

Title:

You Show me yours and I'll Show you Mine

Word Count:

916

Summary:

Employers need good employees as much as the reverse holds true. Therefore, a partnership should exist between the two.

Keywords:

drug testing, psychological testing, drug abuse, human resources, new employees, difficulty, mercurial behavior, verbal abuse, honesty, dishonesty, misrepresentation

Article Body:

As much as employers complain of the difficulty finding good employees, few have embraced a formula that assures success. The greater the difficulty finding good employees in your industry, or certain positions within that industry, the greater the need to view the relationship as a partnership. With these employees observe the Golden Rule, treat them as you expect to be treated. If you extend this principle to compensation, weighing what you'd hope to receive in their positions at the expense of some of your profits, you'll see the problem disappear.

But aren't employees with skill sets more common entitled to their share of the Golden Rule, partially setting issues of compensation aside. After all, the complaint that good employees are scarce extends throughout the economy. Shouldn't the relationship between employer and employee be similar to that of customer and supplier? It's an even exchange, work for pay. Do we unthinkingly accept that the employer has something people want, jobs, therefore their position is superior. If this is truly the way things are, then employers should stop complaining about difficulty finding good employees. It would logically follow from this that there is an overabundance of good employees. But employers need good employees as much as people need jobs. So let's stop the fiction that they're practically performing an act of charity when they make a hire.

But this reality of mutual need is blurred before you even submit a resume'. Ads frequently state, drug test required. There are public policy reasons for some of this, depending on the industry, and the Government has viewed this as a

part of its war on drugs for some time. However, often the employer will force you to take a drug screen as a condition of employment without justification. If nothing in your past indicates drug use or abuse, drug screens should be reserved for behaviors on the job that indicate a potential problem. But what of the training costs you ask. We don't want to devote those resources to someone only to find out months later he or she is a drug abuser. Ok. I'll accept that without argument..

But you, the employee, has probably left a job to accept this new position. In keeping with my thesis that the relationship is mutually imperative to each party, wouldn't it be nice if you knew before leaving your current job that the boss wouldn't be subject to fits of erratic outbursts. The results of the test determine whether or not the employer wants you on the team, wouldn't a clean sample provided by the boss make an employment offer more attractive? You could put your mind at ease over mercurial behavior that would make your work life miserable. Besides, a boss with psychological problems can create more havoc in your life than the reverse.

This thought came to me while I was working for a family who were all subject to terrible mood swings. Screaming and yelling would be followed by an arm around the shoulder in the blink of an eye. One day I received a list of the psychotropic medications prescribed to the patients in the facility. The person in the office next to mine came to see what had caused my outburst of laughter. After dismissing it as nothing, I felt the satisfaction you gain when a mystery dissolves. At the bottom of the list were the names of the owners, obviously receiving their prescriptions from the doctor in residence, who was of course in their employ. The mood altering drugs prescribed to them, many anti-anxiety, were far above what any of the other patients received, and this was a facility with a large psychiatric population. After consulting the PDR, I wondered how they maintained verticality during the day. Evidently they had developed a tolerance for those pills, but for little else. Is this situation out of the ordinary? Probably. But I'd like to see some data indicating employees are statistically more prone to drug abuse than their managers before accepting the current state of affairs as reasonable.

Psychological testing, popular with some employers, should be mutual as well. I've known my share of managers who insisted you share their roller coaster of emotions, without presenting a ticket during the interview.

Finally, this insistence that we negate the strict mutuality of the employer-employee relationship, illustrates something that's always puzzled me while reading HR advice in the trades. It is often stressed that a potential employee should be scrupulously honest while interviewing for a position. Sounds

reasonable. But if they're advising employers to do the same, I've missed those articles. How often have you found the organization to be as advertised after a short while on the job? I once had 2 people, an HR Manager and Assistant Administrator, tell me on my first day, after leaving a position I'd be in a considerable number of years, that it was their way or the highway. During the interviewing process, they were falling all over themselves to convince me to join the ranks. It was obvious within my first week that much of their presentation had been a lie. I'm sure had I been provided with psychological profiles or urine samples of the duo beforehand, I would have declined the offer. But of course, they had a right to see mine, while I only had the right to hope for the best.