

Confessions of an entry level hiring manager

I have some confessions to make. I'm a Hiring Manager. I can hire you. But I can also decide not to hire you. And for every person I hire, 20 hopeful contenders are left by the wayside.

You need to understand that the job search process is not designed for your benefit—it benefits me and my company. But you still have to work within that process. We're very picky about whom we eventually hire.

We are making an extremely large investment in our entry level training and want to make sure we hire only the best. And there are certain things that I do to weed out and exclude those who don't fit our precise criteria. This is my public confession.

We were at your campus, but you might not have even known we were there. We always ask for "closed interviews" when we come to campus, which means that we preselect who we meet with.

How do we decide who to meet with: We talk to your professors. Remember that professor in your major that you couldn't stand, but you had to take two classes with to graduate? Well, you were not on his list of top students when I spoke with him. We also reviewed the booklet of resumes that the Career Placement Center provided to us but since you never got your resume to them, you weren't in the booklet. We found several more there who rounded out our campus schedule. Good resumes. Good Grades. Good experience.

Sure, there are some schools that require us to conduct at least half of our interview as "open slots." We'll meet WITH you. But if you have less than a 3.0 grade point average, we will not even consider you. If you lack any tangible work experience or significant class project experience, you're out.

When I meet with you in the waiting room for our on-campus meeting, I'm looking for one thing: a great attitude. If you don't have the attitude, nothing else matters. Grades, experience, extracurriculars, nothing else can make up for the lacking in the attitude category.

It's what I will judge you on most quickly. And it's what you need to establish firmly and strongly in the first few minutes of the interview. In fact, if you're good, you'll probably establish it during our walk back to our interview location.

Ah, yes, that silent walk. I probably won't say much as we walk back. I'll give you a quick opener, such as "I appreciate you taking the time to meet with me today" just to see where you'll take it. A cocky "No problemo" response won't score



any points with me.

"The pleasure is mine. In fact, I've really been looking forward to meeting with you after reading your company's annual report. Very impressive." Very impressive indeed. Points scored and tallied. You have just taken the early lead.

When we get back to our interview location, I need to spend a concentrated 20 to 30 minutes toward one simple objective: deciding if this is someone who we would have an interest in potentially hiring. Someone we are interested in enough to consider bringing back to our company site for a final interview.

I'll look for eye contact. Your body language. Your expressions. And all the non-verbals that communicate far above what you are actually speaking.

Are you confident in yourself? Are you able to communicate at a professional level? Are you a winner? Or a loser?

I'll ask you questions that are designed to put you at ease, to help break down the artificial barrier that often exists. I want you to be comfortable, but not too comfortable. I need to get through to the real you.

If I feel you're just putting on a show, that I can't get through the outer veneer, you won't make it to the next step. I want to know who you really are. I'll do it by asking a series of structured "closed/open questions," such as:

"Are you a creative person?" (Almost everyone answers "Yes"), then asking, "In what way?" or "Can you give me some specific examples of personal creativity?"

This is where the actors stumble and fall. At the end of the interview, I score you on the A-S-P scale: appearance, skills and personality. You have to rank a one or two in each category (you'll be ranked on a scale of five, one being top 10 percent, two being next 20 percent, three being the middle 40 percent, four being the next 20 percent and five being the bottom 10 percent).

If I'm interested in you, I will offer you my card, our company annual report and further information about our entry level training program. You won't even have to ask for it.

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Trains, fear and dirty laundry

Useful travel tips for the budget-seeking student

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You see them everywhere. They are ragged people with matted hair and shabby clothing. Some carry plastic bags filled with provisions; others, huge worn backpacks bursting at the seams with their life's most precious possessions.

The lucky ones sleep on hardwood benches that decorate the sparse open structure; the rest make nests on the cold floor out of old newspapers and new sweaters.

Are these the bums and beggars who usually haunt our city streets, or is this the latest grunge rave? Forget the nightclubs man, hang out on public property!

The answer is none of the above. Mendicants or Seattle sycophants they aren't. These young men and women are committing mass train station invasion. Meet the few. The proud. The Eurailers.

Summer vacation is just a month behind us, but it is never too soon to dream up plans for next year. The usual, like California, is a convenient place to go and such locales as Hawaii are not too far away. But, the adventure-seeking student wants more.

Viewing a reproduction of Michelangelo's David in Caesars Palace instead of the real thing in Florence just doesn't cut it, and one knows that the Stratosphere Tower, though taller, will never compare to Eiffel's creation in Paris. It must be Europe.

