

INTERVIEW INTUITION

558 & 644

By James Collins

As a director at Kollsman Instrument, I had to interview hundreds of applicants for a multiplicity of jobs. In all cases, my interview process allowed the interviewee to present their credentials and their resume and tell of their skills and accomplishments. Then my portion of the interview started with the stipulation that they would not be allowed to ask any questions until all of my questions were done. The interviews were all completed in my personal office and usually took about an hour. This gave the interviewee a chance to witness evidence of my personal interests, such as books, pictures and other paraphernalia that filled my working space.

After the technical and attitudinal sections of the interview were completed, I then interviewed the people looking for their intuitive skills. An intuitive person is a great asset as they take a number of facts and then jump over the class of missing information and come to the correct decision. This skill is worth its weight in gold in an engineering environment. To determine a person's intuitive skill you have to ask them questions to which only you know the answer and they must guess predicated on their feel from your office and your discussions. It was important that this occur approximately 45 minutes or more after the beginning of the interview process. This gave them time to acquire data and opinions.

Some of the questions asked were as follows,

“If I were to put a dollar bill into a vending machine and it delivered a candy bar and \$.50 change, which would I reach for first?”

“A year from now we will have a review of your performance. Well I present the pros first or the cons first?”

“If we take this interview further and we have supper tonight, what will I want to talk about?”

The final question asked was the one most difficult to answer as it had political overtones and could be very sensitive. However, I asked it because it gave me the greatest amount of information about the candidate.

“I'd like you to describe my wife to me.”

Some of the answers were predictable and some were quite funny.

“I wouldn't touch that with a 10 foot pole.” This was the answer given by the politically sensitive candidate. He might be good dealing with a customer but was afraid to make risky decisions.

One woman described my wife as if she was sitting to my right hand side. She had everything down, the big smile, the age, and the attitudes and personality. She had the greatest intuitive skills of anyone I interviewed. We made her an offer, but she found another position.

One man was one of the more memorable interviews as he answered the question. He mulled the question over in his mind and then articulated each of his thoughts and his thinking process.

“Let’s see, you are about 55 and I figured she would be two or three years younger so I will guess her at 52.”

“You are very well educated and I assume she is also, therefore, she would either be a nurse a teacher or possibly a real estate agent.”

“You are very well-dressed and the office is orderly so I feel it she would be a very orderly person and would keep a clean spic and span house.”

“You have a number of pictures of your family around the office so I feel that you are very family oriented. She is the head of the household and is responsible for all aspects of raising the children.”

He continued in this vein for lease three minutes and nailed every aspect of personality of my wife. We also made him an offer but he did not want to relocate.

The most memorable one was a high-intensity electrical engineer who had been doing marketing, sales and design. He scored well on the interview and did an acceptable job on describing my wife. At the end of the questioning portion of the interview I told him, that portion of the interview was completed and I would now be willing to answer any questions he might ask.

“Mr. Collins can you describe my wife for me?”

I then went into a detailed presentation about her physical appearance .her background in the business world and their interest in travel and gardening. I then asked him how well I did.

“You describe them both perfectly.”

“I beg your pardon?”

“Oh I’ve been married twice and you just described both of my wives. Until this very moment I never recognized how similar they were until you put it all together for me. How did you learn all that?”

“I had no way of knowing you were married twice you never mention that in the interview with all the other aspects that I referenced you told me about in our discussion.”

We made him an offer, which he accepted, but he was working in the quality department so I did not have much interaction with him after that event.

THE END