

Let your agencies do the walking

If you are on the job market, then usually the first thing you do once you have dusted off your CV is to sign up with a number of agencies. However, if all you do is sit back and wait for the interview appointments to start flooding in – then be prepared for a long wait !

Here Michelle Lucas, career Coach of greenfields offers her Top Tips that she shares with her clients who are job hunting :

- Don't just send in a speculative CV by e-mail ! If the agency is local to you then go in and see them, or if this is not possible, phone them and ensure you get a specific contact. Good agencies will want to interview you, so that they can really promote you to potential employers. If they don't want to do this, then you don't want them on your list !
- Less is usually more – think quality not quantity. Try not to be working with more than 10 agencies at any one time. This means you need to do your research, investigate what kind of jobs an agency has on their books and ensure they are a good fit with what you are looking for. Make sure you have a named contact at each – if you are routed to a generic e-mail, beware, you cannot build a good relationship with an auto-responder ! Make a log of every agency you are registered with and not every interaction you have with them. Make a diary note to call them every week, ideally at a time that you have discussed and agreed with them. (Now you know why I suggest limiting it to 10 !?!)
- Be proactive -. Don't let your chosen agencies off the hook or expect them to spoon feed you – review their adverts daily and contact them as soon as something of interest comes up. If they hadn't already considered you for this vacancy find out why ... maybe you need to give them more information or change your CV. Also have a routine for a wider job search, look at ads from other agencies and apply for those which you know you would be brilliant at. If your application gets you logged onto their database, consider if you should drop one of your existing agencies
- Be smart – in this job market, adaptability and flexibility are key – but ironically if you give an agency too many options they will lack clarity on what you are looking for and may fail to think of you because your CV is too generic. So spread your interest - think about the different jobs you are interested in doing, create specific CV's for each of these jobs and then target the relevant agencies for each potential job.

Keep the effectiveness of your approach under review – by completing a detailed log you should be able to see where things are working well and where you are wasting time and energy. Ensure you get quality feedback from agencies after each application or interview, be prepared to change your approach to help them help you. Finally if it becomes clear that an agency isn't really making things happen for you – vote with your feet ... there are plenty of agencies out there eager to get the commission from finding you the right job !

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