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Paula Santonocito

Advantages of Venting

If you build it, they will come. And if you give them a forum, they will air their grievances. At least that's been the experience of JobVent.com, a website where people vent about current and former employers.

The site's tagline is "Inside Information about the Jobs and Employers We Love and Hate." And inside information there is. But, if you're an employer, be forewarned: You'll want to fasten your seatbelt before clicking through to [JobVent.com](#), because it's likely to be a bumpy visit.

JobVent.com was founded by Craig Spitzkoff, an entrepreneur who runs the site through a sole proprietorship, Arlington Development LLC. Under frequently asked questions, Spitzkoff explains the site's origin:

"While working at a certain company, I became very frustrated that there was no good place for me to vent about my job online. I also had wished that I had the opportunity to read up on this job before I had started working there. I looked around and did not see a centralized place for people to organize their thoughts about specific employers, so I started this site, as a potential resource for people who are interviewing for new jobs, or people who just need to blow off some steam about their current situation."

People certainly do blow off steam. Occasionally, they even say something good about their employers. The site skews toward the negative, which is probably to be expected since it's human nature to take time to complain but not to praise.

Still, even though many companies get less than positive feedback, not everyone who posts comments is moaning and groaning (though there is some of that too). The site actually offers constructive criticism.

Consider this evaluation of a well-known consulting firm: "Extremely poor work/life balance, which is also tied to low respect of leadership for its employees on projects. Good vacation package; however, ability to capitalize on your days off is limited. Colleagues are quite competent and knowledgeable. Benefits contribution % is relatively expensive and pay is lower relative to industry standards. Work environment is stressful."

Assuming this assessment is accurate, what might it mean to the company in question? The employer probably wants to take a look at work/life balance for starters, and also address the issue of employee respect (which undoubtedly contributes to the stressful work environment). As far as vacation time, what good is it if it can't be used?

For this organization, it seems to be about making sure it delivers on all it promises--promises that, incidentally, significantly impact its corporate recruiters.

What if you're a third-party recruiter for this company? You should likewise be aware that these issues have been aired at JobVent.com, to an audience that includes potential candidates.

The site allows people to vent, as in the above narrative, and to rate companies in various categories: pay, respect, benefits, job security, work/life balance, career potential/growth, location, co-worker competence, and work environment. Ratings run from -5, horrible, to +5, excellent. Points for any given company are cumulative.

In addition to an alphabetical list, where you can read feedback on any company and see its cumulative score, JobVent.com has love and hate lists, which are based on total scores. It's great when you see your company on the "I Love My Job" list, and very unsettling when it appears on the "I Hate My Job" list.

If your company's ratings are less than favorable, you might dismiss JobVent.com as sour grapes. Before you do, take an objective look at the feedback that's been provided. Sure, some comments are clearly from people who wouldn't be happy anywhere. However, more often than not, postings have substance.

You may not always like what people have to say, but JobVent.com makes good on its claim, "inside information about the jobs and employers we love and hate." As a recruitment tool, it offers valuable insight.

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