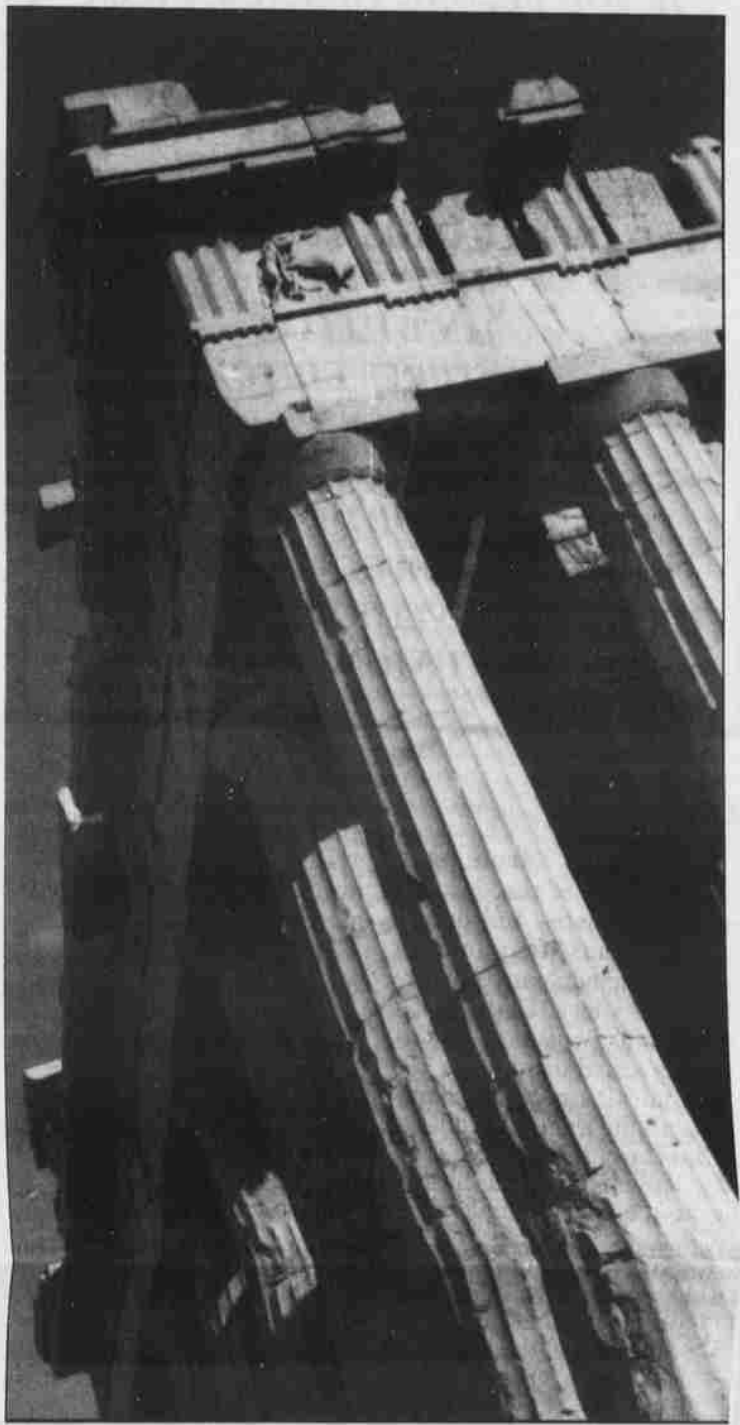
Almost everyone dreams of going to Europe, but excuses never get one there. No time. No money. Get over it. Think there will be more time after graduation, on the new job and in between kids?

As for money, Rick Steves, author of a comprehensive guide to Eurail travel called *Europe Through the Back Door* says it best: "Affording travel is a matter of priorities. Many people who can't afford a trip could sell their car and travel for two years."

Many guidebooks proclaim "travel Europe for \$40 a day." Multiply that amount by a month's worth of days and you will realize your car isn't even worth that much and stay home. Careful planning, however, and a brave heart can help a student make the most out of the continent for practically nothing per day. Very Kerouac.

Starting any trip requires an additional -ing term, packing. Remember that whatever you bring, you will also have to carry. When mom peers over your shoulder during packing, resist her plea to bring an extra sweater. Useless extras will end up ditched in frustration somewhere on the steep hill leading to the Parthenon.

All packed, it's too late to back out. Head directly to the



The Parthenon in Athens, Greece is just one of many sights students can take in travelling with the Eurailpass.

nearest travel agency to purchase your ticket to worldliness, the Eurailpass. For one price, this pass is also your ticket to most European railroad destinations. Packages range from a two week pass for \$498 to a three month pass for \$1,398.

Realize the incredible bargain here, considering that one-way tickets between major European cities can start at \$150 at the discounted student rate. If it were physically possible to travel back and forth from Paris to Milan 10 times in one day, the rail pass alone would cover all of it and the best part is that you won't work your phrase book into overtime at some crumbling ticket window in the middle of Nowheresville, Italy. The Eurailpass gets you on any train automatically.

A big part of train travel is waiting. Remember all those novels you've been meaning to catch up on? Pack them in the space left from removing that extra sweater. You will have much time to read while en route (on the road, Jack).

Paired with a friend, a chessboard can also make a good companion. For about \$38 you can purchase one at gift stores in European train stations; the small plastic travel kind with magnetic pieces. Or, get the same one before you leave at Toys 'R Us for \$5.

Look to grocery stores for most of your meals. Incredible bread is very inexpensive

throughout Europe and grocery stores are usually plentiful and stocked with many foods heavily preserved for your extended enjoyment. Also perfect for backpack storage.

McDonald's are plentiful too and an ideal place to pick-up free utensils. Don't even think of eating there, though: A) prices are tripled, and B) you did not leave all your friends and cross the Atlantic Ocean to stuff more all-American greasy assembly line burgers down your throat. *N'est-ce pas?* Have a croissant.

What about at night? No need to spend time and money at a hostel. As soon as your train rests in the proper quay, rush into an empty cabin, lie down on the bank of seats, hide baggage underneath, shut off the light, and make like you're dead asleep.

This posture will deter all but the most determined passengers from disturbing you, affording you a free bed of three seats to count sheep on.

Plan your destination to be around eight hours away, and set your alarm. *Voila!* Go to sleep here and wake up there.

"When you consider the time you gain—a whole day to bike in Holland, hike in the Alps, or sunbathe on a Greek beach," adds Steves, "taking your longest trip at night makes sense."

After packing, waiting, eating and sleeping, there are a couple more miscellaneous

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