

in another life I'd be an election mastermind, with some help from Dr Seuss

When I started to draft this article there was an imminent election. Now, the election has passed and the result is one which nobody seemingly expected nor predicted.

Prior to the exit poll, I don't think I read or heard a single suggestion that the Conservatives would win an overall majority, and those holding themselves out as electoral experts or leading pollsters, were left wondering what rationale for voter choice had they failed to give enough weight to. Policy position on the deficit? Fear of an SNP and Labour coalition? International credibility of party leader? Membership of the EU?

The result is the result, whatever the post-election analysis, and will have some determination on our economy, social policies and international politics for the next five years. Certainly, anyone engaged enough to vote based their decision on something that mattered to them. Dependent on our political leaning and level of engagement,

each of us was surprised, delighted, disappointed, or oblivious to the outcomes, and may be bothered, or not.

Humour me when I suggest life as a search consultant is not so dissimilar from that of a campaign manager, except we get to facilitate several elections in tangent and don't ever expect a hiring decision to be reached by a defined date. In fact, we are like campaign managers only with the added thrill of more uncertainty – we don't always get the result we expect, or the one our clients hope for, and nobody is making a five year commitment.

Our goal is to represent each of the candidates in a balanced, non-partisan way, and to have a clear idea of what both voter groups, our clients and candidates, want. We never know what candidate the client will pick, and whether the candidate will accept a subsequent offer. Decisions can lead to surprise for anyone involved in the process, and disappointment for the unsuccessful candidates or rejected clients. If the successful candidate is unmoved by the outcome they've secured, then I'd usually advise our client has a rethink.

From an organisational and candidate perspective, picking the



right candidate or the right role is critical. Both candidates and clients must feel they have enough knowledge of each other to vote and be voted, to choose and be chosen, and have evidence and confidence that each is making the right choice for their own futures and the fortunes of their organisation.

And this is when I turn to Dr Seuss because, pre-election, I thought this would be a diversion from political and economic commentary and give people something else to critique. So, here are his wise words, interpreted to give candidates and clients an increased likelihood of being selected in a competitive context.

*Today you are you,
that is truer than true.
There is no one alive
who is youer than you.*

Hiring is certainly served well by an openness, honesty and transparency as to who you are as a person or organisation and what you represent, require and have capability to contribute to a future employer/employee relationship.

*A person's a person,
no matter how small.*

Mutual respect serves any search process well. Candidates and clients who are respectful of each other's time, values and existing commitments, tend to have more fruitful and informing conversations.

*You have brains in your head.
You have feet in your shoes.
You can steer yourself in
any direction you choose.*

The courage, curiosity and energy to make a change to your current role, or make

a creative hire, is in your control. There are some people who think the world owes them the next great role, or feel everything wrong in their career has been done to them. Organisations also need to take active control of their brand and put effort into attracting people to join them. If an organisation thinks the brand name should be enough they can find their competitor for talent put more effort into the engagement process and secured the talent in the process.

Sometimes the questions are complicated and the answers are simple. And sometimes the questions are simple and the questions are complicated. Certainly clarity of communication and asking for clarity in the moment supports a better engagement process.

Children want the same things we want. To laugh, to be challenged, to be entertained, and delighted.

As do candidates and clients. The interview process shouldn't be a joke fuelled popularity contest but certainly some fun and openness allows both the voter and voted to get more of a grasp on whether the opportunity is one that will work in the favour of both parties.

*Step with care and great tact,
and remember that Life's a
Great Balancing Act.*

It is always wise to remember you are taking part in an interview process for an opportunity that will provide a positive impact on your future career (candidate) or success of your organisation (client).

Don't let too much tact or care stifle the chance to secure your vote, or cast your vote in a most informed way.



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