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## Finding The Right Hire Means Asking The Dirty Questions

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Last week, I stopped by one of my favorite BBQ restaurants. I went through the line, went to an open table, and found myself sitting across the aisle from where the restaurant manager was interviewing job candidates.

Although eavesdropping is not my style, because I didn't know the manager and I am an interview junky, I listened in as best I could (without looking like I was listening) to the manager's technique.

The manager was interviewing a male applicant in his very late teens or early twenties for what sounded like an entry-level position. When the interviewee approached, the manager extended his fist for a "fist bump" which I thought was great. It immediately put the interviewee at ease.

It was clear that this was a second interview once the manager began speaking. The manager started by explaining to the candidate what he liked about the candidate's earlier interview, but then stated in a serious voice:

*"You okay with cleaning [grease] traps?"*

*"Oh yeah, I have cleaned a lot of traps,"* was the reply from the candidate.

The manager replied with even more conviction:

*"I know you have cleaned traps...what I am asking is if you are okay with cleaning them all the time. I am not going to lie...our traps are not a pretty place to be and new hires clean the traps...so, are you okay cleaning the worse traps you ever seen, every day?"*

There were no "wiggle" phrases like "you may have to clean the traps" or "you may have to clean the traps for a period of time." It was clear that if the candidate accepted the job, he was accepting cleaning the traps. (As an aside, it was then I began to question whether my selection of barbeque for lunch was the "healthy choice".)

To the interviewee's credit, he did not hesitate, but said clearly, *"I will clean the traps, no problem."*

Whenever you are interviewing candidates for a position, it is important to reveal information and ask the "dirty questions" about the job that may turn away some qualified applicants.

For example, instead of saying that a position requires "frequent travel", you should state clearly during the interview the amount of travel necessary, for example: *ten to fifteen days a month minimum with multiple leg trips including overseas travel.*

Instead of asking "are you willing to work overtime?", you should state: *This job requires overtime nearly every week...a minimum of five hours and sometimes up to 20 hours per week. Are you willing and can you work that much overtime?*

Instead of saying "you will be responsible for closing the store", you should state: *You will be responsible for closing the store and that means not leaving until the last customer has left and all the closing duties are completed, no matter the time."*

Downplaying the dirty questions only leads to problems later. It may lead to employees claiming they were misled or trying to change the job requirements to meet their expectations instead of yours. By being upfront and to the point, you eliminate those possibilities and you find out who really is willing to do the job you want done.

The important point is to not hire anyone who hesitates about doing the "dirty" part of the job. Believing that an applicant turned hire will eventually love the things most people hate about the position is possible, but not probable.

As for the BBQ candidate, he got the job...and I got the heartburn.

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