

Transcription - Have You Been Passed Over For Promotion

Welcome back. I'm Kim Baillie, she's Fulyana Orsborn, this is Inside Exec. Today, we're going to talk about promotion, but particularly we're going to talk about being passed over for promotion and I will start the conversation by saying yes, I have been in that situation where I was passed over for promotion or a move that I thought was the logical sequence.

Having looked at the history of an organization, this is what happened in this sequence and it didn't happen. I was surprised, I think more than anything. I wasn't disappointed because I hadn't really focused on it being a promotion as such. It was just a progression. Yes, it was more money, it was a different position, but it was more that. Historically that was the progression of how you worked through an organization.

So when I came back from leave and found that I wasn't going through that progression, it made me actually think about whether that was the progression that I wanted to take in the organization and out of it came an opportunity to go into a completely different stream that I hadn't thought about before. And the promotion that came out of that was two levels above what I would have got in the automatic one and started a course that has continued through to this day of things that I do.

So opportunity came out of that situation where I was passed over for promotion, but the most difficult thing for me in that situation was that the person who did get promoted was embarrassed by the fact and was constantly apologizing for the fact that they had got the move in the organization that I and she would have expected that I was going to get.

That was what I didn't know how to deal with. I didn't know how to respond to that because the bottom line I wasn't overly concerned. But that would have been insulting to say, well I don't care. That's not fair on her and her abilities and her progression, which was the progression that she wanted to make. And the organization had chosen to move her rather than to move me. So that was, you know, I had to respect that. That was a decision that they made taking into account all of the qualities that we both offered. As I said, I really wasn't disappointed.

But I did find myself floundering for how to react in that situation to the person who had been promoted. So I just throw that into the mix as part of the discussion.

That's good. But that's a good example of one scenario and how it turned out even better. I'd like to keep that in mind because that's a good thing. It's never a good feeling to be passed over, that rejection or you start all sorts of things in your mind. One of the things is we're human, sadly, some people might understandably feel like complaining about it, complaining about it to people thinking it's in, you know, safe environment, etcetera. That's not very helpful, if you're going to do that certainly do it out of work. Yeah, that to me is not very helpful, understandable, but not helpful.

But the thing is to find out why you've been passed over and find out maybe it is just a circumstance where the other person had more of what they wanted than you.

That's fine. Then, if that's the career path you want, then how do you go about bridging that gap for next time? But also it's about finding out what is it you want and what are you doing about it? So in other words, we all can do a bit better at self promotion. I don't mean being one of those annoying people that says I'm the greatest. I'm not meaning that, I'm talking about when you participate in things and work sharing, don't be just a quiet achiever all the time. Just find the right time and the right balance.

My reaction to that, if that was me, I would like to think because I'm not emotionally involved right now, I like to think that I would look at ways to get more involved, so more involved in my own role. Yes, that's a given, but also in say cross functional projects where I can add value to the organization by participating and working with other team members across the organization and in that sense, adding value and then let the results speak, networking with people in other areas, finding out what sort of things, what makes the best in class for a role like that in my organization or another one.

So if it is about project management, for example, what makes the best project manager? Who's been recognized for that, what qualities do they have? What have I got out of those and that list and what do I need to work on?

The other thing is I don't mind saying it because I know people appreciate it and get a lot out of it, get yourself a mentor. A mentor doesn't have to be a formal program and whatever, internal or external, there is people that you can learn from that will become your mentor and this can be inside the organization or somewhere you worked before or a colleague that you worked with before and that is to help you bounce ideas and talk about how to behave in certain situations.

So look for your technical gaps that you might need on the technical side. Look at the interpersonal skills that you might need to grow more. Or if you've got all of those in spades, that's fine.

Then it's just the opportunity like the example with you Kim. It gives you an opportunity to go somewhere else and then you did other courses and you end up going up the career path a step faster even so that's the sort of thing to focus on rather than the rejection. But don't just ignore the rejection and being passed over. So you want to know why and if you know why that might be material or immaterial. But once you know, you know what to deal with.

I think too with the why, when I go back to my recruitment days, I have to understand that sometimes the decision say it's between three people, sometimes the decision is almost a toss of the coin. There is really nothing much between people. And at the end of the day it is a human to human decision. And sometimes we don't make the best decisions but we make it based on the impressions that people have made and the information we've got. And so we do our best decision.

