

WORLD OF WORK

CAREER DOCTOR



Paul Mullan

Q I completed an apprenticeship in millinery in the UK followed by a degree in textile design (weave) from the National College of Art and Design and I recently graduated with a higher national certificate in millinery. I have also done summer work experience and just completed a FÁS 'Start your own business' course. My intention was, and still is, to open up my own business. I've now been drawn into TV production, and think set design, wardrobe or production assistant positions would be a useful direction, as I could use my admin and design skills. I need a job for a year or two in this area, so I can prepare my business plan to go solo. Can you suggest a way of getting into this industry?

A There are a number of possible strategies you can use to secure work in your required field. Firstly there are the jobs advertised in national newspapers and posted online. You can also investigate industry-specific magazines for potential leads and available jobs. Another option would be to use recruitment agencies that specialise in your fields of choice — production, design and wardrobe. They will normally have a pool of related jobs and can also give additional advice specific to the sector such as skills in demand and entry requirements.

If this does not bear fruit you can use proactive strategies such as networking and speculative applications. Talk to people in the industry and identify industry events and functions that you can attend to help build up your network. Use your friends and family to identify industry contacts. Networking is a tough strategy but can prove very beneficial.

You can also research, identify and make speculative approaches to employers in the field. Make contact by emailing your CV. If possible, avoid emailing human resources; target the hiring managers directly. I prefer the phone approach to contacting potential employers by email. If you are phoning you must have a pitch prepared, as impact is important.

Keep a record of all your recruitment activity. This is important, as you will be able to identify which strategies are working and which are not. You can then focus your efforts more productively. These records can also prove a valuable source when you go out on your own in two years.

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