

Hire the Best Students and Get Sued

Every day, I read news articles that make me laugh, cry, and reach for the tequila bottle. Usually at the same time. Pretty much the same as dealing with my nephew.

Today's story that had me shaking my head (and googling "fall out shelters" because I fear a coming apocalypse) comes courtesy of the United Kingdom.

Do companies that only interview and hire the best students discriminate against graduates with lower marks? "Yes, yes, yes," my nephew is screaming.

Hiring the Best Students May Be Discriminatory

According to the [Daily Mail](#):

Companies hiring graduates with top degrees could be discriminating against students with average grades, according to a Government-commissioned review.

... companies who filter on academic achievement need to carry out regular reviews of their screening processes, based on the types of graduates they have hired.

I am not a betting man, but I would wager a fiver that every member of the Government commission was not in his/her graduating class's top quartile.

Grades Are Not The Key

Now do not get me wrong. Grades do play a factor in the hiring process.

For those who read this blog, you know I [do not believe that grades are the prime determinant](#) of career success. Grades are

difficult to compare between schools and students, there is [grade inflation](#), [questionable teaching](#), etc. As such, I look at other aspects of a candidate's curriculum vitae. I like seeing relevant [extracurricular activities](#), students who learn useful [complementary skills](#), and so on.

Grades tell me more about a person's ability to learn, self-motivation to work, and relative success against peers. Those are the [key factors in landing a job](#) offer. So I may not limit my search to the top 5% of graduates in a field, but I definitely want to only interview people in the top 25% of their class.

However, many companies do only seek the top students.

And for fresh graduates who possess little practical experience, it may be the only real factor that can be assessed objectively.

Students reading this may not think this is fair. But I want to hire the best available person for the job. You need to show me that you are one of the legitimate candidates. Grades are a part of that process.

Diversity Over All Else

According to the article:

'Graduate recruiters using filtering mechanisms should undertake a systematic and frequent review of screening algorithms in the light of the qualities of the graduates that the company has recruited and the diversity objectives of the company.'

Ahh, diversity over all else.

Just what I want when I am on the operating table. To look up and know that my surgeon accurately reflects the gender, ethnic, physical, etc., breakdown of society. If he or she or

non-identified is able to competently perform the operation, so much the better. If not, I shall die happy, knowing that I took one for the greater good.

California is interested in knowing the [sexual orientation of its judges](#). Some homosexuals believe they will receive “fairer” treatment from a gay judge than straight. Knowledge of the written law seems to be a secondary concern. Will we move to a society where Asians judge Asians, amputees judge amputees, and gingers never rule on matters involving blondes or brunettes?

What Kind of “Ist” am I?

Many, many years ago I remember having a conversation with someone. We were discussing whether we might be subconsciously racist, sexist, etc., in our hiring practices.

I thought about it and finally answered, “I am an economist.” Whoever can do the best job for me means that I can go home a little sooner each night from work. That the quality of my team is top notch, which reflects well on me.

Female, Asian, gay, physically handicapped, gingers, every religion. You name it, I have worked with them all through the years.

Some Swiss and Germans met their stereotype as hard workers. But I worked with others who I would not want washing my car. And some of the best workers I have ever dealt with were Bahamian and Caymanian. No [“soon come”](#) stereotypes for these folks.

Well, maybe for the only Trini I worked with (yes, just kidding. Really).

A smart business person hires the best person to perform the required job.

In companies I deal with, I want the best service possible.

Who provides it is of little consequence to me.

The Perils of Diversity

Once business is forced to hire based on diversity quality becomes diluted.

Partly because companies no longer hire the best candidates. Instead they primarily try to meet diversity goals.

And partly because students realize that they no longer need apply themselves in school and in their jobs. Meritocracy for advancement becomes replaced by race, sex, and other identifying features. More time is spent researching the family tree than researching course work.

Not a recipe for long run success as a society.