

Red Flags When Interviewing for Your Staff Team

In my role at LifeWay, there are more than 500 employees in the division I am responsible to lead. As we have been looking to bring passionate people to the team who are deeply committed to our mission of serving churches in their mission of making disciples, I have been involved in a lot of interviews.

If you are a leader, you know that having the right players on the team is absolutely essential in fulfilling the mission the Lord has given your ministry. Thus, the recruiting and interviewing process is very important. In looking back at all the interviews I have been a part of, here are five red flags that give me great caution in taking a next step with a potential team member.

1 – No questions

If someone asks no questions, it gives me the impression that they are passive, that they are not the type to take initiative, and that they don't possess a holy curiosity that is going to nudge them to learn, explore, and look for more effective ways to serve. It also gives the impression that they are a bit cold, unable to have a conversation, to engage, to lead people somewhere.

2 – Bad questions

I like questions because I learn more about a candidate by the questions they ask. And bad questions are very revealing about a person's work ethic, passions, goals, and priorities. I won't reveal all the bad questions because I still have more interviews to lead, but here are a few:

The question: How many hours do I need to work?

What I think: This may be someone who wants to punch a clock. I want people driven by a calling, not by a clock.

The question: What will my title be?

What I think: This may be someone who is more concerned about personal platform than the mission the Lord has given us.

3 – Excuses

Because the past is often a great indicator of the future, I am going to ask questions about past performance, faithfulness, and impact. I am not looking for perfection but a track record. Excuses are a major red flag because it shows the person is unable to own his/her responsibilities fully. I would much rather a person say, "Here is where I blew it and the lessons I learned."

4 – Negative comments about current leaders

The person who bashes his/her current leaders or team members will be the same person who brings that toxic attitude into our culture. No thank you.

5 – Over-negotiation

When someone over-negotiates salary, benefits, or some other aspect of the role, I quickly get turned off. I think either (a) the person is not overly excited about the role as it is presented or (b) the person has an inflated view of her/himself and this will never end. I may be oversensitive to over-negotiation, but I tend to be the one who walks away.

Red flags are great. They prevent you from continuing down a path that won't be fruitful and best for the team and ministry for which you are responsible. Pay attention to them.

Read more from Eric [here](#).