

TEXAS TELEPHONE INTERVIEW

By James Collins

In 1980, I was the director of manufacturing engineering and was responsible for all the engineering hiring in that department. The company was rapidly expanding and we were reaching out across the country for talented engineers. Once personnel had determined which resumes were worthwhile pursuing, they forwarded them to my office. Then, I personally examined each of the resumes and boiled them down to a select few who would fit in my organization and meet my needs. If they were located in New England, we would just bring them in to do a face-to-face and do the interview in one day. However, if they came from the western part of the country, we would have them for a week and if there were an interest, we would get them involved with real estate and answer any questions they might have. At that time to bring an engineer up to New Hampshire from the Far West would cost approximately \$5000 for the week, which included airfare, food, car rental and other expenses.

Rather than just invite them and plan to expend the cash, I developed a process where I could do an informal telephone interview to see if they had the necessary technical skills and if they sounded like a promising candidate. The first candidate for the day was a talented manufacturing engineer from the Dallas, Texas area whose name was G.B .Walker. The phone call went as follows:

"Mr. Walker, my name is Jim Collins from Kollsman Instruments and I'm examining your resume which is quite impressive. We manufacture aircraft instruments, fire control systems, Infrared detection systems and VAST program elements for the Navy. Your outstanding resume indicates activity in all of the military product lines that we are interested in, and your interaction with the various military agencies exactly meets our needs."

"Well, thank you kindly, Mr. Collins. Always like it when somebody recognizes quality as you did when you read my resume. Please call me G.B. Tell me a little more about your company and when we can get together. I want to stay working with the military, because I understand their needs and I feel quite comfortable in developing new systems."

"Well, G.B., I'm calling to do a very brief technical interview with you to see if your experience meets our needs and if you would be interested in coming up to New Hampshire to meet with us."

"God dammit! I told those headhunter people that I am a Texan. I was born in Texas. I was educated in Texas. I live in Texas. I plan to die in Texas and I am definitely

going to be buried in Texas. I did not want my resume sent any place outside of Texas and especially not to Yankee land. No offense, Yankee!"

"No offense taken G.B., I've been in Texas many times and I understand your love of that part of the country. I am very glad I had a chance to chat with you and I am sorry I am not able to meet face-to-face and possibly make you an offer. However, I do not want to waste your time and you do not want to waste mine. It's been nice chatting with you. Have a good day. Have a great career. Goodbye."

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