

Why copy and pasting just won't cut it in job application forms submissions any more

It's all over the News; it is discussed on TV shows, radio interviews and can be read in magazines and newspapers...today's challenge of finding and securing a new job. The current economic climate is not one that fills most people with positivity or joy, and the prospects for changing your job, furthering your career or even getting a foot onto the working ladder are proving to be more and more challenging.

Ask any recruiter or recruitment agency and they'll tell you that the number of applications received for a role nowadays is 100% to 200% more than has been seen previously, and that the calibre of candidates for these roles is good too – the competition is fierce. So how do you get a chance of securing an interview, let alone a job?

Gone are the days of being able to simply cut and paste your respond from one application form across to another. In the same way, the days of blindly submitting a CV to a number of companies in hope of securing a job, or writing a bland cover letter than can be sent to all recruiting organisations have now gone. Your application form, CV and covering letters or enquiry letters need to be tailored to the company that you are writing to, and for the role that you are applying for. Remember, companies are receiving hundreds of application forms or CV submissions for each job that they advertise. They will be applying some very specific and difficult tests to each submission they receive in order to narrow that final number of successful applications right down.

The sort of tests that your application form or CV submission might be subject to include:

- If the application form or CV needs to be submitted through the post or emailed (as opposed to uploaded via an electronic job recruitment site such as nhsjobs.net), was there a cover letter attached?
- If a cover letter was attached, was it addressed to a specific individual (Mr Jones, Miss Dunphy, etc) or was it left with a generic addressee, such as 'Dear Sir / Madam', or 'To the HR Manager'? The former is obviously favourable.
- Does the personal statement element of the application form or the personal profile section of the CV reflect the skills that the job is looking for? For example, if you are applying for a Sales Manager role, does your supporting information include examples of your sales skills from previous roles, your ability to deal with difficult customers, your ability to increase revenue, your sales-related qualifications, you drive and passion for the commercial world?
- At any point, either in the personal statement section of the application form or the cover letter, do you state why you are attracted to that specific company?

- At any point, either in the personal statement section of the application form or the cover letter, do you state what you will be able to bring to the company and why you are perfect for the role?
- Have you ensured that your application form or CV reflects how you meet their essential criteria on the job's person specification?

Think about each of these points in turn as you finalise your application for a particular job. Ensure that your documentation reflects the requirements of the role and that it is tailored to the role and the company. And whatever you do, don't copy and paste!