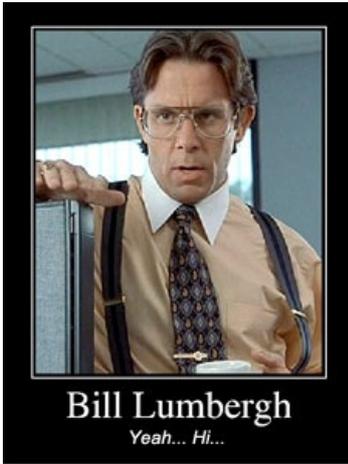


NOTE TO EMPLOYERS: RESPECT YOUR JOB APPLICANTS

About a year ago, I was contacted by an entertainment lawyer who was looking to hire a writer. This guy was a genuine bigwig – hundreds of celebrity photos all over his office, and a video player on infinite loop in the front office with his many interviews on cable news shows, talking about the latest legal problems of Lindsay Lohan and other celebs.



I put on my suit, printed out the writing samples he had requested, and schlepped across town to his Beverly Hills office. There was already another applicant waiting when I arrived. I filled out the usual paperwork and handed over a copy of my resume.

At about the precise time of my interview, the lawyer arrived at his office. After a few minutes, he called in the other applicant.

Fifty-six seconds later, the other applicant came back out, looking confused. He left, and I was called in.

The lawyer told me sit down, and asked me some basic questions about my background. I started to give the usual interview answers, designed to emphasize my skills – but he cut me off. He just wanted the basic facts. So that's what I gave him.

After a few more basic questions (did I have a car? was I insured?), he told me my resume was going on the pile, and if he decided to call me back, would the next Wednesday afternoon be a good time for another interview? "Yes," I lied. He shook my hand and I left.

Fifty-six seconds had passed.

No, I would not have gone to the second interview if I had been invited (I wasn't). This individual did not respect me, or my time. What kind of a nightmare would it have been to work for him?

What was he even trying to accomplish? He wanted to briefly meet each applicant before arranging an interview – why? Was he trying to avoid a certain ethnic group? Perhaps if he had warned me the first interview would be very brief, I would not have been offended.

In another, less heinous example, a Internet firm down by the airport called me in to interview with the HR person and the manager who would be my superior. I had an excellent conversation, for about half an hour, with the HR rep. Then she went off to find the manager.

Fifteen minutes later, deeply embarrassed, she returned to tell me that the manager was on a call that went long, and he couldn't see me. Maybe I could come back the next week. "That would be fine," I lied, with a smile plastered to my face.

A few days later, they gave the job to someone who interviewed before I did. That's okay – I wouldn't have gone back.

I have worked for people who, I assure you, would never treat a job applicant this way. In fact, I like to think that these arrogant and unprofessional employers are in the minority. But I have worked for people who had no respect for their own employees – and you do not want to work for these people.

As a manager, you do not want to be one of these people, either. No matter what your yearly income, title, or level of responsibility, you are not above the rules of common decency. A job applicant's time is as valuable as your own. And even if you don't accept that, then look at it this way – you are mistreating people who might be highly skilled workers who can make you a lot of money.

There are only two circumstances under which it is permissible to treat people poorly and take advantage of their need for employment: never, and never ever. Act accordingly – it's the ethical and professional thing to do.