

In This Issue: Three Ways to Spot a Lie in the Interview

Test for Success
Tools, Tips, & Techniques for Avoiding
Hiring Mistakes and Developing People
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Three Ways to Spot a Lie in the Interview
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Can you tell the difference between an applicant who is embellishing his work experience and on who is flat-out lying?

There is a big difference between the two, in both the applicant's intent (in the first case, simply to make a good impression and in the second case, to conceal or deceive) and in the possible consequences (in the first case, probably no real harm done, but in the second case you may end up hiring someone with criminal or malicious tendencies.)

Every year employee theft costs companies millions of dollars. And even one lawsuit that is the result of employee misbehavior can cost thousands of dollars, many lost hours of productivity, and bad publicity. And all it takes is one bad apple.

I have some good news and some bad news about spotting a lie in the interview. First the bad news: there is no 100% accurate way to tell if a person is lying. But the good news is that there are signs to be aware of that can raise a red flag about the truthfulness of your applicant's answers.

#1. Not getting direct answers – Does the applicant respond to questions that require a specific answer with generalities? For example, if you ask, “I see from your resume you have a Bachelor's degree. Where did you go to school for it?” And the answer is, “Oh, it

was a small college in the Midwest. You probably never heard of it. It was a good school though.” Probe until you get an answer. Companies that do background checks say that educational references on resumes are fudged 40%-60% of the time, to some degree (no pun intended) or other.

#2. Inappropriate or excessive body language – Does the applicant squirm when you asked the tough questions? Many applicants are nervous about the interview and may squirm to some degree throughout the interview. What you want to be on the alert for is squirming in response to questions that ask directly about specifics regarding the applicant’s education, experience and qualifications. This may be because the applicant knows that he or she is lying and is uncomfortable about doing it.

#3. Inconsistent answers – Does the applicant say one thing and then later on in the interview, say something that is inconsistent with his or her previous answer? For example, if you ask, “What did you like about working for ABC Company (his last employer)?” and the response is, “I liked the people there. They were all great.” Then, later on in the interview, you ask about former bosses: what he liked and what he didn’t like. After responding with favorable comments about some of his past bosses, he says, “The exception was the last gut I worked for. He was always throwing his weight around. It really got on my nerves, In fact, he was the reason I quit.” Didn’t he say previously that the thing he liked was the people and that, “...they were all great”? Was this an honest memory error or did something he was trying to hide just slip out?

Reactions like the ones above indicate areas that need to be probed with further questions and, if possible, verified through background and reference checks, the Performance Profile, and other objective means.

The good news is that there aren’t many bad apples out there. The bad news is that they do exist and some of them will apply for jobs with your company. Applying the above strategies can help you spot, and deal with, at least some of them.

Remember, People ARE your most important asset!

To Hire the Best, Test!

To Reveal Management Potential, Test!

To Diagnose Problem Behavior, Test!

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