

The Treasure Punt #29

For vagabonds, rogues, mavericks and other disreputable reprobates, The Bountiful's attraction as a pirate employer was well established. With Captain Blackbird running a tight ship, the team spirit was casual, and most of the merry men perennially tipsy. The redistributing wealth work was meaningful, the material rewards rich, and there were many opportunities for travel and adventure. The boat's culture was inclusive – anyone might be forced to walk the plank – diversity, albeit limited, was valued, and productivity was prized, with the monthly number of violent conquests closely monitored. Work was challenging, with many interesting opportunities presented for murder, mayhem, rape, plunder and pillage, even for young pirates just setting out on their careers. The company was interesting, with a cast of colourful characters, all of whom directly spoke their minds, without the subterfuge, obfuscation or downright lying usually associated with the trading business.

So whenever vacancies arose, usually occasioned by death through natural or unnatural causes, word spread quickly through the criminal community, and the boat's selection committee was invariably spoiled for choice. Seldom was there any need for advertising, the use of head hunters, or hostage-taking or kidnapping. Long lines of recruits would spontaneously appear wherever The Bountiful was berthed, and the frenetic excitement of working alongside such well-regarded comrades as Long John Platinum (LJP), Rupert Redbeard, One-Eyed Dick, Forked-Tongue Fred, and all the simple S-men sailors, caused much scuffling and jousting. Sometimes, by the time the queue receded, a few corpses lay prostrate on the quayside, such was the competition for places on the vessel that regularly won 'best boat to work for' prizes in contests sponsored by the accounting profession.

Research survey respondents were consistent in their praise for The Bountiful's eligibility as an employer of first choice.

"It's the brand! I love Blondie Blunderbusty's bosom," was a common reference to the figurehead.

"I just feel so connected. The brand is like an invisible umbilical cord from my belly button to the boat," said other, younger candidates, with words to that effect.

"It's the leadership," said others. "They're so trustworthy. Yes, they're thieves, of course, but honest ones."

"I like the corporate colours," said another. "Black, black and more black."

"It's the mascot; it's so rabid," said another, remarking on Blackbird's pet spotted hyena.

History made it consistently clear that The Bountiful had consolidated a formidable name as a talent attractor, even for the highly-skilled professions. But this reputation was severely tested when Blackbird and the other officers identified a key gap in their ranks, consequent to their entering a new market, the emerging trade in body parts.

"It seems the hearts, lungs, kidneys, livers, and other smaller organs, do quite well in rum, at least for a month or two," clarified Corpus Cockroach, who had volunteered his stewardship over the vessel's valuable new cargo.

"What about hands and feet?" enquired LJP.

"Not as well," Corpus clarified. "They quickly fall apart. Yesterday I found a palm with no fingers."

“What about skins?” asked Rupert Redbeard.

“Actually surprisingly good, though with discolouration,” answered Corpus. “They get quite grey. The big problem with skins is that they’re unwieldy, especially from fat people, often wrapping themselves around the other organs floating in the tank. It’s a messy job getting things untangled.”

“Heads?” asked Captain Blackbird, enquiring after the most expensive body part by far.

“Whole heads are very difficult; everything wants to seep out of the neck cavity, which is why I often stick my socks up,” Corpus answered insightfully.

“Fascinating,” concluded Blackbeard. “Undertaking this new work, it’s clear we need a specialist mortician. Let’s get to it. Cockroach, will you supervise the new recruit?”

“Aye-aye, Captain. It’ll be good to have some help.”

Amongst the large pool of applicants for the position of Body Part Curator were a smaller number of very talented morticians, whose track records in the business of life and death were exemplary. The selection committee could have appointed any one of six shortlisted candidates. After some debate, they resolved to offer Uriah Reincarnate the job.

Uriah could not contain his enthusiasm for The Bountiful. On his first day of work he bounded up the gangplank in three strides, whistled happily from morn to night, volunteered for additional chores in the galley and heads, and worked through the night caring for a wide array of ankles, calves, knees, hips, elbows, shoulders, sternums and thighs, and other limbic paraphernalia. Throughout his first three month’s service, until the end of probation, Uriah Reincarnate proved a lucky find for The Bountiful. Everyone liked him, and he liked everyone, except Corpus Cockroach.

“Don’t do it like that, Uriah, do it like this. Remember, I’m the Able-Seaman around here. Listen to your supervisor,” Corpus scolded, not once but a thousand times.

“URIAH! How long do I have to wait for those eye-balls, till the next century?” Corpus asked sarcastically, not once but one hundred times.

“If you continue to disobey me, Uriah, and floss those teeth, I’ll make your life very miserable, you ugly little worm,” threatened Corpus, not once, but ten times.

“I’m watching you, Uriah, taking your eyes off those balls?” cautioned Corpus, but only once.

“Argh, stuff it,” concluded Uriah, before jumping ship close to the coast, and swimming ashore.

Treasure Hunting Tip: Whilst candidates join companies, they leave supervisors. As a recruiter, take an active interest in the direct relationship likely to evolve between candidate and client, and try and achieve the best match. Even the attractions of the best companies do not make up for the repulsions of poor managers.

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