

TECHNOLOGY PLUS CREATIVE WORK: A NEW PERSPECTIVE OF THE RECRUITING INTERVIEW

In the first part of this article (journal "Personal Mix" № 4-5 (29-30), 2005, p. 72) we presented the usage of art approaches for reaching mutual understanding during business interviews. The recruiting interview is one example. But theory means nothing without practice. We will present variants of artistic approaches in an interview context, presented in the Workshop "Self presentation skills and business interview"(organizers: T. Schmied-Woerle and A. Tsareva). These are only some examples of such techniques which can be used for development of intuition and for reaching mutual understanding in the dialogue between manager and candidate.

Information asymmetry[■] is present during the dialogue on many levels – spanning from the difference in the mood of interlocutors to their deepest personal differences. One of the most important points about information asymmetry which is extremely important for mutually beneficial communication of employee and the company – is intrinsic values of personality or, in other words, individual emotional motivation which has personal interests as a base. The right assessment of a candidate's intrinsic values can play the main role for a definition of the appropriate place for the person in the company and if the assessment is wrong it can have fatal consequences for both the company and the employee.

For example, two employees can have completely different opinions on international business trips. One of them receives much pleasure of communicating in foreign languages and sinking into other cultures. Another person hates business trips because he hardly endures the airplane, feels uncomfortable in unknown places and feels confused communicating in foreign language. Intrinsic values define whether the candidate aims to mount the career stairway or wants to perfect himself as an expert in a narrowly defined sphere. Exactly these intrinsic values underline roles which people play and define which roles become favorite, which are played more frequently and are the root of success and which are even impossible or extremely difficult and become the generator of personal problems. Understanding the difference between the external manifestation of values – "type"(role) and real personality is a very relevant question not only of managers and candidates who take part in the interview but also for HR managers and for all people who deal with the human factor in the organization.

Dealing with intrinsic values manager and candidate solve different problems.

A manager's task is to trace correctly those intrinsic values of the candidate which can be useful or problematic for the organization. At the same time the most difficult point of it is to act observing not only his own values but at the same time the aims and values of the whole organization.

The tasks of the candidate are the following: firstly, he or she should clearly understand and define own intrinsic values especially those which are connected with a desired position. Secondly, he or she must know how to manage his or her own condition in order to understand clearly the message of the interlocutor. Furthermore, he or she should define as far as his or her intrinsic values coincide with the values of the organization and, in particular, with the requirements of the position which he or she wants to occupy.

Possibilities for the interviewer: usage of theatre plots and historic metaphors

It is difficult to catch a person's intrinsic values with the help of direct questions. More sensitive techniques should be used for it. The usage of art approaches helps to unite the body, the brain and feelings of a person and to activate intuition and helps to find the correct strategy how to act

■ **Information asymmetry** – is the situation in which some people possess the information which is unknown for other interlocutors, or when people possess different information

in a given situation. This approach modifies the standard form of interviews using more elegant and motivating variants.

The usage of metaphors can become an efficient investigation method of intrinsic values of a potential candidate for the interviewer. Defining in advance the set of intrinsic values that are important in a given professional position, the interviewer can use metaphors as a delicate instrument for finding accordance between candidate and position. Theatre plots and historic metaphors allow the manager to improvise on the basis of unknown material and present business problems in an attractive, designed and distanced manner. Proposing to the candidate the interview in such “playful” manner, where there is no “right” answer, the manager not only collects information about a candidate’s intrinsic values but also relieves him from the fear of giving a “wrong” answer.

History is an inexhaustible source of metaphors which are related to different intrinsic values. An example of usage of such a metaphor as a sensible frame for the definition of the candidate’s attitude towards the values “authority and leadership” (lets suppose that vacant position assumes a big deal of personal responsibility and initiative) – the play “Prince Frederick of Hamburg” which was written in 1809-1811 by Heinrich von Kleist. Prince Frederick of Hamburg being the head of the cavalry troop during military operations against the Swedes starts the battle in defiance of the demand of his general – and wins.

A question which can be addressed to the candidate: “Imagine yourself in the general’s place. What would you do with disobedient winner?”

Another effective metaphor in visual form can be paintings. In spite of the richness of senses and associations paintings also allow to make our channel of visual perception active opening new internal possibilities to creation. This allows us to perceive familiar things and situations a bit differently, notice new details and often revalue many things. Madame Pompadour who became famous as a maitresse of Louis XV influenced the politics of France more than ten years. It is an extremely long period for court maitresses. A Gala portrait of the mature, not any more so young Madame Pompadour was painted by Francois Boucher. This enormous painting occupies a big part of the wall in the New Pinacothèque in Munich. The outstanding role of Madame Pompadour in the life of the king’s court is reflected also in the particular features of the portrait which are very unusual for women portraits of that time – in such manner only portraits of important male politicians were painted.

A young ambitious beautiful woman, Louise O’Murphy, dreamed also of becoming a maitresse of Louis XV – her portrait was created by the same painter. She is represented naked, in bloom of youth and beauty, but the canvas has much smaller size. Starting their career and having the same aim – to occupy the place near the king, these two women possessed different intrinsic values and as a consequence – used absolutely different methods for achievement of the goal. Their achievements are clearly reflected in the portraits.

