

Have you survived four aircraft scares and an earthquake.....???

....well an applicant of ours has..... telling us they were “ *a quick learner, resourceful, reliable, diplomatic and even tempered during tense situations, having survived four aircraft scares, an earthquake, being shot at and sitting on a crocodile*”. This maybe so, but would this candidate stand out from the crowd when screening for a field sales role within the trade sector of the window industry? An employer could possibly view this as a strength of character when hunting for new business and the CV certainly stands out but in the right way? (my initial reaction was “Oh my goodness, what an unfortunate person”).



As a recruitment specialist in the building products industry we read/screen hundreds of CV's every week, ranging from short sharp editions to lengthy manuscripts, some with a disciplined format and some with a sense of humour. Each format is indicative of that person's character, but the key criteria when physically screening (and not using an automated search engine may we add) is extracting the specific key skills against the brief given by the client, so a document that grabs your attention within the first few seconds works well. Bullet pointed skill sets, experience and achievements are the best format, as a recruiter will have a number of aspects to look for in that document and if they're presented with something that 'hits them in the face', it not only makes their screening job easier, it gives the candidate a stronger chance of being selected for the next stage.

Screening a CV is (or should be) one of the most crucial and labour intensive parts of a recruitment process and it can be very difficult to decipher who to explore, especially when selecting from a huge candidate pool. We know that someone's career depends on this crucial stage, so it's important that time and effort is put into creating your CV, as

A candidate chasing for an update from an interview with one of our clients.

“I've been asked to take on the role of Dame in a pantomime and I don't want to accept if there's a chance I may not be able to commit to rehearsals when working and commuting to.....”

this is the initial 'selling' point of a job application We physically read every CV from start to finish giving every candidate the same opportunity and for this you need complete concentration, but we have at times been distracted with the occasional statement, that may have made us smile (or cringe sometimes) some of which on a light hearted note we would like to share with you

A frustrated candidate at the lack of public facilities....

"I am unable to track my applications due to using the Thatcher era PC's with restricted access of one hour per day at the public library and no internet café inor nearby towns"

We're hoping this is simply a 'typo'....

"As a Bar Manager, I was responsible for locking up and dealing with customers"

Customer Services to the utmost....

"I consider myself to be an approachable, empathetic person, with a mature outlook to work with and the ability to discuss problems with others. I was recently called to help a customer who had become upset while communicating her complaint to one of the store's cashiers. I took over the complaint from the cashier to discover the customer had purchased dog food that morning, but in the afternoon, her pet had unfortunately died. She had come into the store to return her purchase i.e the dog food and asked for a refund. As a regular shopper I considered her customer satisfaction and future custom at the store the over-riding factor and so granted her the refund even though the store was not legally bound to do so. The lady continued to shop happily for many years"

A candidate being very specific from the outset....

"I am writing to you in case there are any positions open for which I may be considered which are up to 40 hours per week, more than my last job's 20 hours but less than the 48 hours on a hopefully higher re-numeration than £5 per hour. This year I continued my education by commencing to study for a part time evening MBA at the University of..... This year is assessed by assignment, so I will not be requiring time off work to revise for examinations. The course is on Monday and Tuesday evening between 17:30 and 20:30 hours so ideally I would not like to work past 17:00 hours on these two days. If necessary it is possible for me to attend on a Tuesday day time instead of an evening, so I could work around shifts if that was appropriate.

A serious answer to one of our questions within one of our interviews....

Interviewer: *"What is your current/last job title and to whom do/did you report?"*

Interviewee: *"I'm an FNP"*

Interviewer: *"What's an FNP?"*

Interviewee: *"Fun New Person"*

Perhaps we may have misinterpreted the calibre of this person when contacting with an opportunity....

"As my current salary is £.....I think that this opportunity would be unacceptable and create a void in my social calendar as I would not longer be able to mix with the cream of the industry"

A candidate with VERY specific expectations....

“If I am called for interview I may require accommodation for the night, this would have to be of high class, with evening meal and supper before bed. As I am an early riser I would require full breakfast with a copy of the Daily Telegraph to read with coffee or tea and biscuits late morning. If possible a smoking room. The booking would have to be paid and confirmed by yourselves prior to interview with my full travel and out of pocket expenses re-imbursed”

We like to think we're a little bit different from the rest, as our KPI is not calculated on the number of candidates we appoint each year just simply to generate a sale, yes we're here to make money like everyone else, but it's all about RETENTION, with currently 75% of our candidates still in situ after twelve months and when you consider that appointing someone from a CV, interview and gut feeling, the success rate of retaining that person is only 16%!!!! We're quite proud of our record.

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When we secure an assignment the job is to find the right candidate to fit not only the clients brief but the culture of the Company too. We don't 'head hunt', all 4,500 candidates we have currently registered have come to us as active job seekers. We don't interview on a speculative basis, so if you

are ever successful to go through to our interview stage it is for a specific role and we will only work exclusively for our client's. We pride ourselves on treating everyone in a way that we would like to be treated ourselves, with dignity and in complete confidence.

So with January being the most common month to consider a career change or a move, we would welcome you introducing yourself and sending in a copy of your CV, bearing in mind some of the pitfalls above and how what you write makes you seem to someone who does not know you yet! You can visit our website for further details of how we work and see our commitment to candidates <http://bit.ly/koETzi> , or simply call us.

In the meantime we would like to wish you all a wonderful Christmas and a prosperous New Year

*Karen O'Sullivan is Recruitment Director of MBA. MBA Associates Ltd is a specialist consultancy that partners clients to **Recruit, Retain and Develop Top Performing Teams.** 01242 821 432, info@mba-associates.co.uk or through the website at www.mba-associates.co.uk*

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