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Hiring

Let’s talk about the hiring process. If you ever looked at my résumé, you would notice that I have been through the hiring process many times myself. I have also had to hire quite a few people for various jobs, from carpenters and electricians to project managers and maintenance managers. Because of all the requirements, laws and policies in place these days, especially in the public sector, it is not an easy process. It has almost gotten to the point where you can hire the only person left whom you cannot disqualify.

[Istructor's sidebar: Ask me about my adventures in hiring at Southeast. I'm sure you've all heard the old saying, "I'm from the government, and I'm here to help." Well, a modified saying should send a chill up your spine, "I'm from HR and I'm here to help."]

One might think that an employer (at least one in the private sector) should be able to hire whomever s/he wishes. However in order not to discriminate against a variety of population groups, and/or to not hurt the feelings of others, there are very specific interview rules that one must use. I have attached a copy of the 11 pages of questions you may not ask during an interview for potential employees at Southeast. Click here for InterviewQuestions.pdf. Read through this document and see if you can understand the legal basis for the restriction.

Employment

A lot of companies have a probationary policy where employees are at-risk for a specified period of time, usually three to six months. During that time they are evaluated to see if they should be kept as permanent employees. Whether you are supervising a "probie" or are one yourself, you need to know what the parameters are to be considered acceptable. This also applies to your Evaluation or Assessment that you may get periodically. If you want to be deemed as doing a good job, wouldn't it be good to know what "good" is? As Yogi Berra said, "If you don't know where you are going, chances are you won't get there."

Policies

Let's talk about Discipline. I have been in positions where I have had to discipline quite a few employees, and even terminated a few. Not one of those terminations has been pleasant. There is an old saying that you don't fire people, they fire themselves. I agree with this in principle, as long as there is a progressive discipline policy in place. This (except in the cases of major policy violations, like safety, drugs, etc.) is usually a "three strikes, you're out" policy. The first violation (poor work, minor violation, etc.) is a verbal warning. Of course you always document in writing any verbal warnings, so it is almost a misnomer. The second violation warrants a written warning, and the third is termination. This can only be effective if the employee is aware, and reminded of the
subsequent consequences of his/her actions. Thus the employee really does fire himself/herself. The only confusion can lie in the fact that the employee does not understand how his/her actions are a violation. That is where you come in, as a supervisor.

Each company has its own policies as they apply to various employment issues. Make sure you are aware of them, not only as a supervisor who may have to enforce them, but also as an employee who is affected by them.

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