

The science in getting a job - 5 main reasons for unsuccessful job applications

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Looking for a job is a job in itself. From coping with the disheartening "no's" to learning how to navigate the job search environment, the process requires perseverance.



Image source: www.pexels.com

If you are having a tough time finding employment, address your current strategy and change the way you are approaching your search. There are usually five main reasons at play for unsuccessful job applications:

1. Relook at your current job search and application strategies

Job seeking in the digital age means crafting your CV for both a human and for applicant tracking systems (ATS) - an automated system that a CV goes through for first filter before it even reaches a human. If you don't have keywords from the job advert and critical industry-related keywords, your CV may be automatically rejected in this first step.

Keywords can be inserted either in a motivational paragraph at the beginning of the CV or in a covering letter.

Crafting a strategic CV is essential. Take note to:

- Include the key requirements listed in the job spec.
- Show examples of work experiences which illustrate your expertise or skill set in relation to those requirements.
- Include keywords from the job spec in your cover letter.
- In the first phase of job searching, skills are more important than personality.

The CV is the first step to getting to the interview. The interview gets you the job.

2. Check you are applying for jobs within your skillset and/or job specifications

Know what you can and can't do in terms of the job specs. Do I have all of the non-negotiable requirements and 80% of the other job requirements? Then apply. If not, perhaps avoid the inevitable and discouraging no.

3. Your CV may be getting lost in the pile of applicants

Write a separate covering letter or motivational paragraph at the top of your CV in order to stand out.

Sell yourself in relation to the specs of the job, relating your skills set and experience to the position and organisational goals. If you claim to have a particular skill, illustrate your ability. For example, if there is a leadership skill required, describe instances where you've shown leadership qualities. As a graduate, you may have coached a team or headed up a group on campus. Match yourself to the employment specifications so that the recruiter can see you're a good fit for the job.



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4. Upskill yourself

In the current economic climate, companies are hiring one person who can do three jobs. An applicant needs to be multiskilled rather than a specialist. If you are lacking a skill, start studying it now, and show in your CV and interview that you are willing to learn.

For example, if you are a content creator, teach yourself basic graphics. Learning additional skills increases your employability, and shows your flexibility, opening doors and career options.

5. Develop an emotional intelligence skillset

A key component of emotional intelligence is understanding and managing our emotions.

Job applicants need to support themselves emotionally to remain resilient in their quest to find employment. Henry Ford once said: "Whether you think you can or think you can't, you're right."

Confidence or lack of confidence in your abilities to do something (even get a job) impacts behaviour and actions, which in turn can turn your belief or lack of belief in yourself into a self-fulfilling prophecy.

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Build your confidence by:

- Making a list of past achievements.
- Believing in yourself – but don't be arrogant.
- Imagining yourself interacting self-assuredly in the interview.
- Managing your self-talk with empowering words rather than critical thoughts

Make this a turning point in your life. Upgrade your skills, be flexible in your applications and expectations, and customise each cover letter – and as necessary your CV - for the job. It can help in getting you on track to finding and getting the job you want.

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