

LITTLE ERRORS THAT STAND BETWEEN US AND OUR DREAM JOB

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In the increasingly mobile world of today, it is not enough to be IT compliant. You need to stand out in what I term 'online etiquette' which I think is sadly lacking in today's workplace culture and even in job applicants. This is the reason why companies, firms, and 21st century-styled government offices have resorted to the use of Applicant Tracking System software to sieve through curriculum vitae they receive so that only those that have that magic get in.

In my not-too-modest experience as the COO of The Bar List - a recruiting firm for lawyers and now as the Practice Manager at a top-notch law firm as The Law Crest LLP - I have noticed that these errors (as I would like to term them) occur over and over again and it just irks me considering that these should not happen looking at the ilk of employers you should attract as a candidate and the kind of candidates we look out for and demand. From my experience, these avoidable slips in the CVs that contain them, hardly get the required attention from us as recruiting agencies and ultimately organisations.

1. Sending CVs or Applications with an email address other than yours

This particular one first got my attention largely because it happens often and I scoff at some candidates' need to correct you as to their real names when you may have over 50 CVs staring at you waiting for a verdict - either to be cut or shortlisted. In opening an email address, it is always advisable that the recruiter or advertiser knows they are dealing directly with a said applicant as against another person who more often than not is unaware of applications having gone out from their email addresses. Where it is absolutely necessary to send such using an email other than yours, please indicate in a cover note for easier handling. While we are still on the subject of email addresses, please avoid words like "love", "baby", "sweetie", "sexy" - I'm sure you get my drift. My advise: Keep your email address as official or corporate as possible.

2. Sending solicitous messages via emails, text messages, Whatsapp chats etc.

Now your CV has been received and you have been contacted and informed that you have been shortlisted, **PLEASE DO NOT BOMBARD WITH MESSAGES!!!!** I had an experience one time where a candidate kept sending me messages coupled with frequent phone calls asking me to "influence" her CV being recommended for a job. Instinctively, I concluded the candidate was not qualified for the role! As recruiters, ours is to recommend based on how the candidate's profile matches the job description. The final decision of whether or not to recruit is the exclusive preserve of the client. Since it is our integrity that is at stake, we will not recommend you if you don't qualify - even if you call us with your blood!

3. Otherwise impressive CV but not properly articulated

I have seen impressive CVs get thrown out by the Applicant Tracking System software owing to the fact that the CV was either not properly arranged or hurriedly packaged. Your CV is your forerunner, therefore, it requires all the attention you can give to it. Before we speak with or meet the candidate, the CV speaks volumes – good or bad. Without more, your CV shows your class, exposure and language. My advise: Pay attention your fonts, font size, paragraph, grammar, etc. We see about 100 CVs daily, therefore, the more striking your CV, the more attention will be given to it. “Striking” does not mean colours or shades.

4. Sending CVs from smartphone without introductory or explanatory notes

While I am all for applicants sending CVs from their smartphones, it seems most applicants suspend their own smartness. My experience is that most of the CVs we receive via smartphones come with scanty or no notes at all. How do you send a CV without an introductory or explanatory email? Don’t just send a CV and expect the recruiter to read your mind – there is no time to read your mind. Sending your CV without more is enveloping and sending a blank letterhead as a proposal. Worse still, some applicants write “Please find attached.” This is hardly adequate. If you want a job, you must give it your best shot.

5. Sending credentials along with CV

When you are asked to send a CV to an email address for a job vacancy, just send the CV **WITHOUT ANY OTHER FORM OF ATTACHMENTS** as stated in the instruction. Collating 100s of CVs could be a gruesome exercise. Adding your credentials in your overzealousness makes the exercise more gruesome. At the right time, a request for your credentials will be made.

6. Send relevant CVs for vacancies

On an average, a recruiter spends about 30 seconds perusing a CV and so it is important that I see what I’m looking for within those seconds. In other words, make your CV as relevant to the job description/requirement as possible. If you are sending an unsolicited CV (which is always welcome), please be sure to send why you are sending an unsolicited CV.

7. Sending your CV to the recruiter and copying “the rest of the world”

For instance, you send your CV to The Bar List and, in the same email, copy a bank, an insurance company and 6 law firms. This is one error I see everyday a

and I shake my head in disgust. I am sure that the other person in copy will feel the same way. Who is the ultimate loser?

8. Sending your CV from a ‘forwarded’ email address

Now how many seconds will it take an average person to send an email with an attachment? I should say 5 minutes at the most. But, I have received 'forwarded' CVs from applicants and it just tells me why they are still searching for that elusive job. Personally, I consider this practice indecorous, and it is a sign that the applicant is indolent.

9. Not following stated instructions on Careers Page of website.

While companies welcome employees with individual thought, it would help to know that the simple rule of applying for the job using the "job application form" is followed for ease of attending to your applications. Candidates have been known to flout this rule and it smacks of unprofessionalism and doesn't paint you as a teachable candidate. I had an experience recently when a candidate flouted this rule even when it was specifically stated on the Careers page of the website steps to be taken. She went ahead to send a direct email to the managing partner using that same email when it was stated that the email was for those experiencing challenges filling the form. Instinctively, I concluded the candidate was not qualified for the role! As a practice manager, ours is to recommend based on how the candidate's profile matches the job description. The final decision of whether or not to recruit is the exclusive preserve of management. Since it is your integrity that is at stake, I will not recommend such a candidate who is slow to adhering to instruction for a role at the firm!

10. High salary expectations

We have a good tradition of asking prospective candidates to give us an indication of what their minimum monthly salary expectation could be. At this point all hell is let loose. Getting a straightforward answer to this simple request is hardly the issue. The issue is the mostly unrealistic salary expectations. A lawyer called to the Bar in 2014 wants N250,000 per month - with add ons! A lawyer that currently earns N70,000 now wants N300,000. I know going through law school was hard and expensive. I also know that the stress of law school must be compensated. However, the prospective employer will not employ you and go out of business. The advantage the employer has is that he will get a more qualified and "fit and proper" lawyer at an affordable rate. The job that will pay you on your terms will come. But are you ready for the job?