

Know Your Company's 30-Second Story

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As the job climate continues to change, quality candidates are becoming more and more difficult to find. According to the Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics, the national unemployment rate for high school graduates currently stands at 4.6 percent, but for people who have four-year degrees, the rate is significantly lower, 2.2 percent. These days, applicants have many more opportunities from which to choose, and that's why companies just like you must actively recruit candidates and show them that you are the employer of choice. More importantly, you need to be able to communicate this throughout the entire interview process.

How you tell it

In order to accomplish this, everybody involved in your company's interview process must be able to sell the company through the use of a 30-second story, one which differentiates the company, stresses its benefits, and ensures that its street reputation is a good one. In addition, everybody's story should be exactly the same, with why they stay at the company being the possible exception. (Hopefully, your company provides many reasons why employees stay, and each employee may have a different one.) The message being conveyed needs to be consistent, and any and all employees that are involved in the process should know what it is and be able to articulate it.

And if you happen to be utilizing the services of a recruiter in order to fill the position, **they** need to know what the 30-second story is, as well. This is extremely important, because what you're actually doing is making a **sales presentation** to the candidate. In effect, you're selling not only the opportunity, but the company to them. You're selling the notion that your company is the very best option they could choose and that the opportunity you have for them is the best one available.

Delivering a clear, concise, and consistent message will allow you to effectively sell both your company and the opportunity. The key to delivering that message is **communication**. You must make sure that every single person participating in the process has all of the information they need, and that information includes the details of the job description, in addition to the 30-second story. Everybody has to be on the same page. There can't be any lapses; those will compromise the interview process, potentially to the point where top-notch candidates will choose other opportunities.

How you sell it

Making sure everybody is on the same page and delivering a consistent message is the first step. The second step is ensuring that you're selling in the correct fashion. Below are some key points to keep in mind throughout the process.

- **You're not just selling to the candidate.** You may be talking with just the candidate, but you're also selling yourself to their spouse, to their friends, and to their family. There are a lot of people you have to convince during this process.
- **Sell your opportunity as a piece of a larger opportunity.** When you're selling, make sure to let the candidate know how much potential the position has for growth. Don't ask them where they'd like to be in a few years, **but show them where they could be and what options will be available.**
- **Assume your competition is always on the ball.** As mentioned previously, star candidates have multiple options these days, and more than likely, one of them is being offered by a competitor. If

you truly want to attract the high-level achievers, you must be willing to do and offer everything your competition is willing to do and offer—and then some.

- **Using a recruiter doesn't relieve you of the responsibility of promoting your company.** This is perhaps the most important point. Selling and promoting your company should be not only part of the interview process, but also part of the company's culture.

In the final analysis, selling your company and its opportunities in a strategic and consistent fashion will dramatically increase your chances of landing star candidates, regardless of where they come from. Take the time to review your interview process and to make sure that everybody involved in that process knows how to sell and knows what to sell. It could mean the difference between attracting top talent and letting the big ones get away.