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Navigate the Compliance Universe

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Women in leadership? Trust me, "She's not ready"

By Solomon Carter

Over the years, I have had the pleasure to sit on interview panels for myriad roles both inside and outside the leadership space. I sit for my own organizations and as an external guest panelist. Particularly with new remote video capabilities—unlike before, where everything was in person—technology has allowed me to meaningfully participate in interview panels across the nation. In some, I am a consultant for the purposes of offering an interview panel's evaluation; in others, I am there to provide an unbiased and uninfluenceable perspective on a candidate's interview performance.

I participate on panels pertaining to a countless list of disciplines—some of which I may only possess general knowledge—but it doesn't matter. Why? Because the characteristics to thrive in leadership are the same everywhere, from a finance vice president or operations manager to a compliance chief or a director of widgets in a factory. Judgement, courage, communication, accountability, and integrity look the same everywhere if you know what to look for. "If these three things happened, would you report your boss and why?" are salient questions that transcend industry.

Why have a guest panelist?

Guest panelists can be very important because, often, workplace dynamics can hinder the work a panel tries to do. For example, if an interviewer is the boss of four other panelists, it will not be a diverse panel. Even if they are a rainbow coalition of every demographic known to man and have an eye for diversity, equity, and inclusion, the panel will be unduly influenced because if they all report to one person on the panel, they will ultimately be more inclined to agree with what they say.

This circles back to why having an outside set of eyes on your interview panels is good. It's also a great learning opportunity for your firm to see how someone not from your business culture uses their critical thinking skills and analysis to come to conclusions and advance their arguments.

Additionally, it's refreshing to have a panelist who doesn't particularly care "who is who" on the panel and doesn't have any allegiances other than what they objectively observed in the interview. A guest panelist probably won't have an opinion on one person or the other because they don't work there. They don't have to deal with management downstream like the rest of the panel, worry about a business request being slowed down, or other overt or microaggressions that may surface if they don't agree with a key influencer.

If you're not using external panelists for your interviews, you might be missing out on some really good intel that could propel your program higher with better interview panel experiences, more astute panelists, more quality selections, and a better atmosphere of fairness—all of which enhance performance and insulates you

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