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Dear All,

This month, we should have talked about how our clients have lived executive/direct search experience with us. We will have to postpone it to next month. So I have decided to talk about some candidates who may sometimes tend to distort the truth when it comes to talk about their experience, knowledge and skills...salary package.

How can I get to know whether it is true or not true?

Next month, we will talk about how our clients have lived executive/direct search experience with us and how they have benefited from our services.

Best Regards,

Zoran Marinkovic
Managing Partner – Blue Marin Management Consultancies

How can I Get to Know Whether It Is True or Not?

First of all, it is important to be aware of the **result of studies which show that we may be lied from 10 times to 200 times per day!** even though many of those are white lies. Another study shows that **strangers lied three times more within the first 10 minutes** of meeting each other.

It clearly indicates the probability of being lied during an interview and vice-versa interviewers might not tell the truth as well. It is such a paradox because we are mostly mainly against lies so we cannot believe how prevalent lying is. But if you look more closely, the plot actually thickens. We lie more to strangers than we lie to coworkers. Extroverts lie more than introverts. Men lie eight times more about themselves than they do to other people.

Women lie more to protect other people. If you are an average married couple, you are going to lie to your spouse in one out of every 10 interactions. Now you may think that is bad. If you are unmarried, that number drops to three.

However, we need to accept the following core proposition: lying is a cooperative act. Its power emerges when someone else agrees to believe the lie.

So how can you be a lie spotter? Once again, we have to refer to Science. Trained lie spotters get to the truth 90 percent of the time while others are only 54 percent accurate. Why is it so easy to learn? There are good liars and there are bad liars. There are no real original liars. Because we all make the same mistakes, because we all use the same techniques, we could figure out two main patterns of deception. The first common telltale sign is the non-contracted denial. Studies show that people who are over-determined in their denial will resort to formal rather than informal language. There is the distancing language as liars will unconsciously distance themselves from their subject using language as their tool. In addition, qualifying language is another sign such as “well, to tell you the truth...”, “in all candor” or simply repeating entirely the question they were asked or going too much into details.

The second common telltale sign is of course body language. Let us use Science once again to get rid of our unconscious assumptions. While we think that liars fidget all the time, they are known to freeze the upper bodies when they are lying. Second instance, while we think that liars will not look at you in the eyes, they look in the eyes too much to compensate for that myth. Thirdly, we think warmth and smiles convey honesty, sincerity, a trained lie spotter can spot a fake smile a mile away. You can consciously contract the muscles in your cheeks but the real smile is in the eyes, in the crow's feet of the eyes to be accurate which cannot be consciously contracted.

Having said that, if we look now at the hot spots especially during a conversation, an interview for instance, can you start to find the hot spots to see the discrepancies between someone's words and someone's actions? Even though it seems obvious, but when you're having a conversation with someone you suspect of deception, attitude is by far the most overlooked but telling of indicators.

An honest person, to be cooperative and shows they are on your side, they are going to be enthusiastic and willing and helpful to getting you to the truth, to be willing to brainstorm, name suspects, and provide details. They are going to be infuriated if they sense they are wrongly accused throughout the entire course of the interview, not just in flashes.

If you have exactly the same conversation with someone deceptive, they may be withdrawn, look down, lower their voice, pause and be kind of herky-jerky. Ask a deceptive person to tell their story, they will pepper it with way too much detail in all kinds of irrelevant places and they will tell their story in strict chronological order. A trained interrogator will – in very subtle ways over the course of several hours – ask that person to tell that story backwards, and then they will watch them squirm, and track which questions produce the highest volume of deceptive tells. They do this because we all do the same thing; we rehearse our words, but we rarely rehearse our gestures.

We might say “yes” but we shake our heads “no”. When we tell very convincing stories, we slightly shrug our shoulders. We commit terrible crimes and we smile at the delight in getting away with it without being punished.

Furthermore, Science has surfaced many more indicators. We know liars will shift their blink rate, point their feet towards an exit, they will take barrier objects and put them between themselves and the person that is interviewing them, they will alter their vocal tone, often making their vocal tone much lower. However, these behaviors are just behaviors so they are not proof of deception but just red flags. As a matter of fact, we are human beings so we make deceptive flailing gestures all over the place all day long. They do not mean anything in and of themselves but when you see clusters of them, that is your signal. You must look, listen, probe, ask some hard questions, get out of that very comfortable mode of knowing, walk into curiosity mode, ask more questions, have a little dignity, treat the person you are talking to with rapport. Be cautious; do not try to pummel their subjects into submission, don't be too aggressive, it doesn't work.

Eventually, when you combine the science of recognising deception with the art of looking, listening, you exempt yourself from collaborating in a lie. You start up that path of being just a little bit more explicit, because you signal to everyone around you.

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