

Being Short - the Recruitment Myth

Contributed by Administrator
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Further to this research, Resourcing Matters were asked to participate in a BBC3 television programme to investigate whether a short applicant (Trevor who is 4'10") would be as successful at interview as a taller candidate. Janet Cowell, spent a morning with Trevor at the BBC talking through his career history and finding out about his experiences of being interviewed. Trevor had an excellent academic base with a 2:1 in Design but had drifted into temporary manual work - not achieving his ambition of working in animation.

Trevor admitted that his perception was that interviewers only saw that he was a short man and did not take into consideration his skills and abilities. Trevor's mental frame precluded him from performing well at interview as he was too busy believing that he did not stand a chance of getting the job - he believed the interviewer saw him as short - and therefore not suitable for the role.

This form of negative framing is very common. A candidate who is ideal for a role will often use internal dialogue to talk themselves out of being selected. In Trevor's case it was about being short but in others it could be about lack of work experience; having an accent - either regional or overseas; or having ginger hair which is the theme of the next programme in this series.

This only goes to prove the importance to both employers and candidates of recruiting by competencies. If it is clear to a candidate that s/he is being assessed on their skills for the job it makes the process more open and clear to all. In this way, if a candidate is unsuccessful measurable information can be given as feedback regarding how s/he matched the competencies - and what they can do differently in the future to be successful.

Competency Based Interviewing is a structured process and is designed so that all candidates understand what competencies they are being assessed against at interview. We recommend that a Candidate Support Pack is sent out to every candidate to give them definitions of each of the competencies required for the role and tips on how to prepare. It is clear that the process is consistent, fair and transparent.

For interviewers, we offer a comprehensive Competency Based Interview skills training programme designed to ensure that accurate observations of behaviour are made in line with the competencies required for the job. Our course is highly interactive with the opportunity to learn first hand how to observe accurately and take notes that support decisions. If you are interested in knowing more about our course, please contact Lindsay Hanson.

The career review with Trevor must have worked, as the last message Resourcing Matters received was that he had taken the feedback on board and had secured an interview with two film animators. We wish him every success.