Questions to the candidate: “How can you explain the difference in the sizes of these portraits? In the canvas of which size would you like to be represented yourself? What do you think: why did Louise O’Murphy finish her “career” as one of the numerous maitresses of the king in the pavillion of erotic divertissements which was organized by Madame Pompadour for the king?”

Candidate’s possibilities: cybernetics and behavior of lions, or how to dispose yourself to improvisation

In order to reach your aim – to receive the job (or to decline it – if the interests don’t match) it is not enough to know how to communicate and tell the right information about yourself. Much more important is to assess correctly the microclimate of the interview during several seconds

and switch on a system approach or as mathematicians would say, **cybernetic**[■] approach of perception. The candidate is often concentrated on one element of this system – the manager who talks to him during the interview. And the whole system is often not taken into account to the detriment of the candidate – while in the case of success the candidate will become the element of this system – the organization where the interview is conducted.

The organization is a system, developing a unity of aims, financial and industrial processes, organizational culture, chains of communication, habits, attitude towards authorities and towards other people and many other elements. People who master the talent of communication from birth frequently use cybernetic perception unconsciously. Conscious usage of cybernetic approach can significantly facilitate a candidate's dialogue with such a multiple-unit system as an organization. The usage of art approaches for training of cybernetic perception can help the candidate during the preparation for the interview from one side intensifying separate channels of perception and from the other side organizing synthesis of these channels.

One of the instruments to improve intuitive understanding of system features formed by members of an organization can be music. Music, especially classical music, makes our perception by ear more active and changes the structure of attention. Rhythm as the basis of music has organizing and systematizing influence – the influence of music on the mood is a common knowledge of big city residents even constantly surrounded by audio streams – sounds of radio in offices, music in transport, melodies of mobile phones, different walkmans etc. Some musical compositions can “simplify” perception, stereotype it, other musical pieces, on the other hand, make a person more sensitive to some details.

Every organization, if compared to a musical composition has its own set of rhythms, moods and melodies (time management, organization of management and industrial processes etc). The structure of music, its speed and mood can become keys to intuitive definition of aim construction, authority style and attitude to time in different organizations. There are many examples of music which is characterized by a complex structure. For example, listening to two musical masterpieces – “Little night serenade” by Mozart and “Kamarinskaya” by Glinka we can notice that these two pieces belong to absolutely different worlds – they are completely different from each other, but united by the degree of complexity of their organizational structure. In our case they represent a reflection of two different “cultures of management”.

Kinesthetic or body feeling is another important perception channel for effective communication. Our body also demands attention, dialogue, only with such an attitude it won't let us down in a crisis situation and will help our brain to search and realize optimal solutions. The kinesthetic art or finding a common language with your own body can be conditionally divided into three parts:

1. Kinesthetic attention. Listen to your body, define its possibilities and limitations, strivings and fears.
2. Kinesthetic dialogue. Attention to poses and gestures, yours and interlocutor's, experiments with location of body in space which helps not only to find out interesting things about yourself but also unpredictably change the course of conversation.
3. Improvisation. After a number of years your body gets used to move in a certain manner, it realizes habitual gestures and poses. Trying on other's masks allows your body to remember forgotten feelings of freedom and get away from stress more efficiently than with expensive anti stress medicines.

The ability to strain yourself and to relax, in order to save and efficiently use energy is a gift of nature which was in many respects lost being exposed to the speed of urban business life. One unusual method for the improvement of perception and accumulation of energy for an adequate reaction to unpredictable circumstances can be the “strategy of lions” or effective inactivity. According to the observation of biologists lions are passive about twenty two hours a day. The king of animals does absolutely nothing even all the time! But during the

■ **Cybernetic approach** supposes to consider events as complex and self-organizing systems which development acts by the principle of feedback. Firstly formulated in 1948 by Norbert Viner.

remaining two hours lions hunt and defend their children with incredible energy which has been saved during twenty two hours of inactivity.

The usage of “lion’s strategy” before the interview with a potential employer helps the candidate more than another rehearsal of his speech or feverish reading of many books. Instead of this he can relax, enjoy solitude and concentrate on the forthcoming interview not thinking about something else. Thus he can free his brain from all superfluous and distracting, unite all inner potency and focus energy on the impending event as a lion does while preparing for his active life phase.

Overture for employers and employees: individualization of working contract and development of “compensation portfolio”

Behind the front of the interview lay strict economic facts – concordance of the requirements of the professional position and the candidate’s abilities, and connecting internal values with different forms of compensation. Russian working experience shows that adequate assessment of his or her professional abilities is not an easy task for many candidates. A strictly defined system of monetary compensation coordinated with defined levels of education, professional skills and types of work is nearly lacking – nowadays specialists have to develop conception of their “market value”.

Adding to the standard recruiting interview some artistic and improvisational approach is an efficient instrument for reducing information asymmetry between employer and candidate, an instrument for a more deep recognition of personality of a potential employee, which is not limited by strict frames of role, and his potential abilities. The interview with an artistic approach can help to bring in line the professional requirements of the organization and the motivation of the employee. So the risk of discrepancy between professional charges and professional skills of the candidate can be reduced.

So...

We only picked several examples of usage of “irrational” elements for business practice to which the Workshop “self presentation skills and business interview” is dedicated. We can find a common language with these elements. We will receive the keys to intuition only with the help of personal practice, tuning the instruments of our own attention, discovering our own intrinsic values and uniting all this into a constructive dialogue with different systems – between individual person and organization.

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