It might not always be the right decision and you have to accept that they might not have chosen the right person in this instance, that's an issue for them. What I need to do is get on with what I need to do because I am in control of my career and my activities and we've got to keep coming back to this. Don't let other people run your life for you.

If you're in a situation now where you're a senior manager, you've got there for a reason. Keep managing yourself as well as you manage the people that are working with you and for you, trying to learn new skills and get new experiences through participating in other things that might help you decide, oh, you know what I love what I'm doing, but there is this angle of my career that now I'm interested in. I have exposure to it now and I like it and I think I'd like to pursue it. So again, it just broadened the observation for you and knowing yourself and not getting a promotion I think is not the end of the road.

It just means that that door is not open at the moment and it might well be that it's not open for a reason, as it was in my case. In that particular case, it was better to be moving in a different direction and in that sense, the people who made the decision had a better idea of what the organization needed than I did because I didn't know the whole of the organization, I knew this one area that I was in and I knew what the natural progression was in that area, and yes, I knew the rest of the organization was there, but I had not ever considered the rest of

the organization.

What the management group decided at that point is that they had seen some qualities and skills in me that I wasn't using in my current job that I wouldn't have if I followed that progression. But they knew they were needed in the organization, elsewhere in the organization. And so even without it being part of the job that I was doing at that point, they had seen some qualities that they wanted elsewhere in the organization. So in that sense, they were making the right decision for the organization and that's what they're there to do.

You know? The bottom line is they're making a decision for the organization, not the person. As hard as it is, you shouldn't take it personally because it's not about you. It's about the organization and what the organization needs. And if you haven't been able to express how you can meet the organization needs, then they can't make the decision to choose you. It's just not there. The evidence is not there. I guess when you are in that position yourself, where you're making those decisions and faced with all of that, if you haven't already, if you have you already understand what we're talking about, if you haven't, you will get that experience.

And then, you know, sometimes it is a very close call. I think too, if I can add in here just some advice for the people who are making the decisions and it's the same for recruitment generally, I will say, is that tell people why. Don't just say, it was a strong field and we're sorry, but on this occasion we've gone with someone else. Tell people why, because they will never get any better at presenting themselves if you don't tell them why.

If you do tell them why it gives them a commitment to you as an organization. You as a potential boss of them in the future of robots. And there's now the communication, the vital thing. If you keep that communication line open, you're in a better position for the organization to be choosing the right people long term.

That is so true. I recently heard of a very senior appointment where the person, one of the people who applied for the job, didn't get it. It was a very very well respected candidate. The leader of that group took the person out for coffee and had the conversation and not just with that person but with the three other applicants. And I just thought it was wonderful that they know they're very busy and they made that investment in, put their time in, to help someone else who they are not working with. Even if it's not that she or he or those three people wanting their organization, it's about if you've been passed over for a promotion

and you want to know why, it's about asking why.

But it's about asking why a way that allows the people to hear unpleasant information that they probably have been avoiding doing because it's not an easy task to say no, you're unsuccessful. You know, it's one of the worst jobs you have when you're doing recruitment is to have to write to 500 people and say you missed out, knowing that within that group, there were probably really potentially good people for the organization. And I go back to the time when I used to do graduate recruitment campaigns, 1100 applications for eight positions. You know, how can you possibly know that you've chosen correctly? So it becomes a numbers game to a certain extent and then it becomes the interview process.

So tell people why, in a general sense or what the organization was looking for. And yes, in some cases you might get a bit of to and fro from the person saying, oh, but I could have done that, then it is your opportunity to say you didn't show us that at the time, we couldn't see that at the time for whatever reason.

So perhaps your reason, you may need to do this, or perhaps when you're at an interview, you need to say it. Give people feedback. Because longer term, in the broader scheme of organizations, you don't know when you will interact with that person. Again, you don't know when your paths will cross. So the more you can do to keep communication lines open, to keep understanding at a level that can be acted upon, then the more benefit you're going to get long term one way or another. Get the learning and you're putting it in action to help you for the next time.

I think we've covered that now. So you should be at least not happy, but at least have a path to follow, if you do get passed over for promotion. For now, I'm Kim Baillie, she's Fulyana Orsborn. This is Inside Exec.