES INTERVIEWING SUCCESS

In working with life science organizations large and small, I've found that despite how various individuals treat the interviewing process, there is a general theme that runs through the applicant's interview day. This theme is based on how much 'selling' a company does during an interview. Here are the three styles I've identified:

1. *The company that oversells*– Oftentimes these are the smaller firms, the startups, who try so very hard to recruit and attract the best people from the larger companies. This kind of organization sends its interviewers in sounding like used car salesmen. During a day like this, the applicant is faced with a series of interviewers who are more concerned with selling around any corporate weakness than they are in learning what factors drive that interviewee's behavior.
2. *The company that doesn't sell enough*– Certain very successful firms, surprisingly some of the biggest names, develop the attitude that everyone wants to work for them, and they find that this isn't always the case. No selling at all is done in the interviewing process. Occasionally, it comes as a shock to these top-tier firms that they can't land every candidate. Even the big boys need to pitch a little bit now and again.
3. *The company that tells it straight but sells when needed*– This is the kind of company that attracts top talent consistently. There is something about candor in the interviewing process that elicits the same response from the applicant, and yet there is a focus on making it a positive day for this important visitor. The company knows that they have to do some selling, but they also know that overdoing it can cause negative results.

To improve as an interviewer, it's important to draw from this last example above and offer candor mixed with the ability to sense what the candidate's 'hot buttons' are in order to bring the right amount of selling to the table.

Despite which of the three your company culture tends to propagate, and whether you are a manager or contributor, it is critical to develop your interviewing ability and skills of discernment to separate out those applicants who really can benefit the company by their presence. Like a centrifuge, good interviewers seem able to spin down through the layers of interviewing gloss and come out with the desired end-product.