

WORLD OF WORK

CAREER DOCTOR



Paul Mullan

Q I hold a science degree in IT and telecommunications. I'm also a Microsoft-certified system administrator. When I graduated in 2004 I began working for an agency, which placed me with one of its multinational clients. I stayed for two years and then quit, as my career was going nowhere and the company wanted to drop my salary in line with everyone else on the team. The big mistake I made was to quit without having another job to go to. I took the advice of several professionals including recruitment consultants that I would easily find work. To my horror I have been unable to find a permanent position with anybody since July 2006. I have secured a couple of short-term contracts that fill space on my curriculum vitae (CV). I have been to several professionals who can find nothing wrong with my CV and can't understand why I can't find work. I am so desperate to find a job that I am tempted to ask for a next-to-nothing salary. Please tell me what I can do.

A I am surprised you were advised to leave employment without another job to go to, as it is very rare for this option to be recommended. It puts unnecessary pressure on jobseekers and that can impact interviews and career choices.

If you are not having success securing interviews, there may be problems with your CV and how you are marketing yourself or you may be applying for jobs that are not suitable. If you are failing at interview you may need advice in interview preparation, techniques and how to sell yourself.

The main flaw with most CVs is that candidates are so concerned about their needs that they don't stop to think about what the employer is looking for. Employers hire to solve a problem, capitalise on an opportunity or both. You need to treat yourself as a product and structure your CV to emphasise how you meet these needs.

You need to explore all recruitment strategies. You seem to be using direct application (internet and newspaper) and recruitment agencies, which is fine, but remember that more than 50pc of jobs are never advertised so you need to increase your networking and direct application strategies.

For interview assistance, I recommend that you speak to an interview coach. If this is not an option, you can request feedback from employers where you have been unsuccessful at interview.

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