**VETTING THE COMPANY**

I have a client who told me that she had interviewed with one of the very sexy startups in town about six months earlier. She got to the finals and lost. So I asked why she wanted to work at that startup. It had a horrid reputation for hiring people and quickly chewing them up. My client acknowledged that the candidate who was hired was fired six weeks later. When they approached my client about the position after the firing, my client said, “No thanks!”

Before approaching a company about a job, do your due diligence:

* Research the company on sites like Glassdoor.com.
* Check LinkedIn for recommendations. Go to the hiring manager’s profile and check his or her recommendations section:
* Have they given recommendations to their employees?
* Have their employees recommended their manager?
* Check other profiles within the organization to determine if there is a culture of giving recommendations on LinkedIn. If that is not in the company’s culture, it’s a bad sign. You find this culture more commonly, by the way, in newer and smaller organizations than in big multinational companies.
* Connect with recruiters or HR professionals at the target company on LinkedIn. This will give you visibility to the organization needed.
* Target former employees who have personal relationships with people you know. Ask around among your connections to see if anyone has a personal relationship with your target employee and would be comfortable giving an introduction.

Former employees are incredibly valuable and often will give you an honest evaluation of what it is to work at a company.

One of my clients, Steven, was interviewing for a high-level HR position with a technology company that had just gone public. Steven reached out to three former employees and asked them why they left. All three responded with the same answer — the toxic work environment. Steven had the interview and the tech company made an offer. Steven turned them down. We later found out the company had many internal issues and there was high turnover.

Find out what current and former employees think of the hiring manager. Current employees who work for the hiring manager might be evasive or not truthful. Be aware of their body language. Former employees will likely be more forthcoming with the truth.

**PREPARE FOR THE INTERVIEW**

The interview is like the first date. And on the first date, it’s not all about whether the other person likes you. What do you like or not like about the company? Are you ready with your elevator speech about what you need?

This interview isn't just about whether you get the job. It is about whether you want the job. A small business owner told me that she always starts interviews with “Do you have any questions about the position?” If the candidate says no, then the interview is pretty much over. She wants to hire people who are looking for her company, not just “a job.”

Come into any interview with at least 10 questions. Print them out and keep them in front of you. Take notes and write the interviewer’s answers on the paper. This gives you time to think about where to take the conversation next!

Controlled pauses like these give you a chance to think about the flow of the conversation. Another

example of a controlled pause is to restate the question you were just asked. “Let me make sure I understand your question. You asked .... ”

Among your questions should be:

* What is the management style of the hiring manager?
* What is the team environment like?
* What is the reward structure?
* How structured is the work environment?
* How much freedom is allowed to do the job the way you want to do it?

You will likely interview with peers of the hiring manager, upper-level managers and peers of the position you are pursuing. Use the first two questions with each. Beware that your future peers may be deceptive. Also, look for very different answers coming from different levels of management. My last manager was amazing at managing up and lousy at managing down. His management team had a very different opinion of him than the people he managed. Look for discrepancies. When you interview with the hiring manager, ask the following questions:

* Describe your management style.
* Give me three words that describe you at work.
* What do you like best about being a manager?

Most hiring managers are not very good at interviewing. Most have never been trained on interviewing skills. When you take this approach, they often like it. If the hiring manager balks at any of these questions, you might want to dig deeper.

Sometimes you will have to dig and read body language to get an accurate gauge on the situation. Given the information you have received from current and former employees, you should be able to play detective.

Pay attention to your gut instincts. If it does not feel right, it is probably not a good fit. Have you ever not followed your instincts and regretted it? It all comes down to you taking responsibility for the process.

***ACTION STEPS:***

* Check out the company before the interview. Look on sites like Glassdoor.com and talk to people who work for the company and former employees to learn about the culture.
* Look at the company’s employee’s LinkedIn pages to see if they give and receive recommendations. This could be a sign of the company’s level of supportiveness.
* Prepare a list of at least 10 questions you want answered before you decide to take the job.

For additional resources, check out:

Repurpose Your Career Resource Center <https://careerpivot.com/RYC-Resources/>