

THE EFFECTIVE INTERVIEWER

Laurence Lewis talks about the importance of getting it right the first time.



Recruiting is a vital part of the Captain and heads of departments job, and much is at stake. As the Caribbean season is approaching many will be looking at hiring new crew members.

Which employer has never been guilty of talking too much during the interview instead of asking the relevant, incisive questions which will ensure the best candidate is hired? Few, I'm sure! Yet who can afford to get it wrong when everybody is part of the food chain? The Captain assesses his/her Chief Stewardess, Chief Engineer and Chief Officer on how well they hire and the Captain is himself assessed by the owner on how well he chooses the crew. Your crew agency (by the way, using more than two, three maximum, is counterproductive for you the client) will of course do the groundwork and will provide you with a shortlist of one, or a few candidates if you wish, for you to interview. It's then over to you. Which questions should you ask? What shall you look for?

On trend

As a recruiter I read many blogs, papers and books on trends in interviewing techniques and, last June, I came upon the interview which Laszlo Bock, Senior Vice President of People Operations at Google, gave to the New York Times in which he revealed that the famous Google brainteasers were "a complete waste of time". They do not predict anything. They serve primarily to make the interviewer feel smart."

For information, here's one such Google brainteaser: "You're the captain of a pirate ship and your crew gets to vote on how the gold is divided up. If fewer than half of the pirates agree with you, you die. How do you recommend apportioning the gold in such a way that you get a good share of the booty, but still survive?" From a pirate ship and its gold to a charter yacht with its tips...could have been an interesting question...

But no, with insight, these types of brainteasers are not conclusive in detecting people's ability to creatively solve problems. What types of questions should you ask? What do you need to achieve when interviewing a candidate? An insightful paper was published

on forbes.com by George Bradt, the MD of Prime Genesis. Basically, it boils down to three questions, and three questions only: "Can you do the job? Will you love the job? Can we tolerate working with you?" It's so obvious, so simple and yet, it's a revelation. As the interviewer you might not ask these direct questions as is. The point is, you need to formulate questions which will address these issues as they are all encompassing.

Can you do the job? is obviously about skills, abilities to do the job, to learn and develop. It is therefore quite straightforward to find pertinent questions to ask depending on which role you are looking to fill.

Will you love the job? is about motivation and what makes the crew tick. Replacing crew can be difficult and initially, detrimental to the yacht. It is in everybody's interest to have crew who are fully engaged in their job. As an employer, give a realistic job description, be honest about what the job entails and ask pertinent questions about what really motivates the candidate, what he likes best in his current or last job, and, what he would want to be doing in the next job...

Can we tolerate working with you? is about cultural fit and the impact the crew members you recruit will have on the existing team. It is about communication skills, personal values and behaviour. On yachts where one works together 24/7, this point is essential. Questions will not be about the job itself, but about who the person really is, what they like to do as a hobby and how they spend their free time, what they are proud of, etc.

Whatever questions you eventually end up asking, whichever way you formulate them, they need to address these three points, that's all there is to it. As your recruitment agency, YPI CREW will provide you with the best candidates available at any given time and we are here to assist throughout the process in the most efficient way we can, giving the best possible value for money as always.

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