

True or False?

"Consulting firms are just
resume mills."



Answer: *It depends on how reputable the consulting firm is.*

When working as a drilling superintendent, I often relied on the consulting firm I worked through to place the wellsite supervisors. When looking at the resumes, the individuals indicated they had the required experience to be successful at their jobs and I assumed because they were being presented to me as good for the position, the firm had done due diligence prior to recommending them.

After several near misses and a few failures, I started to perform an "autopsy" of how we came to have such unqualified people on location and how I could prevent that from ever happening again. One particularly painful experience resulted in the firm I was working for losing the contract work and ultimately tarnishing what was a good reputation.

A TRUE STORY: HOW COULD IT HAPPEN?

It started with a recommendation from another consultant. The consultant had been contacted by a rig manager on a drilling rig he used to work on. The former rig manager was looking for work and the consultant remembered him as someone who did above average work and recommended him to the firm. This same consultant had recommended other good individuals in the past and so it was quickly assumed that would be the case here as well. The individual I counted on at the firm to assist me with finding qualified consultants contacted the man and discovered he was available to work, and it was passed onto me as a good candidate for the position.

I also called the individual and spoke with him briefly about what he would need to do before starting work.

I asked him to come by my office after his drug test before heading out to the rig, so I could meet him in person and we could get to know each other a bit before he started.

Today I'm a bit embarrassed that to say this, but the process I just described was not uncommon. The first sign of trouble was when he did not show up as expected. I attempted to call numerous times, left messages, and got no answer. I wondered if he was injured or hurt or if he had just flaked out.

About 48 hours later, I received my answer.

I was on the phone with the wellsite consultant, and he described a car which drove up to the location. And according to the wellsite consultant, it was a miracle that the car could even drive. He described duct tape covering a mirror, the muffler obviously not working, and tail pipe dragging on the ground. He immediately assumed a drifter had fallen on hard times and had made a wrong turn and gotten lost. Surely, he must be looking for some assistance, financial or automotive. The wellsite consultant said he had to go and would call me back. A short while later, I received a return call and assumed he had given the lost driver directions, but as he spoke, I sensed a curious tone in his speech. He told me that the consultant we had expected 48 hours prior had just showed up in the aforementioned vehicle. I spoke to the man, and indeed he described to me some very hard times; he was delayed due to a very serious illness his father had, and on top of that had broken down on the way to the location but had no money to pay for repairs so he had to make arrangements for payment. I immediately felt a sense of sorrow for his experience and at the same time very concerned. I understand hard times can happen to anyone, but what I did not understand was the total lack of communication up to this point. But, he was ready to work. Since it was nearing dark and the man had been on the road for some time, I asked that he go directly to bed, stay off the rig, and report first to the drug screening facility and then to my office in the morning (this was the original plan, although two days earlier).

The next day, he did show up at my office but had skipped the drug screening. While I listened to the calamity that had befallen this man, my heart ached for him yet at the same time we had another failure to follow instructions and communication. I explained my position and that we would not be needing his services. He then asked about his pay. I thought to myself, "How in the world could we ask the operator to pay anything for this?" He didn't qualify for any remuneration, yet he didn't even have the funds for fuel to get home. No matter how disappointed I was in this man's actions, the feeling of sorrow for my fellow man exceeded that by far. I didn't want to leave a man stranded in a strange town, so I did some quick calculations on what might be needed for gas money to get him home and went to the ATM and gave him the cash, all the while wondering to myself if the funds would be used for fuel or drugs. After taking care of these most immediate needs, I dove into the autopsy, wondering how in the world this wasn't caught. As it turns out, there were not systems in place to keep something like this was happening. After further investigation, it appeared the man had fallen on hard times, been arrested for drug-related charges, and been away in prison. He was released only a few weeks before he was recommended for the project. The only "vetting" of this person before he was hired was from a man who had worked for him two years prior, at H&J Petroleum we believe there's a better way.

