

SELECTION — PART II

By Ron Frame

Last column, we were using a driver for distance and position. Now it is time to get to the short irons — past generalizations and down to specifics; the repositories for information to be exchanged, how exchanged and other aspects of the delicate relationship between the person responsible for getting the work done and the candidate/person through whom he expects to execute that responsibility.

1. THE APPLICATION — The writer favors a simple screening interview application form, simple to complete and containing provisions for basic, important information. The applicant's time is valuable (to him), and the standard, laborious, comprehensive application at this early stage tends to interrupt the smooth flow of the process. Also, it often serves to generate negative, impatient and frustrating feelings in the mind of the candidate. A more complete, official form has its place later in the process.

2. THE SCREENING INTERVIEW — After the initial greetings and settling-in conversation, this interview becomes a series of "go"/"no-go" decisions. From first eyeball impressions to later probing questions, opinions and impressions are being formed and evaluated in the minds of both the interviewer and the candidate. Conscious decisions to terminate the interview or to continue are being made on both sides. Thus, it is important that conditions foster a useful exchange.

The interview should be conducted on a timely basis. Keeping the candidate waiting accomplishes little but anxiety and nervousness (and perhaps anger), reflecting poorly on the Superintendent and his operation. Arrange to conduct the interview in a private setting within the operating area. Eliminate prospects for telephone interruptions and staff drop-ins, and commit at least one half-hour to the process.

Avoid placing yourself behind a desk — you don't need a defense mechanism. And, don't worry that the chairs are uncomfortable or that coffee is unavailable. The idea simply is to initiate a process by which communication exchange can happen, an exchange from which information and impressions can be generated, explored and evaluated. And please remember, this is happening at both ends. The applicant is going through the same process of receiving, exploring and evaluating information.

The interview should be structured, however, to the primary advantage of the interviewer at this particular stage. It should be handled in such a way that the candidate does most of the talking. One can learn little about another person if one speaks much and listens little. Also, questions that lead the candidate to respond with "yes" and "no" responses are largely non-productive and give the candidate an inordinate advantage in conveying what he thinks the interviewer wants to hear. It helps to prime the communication pump with questions like:

"Take a few minutes and tell me about yourself, starting anywhere. It's a good way for us to get to know you."

"What led you to come to us rather than Bennie's Rib and Aerospace down the road?"

"What do you look for in a job? In an employer? What kind of things are important to you?"

"What is there about golf course work that seems attractive to you?"

Once primed, keep the applicant going with comments such as, "I see," "Tell me more about that," "That's interesting" or simply, "Oh." These bridging remarks help maintain the verbal momentum and convey approval and encouragement for the direction of the interviewee's thoughts, often opening up other areas for discussion that are of real value. Done properly, bridging remarks indicate that you are listening.


As the interviewer encourages and the candidate talks, the interviewer is gathering information and impressions, developing opinions, mentally putting a shape and texture to the person. He is getting a feel for how this person will relate to others, to supervision

and to the work. And as he gets to know or feel about the candidate, the Superintendent is making those go/no-go decisions. At any point when no-go's outweigh the go's, a courteous means of terminating the interview is implemented. Thanks and goodbyes are said, and the remaining time can be spent with another candidate.

If the signals to this point are positive, however, continue probing while time allows. Then, bring this initial interview, not to a close, but to its second phase. In the wind-down of this first phase, it is good to begin to give information about the job, the work, the skills, the goods and bads of working at the course, salary and benefit information, provided timing is comfortable.

While this initial interview is referred to as the "screening interview," it is apparent that it can evolve into something more substantial than just screening, for the screening process begins to diminish as the number of "go" signals increases. This is as it should be. Any human relationship begins in a similar manner, and the employment process is most definitely marked by intense and involved human relationships, expensive relationships — relationships critical to the Superintendent's ability to discharge his responsibilities and increase his career achievements.

In the next issue, we will move into the remaining phases of the Selection Process.



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