Anonymous Peer Reviews and the Recruiting Process

The trend of writing anonymous company reviews on sites like Glassdoor® has been a hot topic of debate in the past few years. For better or worse, other sites continue to join this movement to include anonymous peer reviews, endorsements or co-worker performance ratings and could impact a person’s career with or without their knowledge. That means that it’s possible for recruiters or managers to make a hiring decision, for or against, by relying on a completely anonymous peer review. While this can certainly seem like an enticing source to rely on initially, it bears taking a step back to think about whether this is a true representation of an individual’s knowledge, skills and abilities.

Relying on Anonymous Ratings

Today, social media and mobile technology provide amazing resources that companies can use to find information about a candidate’s skills, abilities and culture fit. It’s common for people to use social media to tell their personal and professional stories. A FastCompany.com article indicates profiles are being created for individuals using information from sites like LinkedIn® and Twitter® without their permission and reviewers have the ability to provide anonymous comments about the individual1. It is important, however, to not become overly reliant on information gathered from online third-party sites to assess candidates. Recruiters need to broaden their pool of potential resources to understand a candidate’s relevant background and potential fit for an organization.

According to a recent Jobvite® survey, the overwhelming majority (87%) of recruiters find LinkedIn most effective when vetting candidates during the hiring process — especially those under 45 (90%)². Giving the same emphasis to anonymous reviews significantly opens up the potential to hire someone based on an opinion, not necessarily facts. How does a recruiter validate the truth behind what is said, good or bad? A company could be missing the opportunity to engage great talent or end up with a bad hire if they solely rely on anonymous peer reviews.

Anonymous Ratings Can Be Helpful

Considering anonymous ratings provided in the social world can be beneficial in many situations. People who travel frequently may use information from sites like TripAdvisor® that influence their hotel choices. That information most certainly involves looking at pictures of hotel rooms and features. Or, when considering a large product for purchase one can learn a great deal from others who have already made the purchase and chose to post comments or ratings on the product. It’s great to be able to use others’ experiences and knowledge to make this decision.

However, when it comes to assessing a candidate it takes more than just others’ anonymous observations about an individual. Even though almost half (41%) of recruiters believe that seeing a picture of a candidate before meeting them influences their first impression, it’s crucial for recruiters and hiring managers alike to make educated decisions about candidates because it will surely impact the company hiring that candidate on a number of levels. Leveraging more than just one social media resource can help provide a more holistic picture about someone’s knowledge, skills and abilities. Making a hiring decision solely based off of anonymous peer review may not be a best practice in today’s social media dominated world.

Best Practices in Recruiting

Recommendations to evaluate candidates in a comprehensive way include:

1. Carefully incorporate research from professional and social networking sites, as well as professional associations, industry groups, targeted companies and deep web searching.

2. Leverage information from varied sources, rather than relying on only one or two, to gain a more complete understanding of a candidate’s background. Obtaining a broad understanding of a candidate’s experience is essential to aligning top talent with positions across organizations.

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3. Use anonymous reviews, but don’t rely on them to be 100% accurate. It’s entirely possible that a great candidate will have both glowing reviews and negative reviews. Likewise, a bad candidate may also have great reviews along with negative reviews. Considering that people have numerous interactions with managers and coworkers throughout their career, those interactions and therefore the anonymous reviews may vary greatly from one person to the next.

4. Use the information provided by the candidate during the interviewing process. That may sound like a basic premise, but with so much information posted on both social and professional networking sites currently, it can unfortunately and sometimes unfairly bleed into hiring decisions.

Incorporating anonymous peer reviews into the hiring process is probably a trend that will continue to develop. Use caution, as basing hiring decisions from this type of resource leverages a non-verifiable, not candidate generated source to make a decision that will impact an organization.

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Sources:
1. www.FastCompany.com