

Leading light

By Sean Mills, Client Director at CHPD



I've recently been involved in an application for an internal promotion. I had a number of interviews and although I thought I'd done well, I didn't get the job - another internal candidate did. Obviously I'm disappointed, but where do I go from here?

Shocked and angry – that's how you're likely to be feeling when you find out that you weren't selected for that great new job you thought was all but in the bag. You are likely to feel this as a very personal rejection, which is understandable. You probably imagined yourself in your new job - you may even have spent most of the pay rise already. The important thing now is to take action.

Step one: Understanding why you weren't right

Some companies are poor at giving feedback in these situations, so answers as to why you weren't selected may not be volunteered – you'll need to go and ask for it. This is essential: you need to know why you didn't get the job, so you can take steps to improve your chances next time. If you feel awkward in this situation or you feel the person giving the feedback is unlikely to be honest with you, find a third party who can act as an intermediary. The important thing is for the

feedback to be frank and direct.

Step two: Understanding why the other candidate won

You need to understand what the recruiters saw in the winning candidate that they didn't see in you. Find out about the person who got the job; what are their strengths, experiences, technical know-how, networking skills, leadership behaviours etc. Look at the informal promotion/recruitment process in your organisation – was the winning candidate actively courting the right influencers?

Step three: Addressing your skills gaps

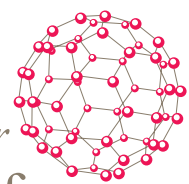
You should now be in a much better position to have an honest assessment of your own qualities and approach compared to the winning candidate. You can then take steps to address any gaps in your skills. Take responsibility for your own development, speak to HR or your training department about your needs, but be proactive in looking for opportunities to address the skills gaps you're aware of.

Step four: the sphere of influence

Recruitment and promotion processes are not

always as transparent as they should be. An ability to network is important in many professions, so crucial in your next job application will be to identify your 'sphere of influence' – who are the six people who are influencing the decision on who to appoint, what's your relationship with them and how can you build it?

Finally, a word about how to handle yourself when the new person starts. Firstly, be prepared, this is going to be awkward so there's no point in pretending otherwise. Secondly, remember that this person could be useful in helping you get a new role so don't make an enemy of them, no backstabbing! Thirdly, try to look on this new person as a role model, you just might be able to learn something from them. So onwards and upwards!



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