

Irrational or Rational? To a meaningless degree

Every so often I hear a request for a degree and wonder why? Why is the degree necessary?

We don't have to have a degree to be a professional engineer, one can be a P.E with experience; in fact some states you don't even have to be formally educated to be a lawyer, so why do we also have to require a degree for a manager, or yes, as I have seen even required for an *Administrative Assistant*?

What even bugs me more is when an awesome candidate is turned down, a candidate who has had the proven experience for the position; has been successful in the same position for years. Do people use Education as an excuse; they are too lazy to write a better job ad, understand the job they are recruiting for; reduce the number of resumes they have to look at?

What is more important, sheepskin or proven abilities and accomplishments? Hands on Skills and knowledge or something a person learned 20 Years ago?

Recently the EEO published the following regarding Education.. maybe it is time for Managers to really take a look at some of their requirements.....

"Educational requirements obviously may be important for certain jobs. For example, graduation from medical school is required to practice medicine.

However, employers often impose educational requirements out of their own sense of desirable qualifications. Such requirements may run afoul of Title VII if they have a disparate impact and exceed what is needed to perform the job.

As the Supreme Court stated in one of its earliest interpretations of Title VII

"History is filled with examples of men and women who rendered highly effective performance without the conventional badges of accomplishment in terms of certificates, diplomas, or degrees. Diplomas and tests are useful servants, but Congress has mandated the commonsense proposition that they are not to become masters of reality."(89)

EXAMPLE 14 EDUCATION REQUIREMENT

Chloe, White, is the Head Secretary for a division of XYZ Corp. She took the job right after college and now is departing after three years to go to graduate school. The employer was thrilled with Chloe's work, and when it gets notice that she is leaving, it sets out to find a replacement. Sylvia, an African American, applies for the job. Sylvia is a successful graduate of the local business institute, and has spent the last five years working as a secretary for a regional bank, rising a year ago to become the Executive Secretary in one of its major departments. The employer rejects Sylvia's application because she is not a college graduate, which triggers a charge.

Statistical evidence shows that in the local labor market African Americans and Hispanics in the pool of administrative and clerical workers are significantly less likely to have college degrees than Whites. The employer defends its education requirement by attributing Chloe's success to the fact that she was college educated, noting that the Head Secretary position involves not only traditional secretarial work, but also more complex responsibilities such as preparing reports, and training and supervising other clerical staff.

The investigation reveals, however, that none of the firm's prior successful Head Secretaries had college degrees, and it is not the industry standard. Most importantly, the employer presents no evidence that a college degree is more predictive of, or correlated with, job performance than a degree from a business institute plus significant relevant experience (i.e., Sylvia's qualifications), or other credentials and experiences that would render a person qualified for the job. The evidence establishes that the employer has violated Title VII because the college-degree requirement screens out African Americans and Hispanics to a significant degree but it has not been demonstrated to be job related and consistent with business necessity"

I have seen so many jobs written on the internet and wonder why? Why would a Secretary NEED a bachelors degree..

I was speaking to one of my partners yesterday, (an attorney) we were discussing this same thing.. he made a Poignant statement.. Isn't really worth more to Your ROI to *just input 3 simple Words* - OR Equivalent Experience.

How many Dynamic candidates did you miss yesterday because your job add did not have those three Magic words?

Is this why there is a war for talent? is the war for talent only as big as we have made it, because we over qualify, over signify something that should have no significance to the skills necessary to perform the job?

I wonder

See also an Excerpt from a Recent Opinion Letter from the EEOC Regarding [**Title VII: Disparate Impact of Education Requirements**](#) - "If someone could show—most likely using statistical evidence—that the strict requirement had such an adverse effect, and that the effect was significant, adopting the requirement could subject [the employer] to liability for disparate impact discrimination unless (a) [the employer] could show that the requirement is job-related and consistent with business necessity, and (b) the plaintiff could not show that a less discriminatory requirement would have been equally effective in predicting job performance." reg

"Assuming that the employer could show that the master's degree requirement was "job related and consistent with business necessity," an employer might nevertheless be liable if there is an available alternative that would equally effectively meet its business objectives. Accordingly, assuming this requirement has a disparate impact on racial minorities, the employer is advised to determine whether there is an equally effective alternative selection procedure that has less adverse impact and, if so, adopt the alternative procedure. "

ABOUT KAREN MATTONEN, CAC, CSP

Karen Mattonen started a career in Human Resources when she served as a Recruiter for Snelling Corporation. Leveraging her tenure with Snelling, Karen founded Advanced Career Solutions in 1997 focusing on the HVAC and Mechanical Construction industry. Her reputation for excellence is echoed in the satisfaction of clients and candidates she has serviced nationwide. Furthermore, Karen is esteemed for sharing her expertise in Recruitment Education, Ethics and promoting self-regulation for the Recruiting industry.

She has a new and future-oriented vision of what recruiting can and should become: a profession we can be proud of for its ethical standing, professional conduct and ability to build great organizations. Her doing-well-by-doing-right philosophy is shaking up the status quo in an industry that needs to be shaken. She does this with conviction, leadership, and a distinctive voice that cries out for change.

Outside of the HR community, Karen Mattonen has been cited by Microsoft as a resource in how to use Microsoft Outlook as an ATS. She has also served as the Marketing and Public Relations Director for the 3rd largest city in Utah.

Her passionate and tireless advocacy has led her to create HireCentrix - *The Pulse of H.R, Regulation, Retention, Recruiting and Risk Management* www.hirecentrix.com. Hirecentrix is a company dedicated to providing training to the HR, recruiting and staffing industries, which includes a special focus on the ethical and legal dimensions through offering a full service resource for individuals to share and communicate, obtain current and accurate information, acquire and provide education and learning within the quickly expanding, diverse and rapidly changing Recruiting and Human Resource climate.

Karen has achieved accreditation as a California Accredited Consultant (CAC) through California Staffing Professionals. She has also gained her Certified Staffing Professional Certificate (CSP) through American Staffing Professionals. (www.americanstaffing.net)

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