Candidate Materials: Reviewing and Interpreting Them

Suggestions for Reviewing Candidate Materials

The materials contained herein are prepared to provide you with information concerning the candidates we are recommending you consider. The materials we and the candidates prepare are designed to provide you with information first and foremost concerning the candidate's ability to do the job. You can then review the materials and determine which candidates you wish to interview.

As you can see, what we have for each candidate is often fairly extensive. When you review the materials, we recommend you begin with:

- The Candidate's Resume. This document provides a brief history of the candidate's employment and possibly some personal information.

- The Candidate's Cover Letter and Introduction. These have been prepared by the candidate and offer insight into what the individual feels is important and his/her ability to communicate.

- The References. These materials provide information concerning what people who know the candidate think about the individual. It is important to note that people are often reluctant to say anything negative about a candidate so even though we push fairly hard to get them to identify weaknesses, the weaknesses and negatives are often limited. Further, if a candidate's references are poor or if we see significant red flags, we generally do not present that individual. We also attempt to reach references who know the candidate but were not provided.

The other materials for each candidate are important as well but probably do not need the same level of attention. They are:

- The Internet / Newspaper Archives Materials. These materials provide information concerning the issues the candidate has dealt with and what he/she has done well and not so well. We do not recommend that you read these materials word for word but rather you scan them and carefully read the sections you feel are the most important. Please also see the following pages for comments concerning the Internet's limitations.

- The Background Checks. For the most part, the Candidates we present tend to have very few if any items of note on their records.

It is important to understand what is provided in the background checks and what it not. First, National Criminal Information Center (NCIC) is the gold standard for reviewing someone's criminal past. Its use, however, is limited to law enforcement agencies for specific purposes. It is not something we have access to. Our nationwide criminal checks are run through a database assembled from data from a wide range of state and local agencies and is not as complete as the NCIC database. Nonetheless, we have confidence in it and have used it successfully for years. Further, we supplement it with checks of the databases of the county and state of residence.

You also need to be aware the criminal databases we use contain convictions and not allegations, complaints, or arrests (unless these lead to a conviction). We also do not check records in family court. The reason is cases are often emotional and parties are not always truthful in attempting to achieve their desired goal. If the allegations are serious and substantiated, they are generally found in the criminal records or covered in the newspaper, at least for people with significant positions in the public sector. Further, a substantial body of law exists concerning what can and cannot be considered in government employment. For example, it is illegal to use a bankruptcy as the basis for not considering a candidate.

Overall, we try to focus on someone's ability to perform the duties of their job. We do not delve into their personal lives which can be murky. It should also be noted that a large body of law exists concerning what can and cannot be considered and it varies from state to state. We try to stay safely on the right side of the line, both for our own sake and that of our clients.

The other thing to consider is we do not want you to be surprised. Even if you cannot legally use a matter in your decision making, if it has been reported, we want you to hear about it from us rather than a third party. That way we can present you with a fair and unbiased analysis of the situation and you can determine what weight is appropriate to give the matter in your decision making.

Interpreting the Internet

When considering material gathered from the Internet, it is important to read carefully and to understand the Internet's limitations.

In part of each candidate's materials is what CB&A's staff gleaned from the Internet and from newspaper archives concerning the semi-finalists. While we would like to think everything published is accurate, we know it is not. For example:

1) Some news sources have biases concerning particular individuals or write with incomplete information. Further, reporters have different capabilities and some do not understand the matters they are reporting on. Hence the story may not be accurate.

2) Occasionally, governments purposely provide information to the media that is not accurate or the full story, particularly when someone is leaving their employment.

3) Some elected officials occasionally make allegations concerning managers or staff members for political reasons whether or not the allegations are based in fact. Further, officials sometimes shoot from the hip without a complete understanding of the real issue and/or all the facts.

4) Some residents make allegations that are inaccurate or untrue and which are repeated in the media.

5) An employee may be blamed for issues and problems that come to the surface during his/her tenure but existed long before the individual took office. In fact, occasionally an employee uncovers a problem and is dealing with it. That very action can bring problems to light and result in a news story that reflects badly on the person who is actually trying to fix the problem rather than the person who let it fester for years and did nothing.

6) Managers/Directors may have more articles than, say, assistants because of the nature of their work. Assistants tend to be much lower profile and hence, less is written about them. Further when assistants make mistakes, the manager/director tends to get blamed.

Further, the Internet changes daily. Articles are added and removed. What is provided here is a snapshot in time concerning what was available on the Internet the day(s) we did the research. If someone were to search the internet tomorrow concerning information on these candidates, additional information or less information might be found. Search engines take up to six weeks

to "find" stories after they are posted on websites. By the same token, a story appearing on a website yesterday may be deleted and may not be there tomorrow.

We should also note we have not included everything we found. Many articles mentioning the candidate's name have little if any relevance to the candidate's qualifications. Hence these are often been excluded. Further, if multiple articles exist concerning the same issue, we often select the most relevant and complete articles and do not include the rest.

Where issues of concern were found in the following articles, we have attempted to research them and determine their true nature. Where we found information that we believed was serious in nature and the result of the candidate's actions or that would could potentially embarrass you, our client, we would have dropped the candidate from consideration and his/her information would not be in this notebook.

One final note is that we generally do not include information from blogs as they are notoriously slanted and unreliable.