



## When candidates look at changing jobs

So many candidates these days in the electronic revolution just send through a 2-4 page cv thinking that will get them a job. Many of them work in roles where strategic thinking is required, and yet they fail to implement the skills and competencies required in this field of endeavour when preparing a cv.

Here are 3 Simple words that may assist you to focus: Preparation, Opportunity and Success.

We will come back to this later.

I spend my day sifting through a myriad of cv's from people who are looking to change job. They are looking to move forward in their career, flee from poor management practices or even just a poor boss, they are just plain bored and unmotivated in the current environment.

However, if I am to judge them by their cv's some will not pass muster. Here are just some of the reasons why.

Here is a look into what I saw: typing error, misspellings on resumes; zero mention of accountability; inconsistent information; absent information from previous jobs; half-completed resumes; and six out of seven resumes were from wanna-bees. The sad part is that some of the wanna-bees took more time to position themselves than some of the veterans.

If you are a serious player, and you want to separate your candidacy from the sea of competition, I suggest you take your job search seriously, even if it is for a contract role. Take your time. Who you are being in your job search is a reflection of who you will be on the job.

Read the ad or job posting in full. If asked, answer the questions concisely and accurately; in recruiting, time is money. If there are instructions to follow, don't demonstrate what a rogue you are. These days recruiting involves a lot more processes, and the bigger the company, the more risk involved. If you cannot follow the application instructions, you are sending a message that you can't assimilate to their ways of doing things.

On the other hand, if you follow the instructions verbatim and don't do anything above and beyond — like using some creativity in your communication or application — you may be sending a message that you give just what is asked and nothing more.

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If you are applying for a job with me, look me up, at our company web site [www.heliumnz.co.nz](http://www.heliumnz.co.nz) and talk to me in my language. Don't address me by Dear Sir when my name is Lyndon. It tells me you don't care. Find out who the employing manager or contact person is and get their name and title correct.

Typically the person who is hiring is someone who has done the job before, and done it well, or a HR advisor or recruitment specialist, so they are expecting you to blow them away with knowledge, pizzazz, terminology, and technology. If you are applying with me I am a recruiter and I expect you to provide an accurate cv that describes how you add value. Most recruiters use competency and behavioral based assessment interview techniques (STAR is a framework to assist in this process by focusing on situation, tasks, actions and results. In essence this is about the value you have added to the various roles you perform. It is not a high level generic statement such as skilled in Project Management; it is providing examples and evidence of what you delivered. )

Recruiters in 2008 lists accomplishments, numbers of jobs filled, retention of candidate by the organization , or interviews to hire. Great recruiters know their retention rates and their percentage of good hires. A successful recruiter knows their billings, per month, per quarter, if not per week. They also know their sendout-to-placement ratio and their job order-to-fill ratio. A solid recruiter knows their fill ratios and their (fall off ratio) misery index.

Gaining a job is a sales process and I expect you to use that to your advantage. Show you know that by positioning yourself in the right manner.

## Preparation

Do your homework. Find out what company you are applying with, go to your browser, type in the company's site, and look at who is requesting your services. Tailor your application and response to what they are looking for.

Job searching is a sales process. *You* are selling to *me* on why *I* should invest in *you*. That takes positioning, discernment, listening, questioning/probing, and salesmanship.

Remember, who you are being in your own search process *is* indicative of how you will conduct your searches for your new role, or if you are at the start of your career, who you are being in your job search is an indicator of how you will function in this role for others. This seems easy enough to understand; however, sometimes when we are too close to something, we catch a case of running on automatic, or a case of entitlement. We forget the game we are playing. We also forget that in *this* game, it is always about winning. Winning the game means working. Losing the game means you keep looking.

Be prepared to invest in developing a strong cv that provides evidence and examples of your abilities and achievements. Do not use generic statements that are supposed to convey Value – they don't. Back it up with some firm evidence and examples of what you actually did (remember Actions in STAR – this is the real meat of the cv !)

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This is why it is important to make sure your cv STANDS OUT from the others. Most CV's are generic in nature, and omit providing the compelling evidence to say PICK ME!

As with every profession, people are evaluated by their performance; our performance in this industry is about quality of hire, Helium is focused on getting the RIGHT PEOPLE the Right JOB, it's about quality not quantity.

## Opportunity

Another element of taking your search seriously is the level of effort you have put forth in personal competency development. What have you done to increase your awareness of the marketplace? What have you done to improve and expand your skills and experience on your own?

Opportunity is about working with recruiters, and or HR professionals so that they will identify you as talent that they wish to engage with allowing them the opportunity to contact you again when there is that RIGHT role. Everybody is talking about engagement, talent acquisition – however, YOU, the candidate, are still considering getting a job as a transaction, where you just flick out your cv.

Getting the Right job requires effort, dedication and some nous. Can you say, that you have thought about this? Seriously!

More and more employers are now searching for better ways to employ good people. We all know stories where we have hired the wrong person and the problems this cause – it's a lose –lose scenario. Wasted effort all round.

Employers now are looking at assessment techniques mentioned earlier behavioural and competency based interviewing, technical ability tests, psychometric tests, asking people to prepare a presentation to deliver to interview panel, reference checking the list goes on. It's not just an interview and a reference check any more.

Helium advocates preparation and planning both in your cv and for the interview.

Feedback from clients is staggering about the number of people that do no research or preparation for interviews and wing it. This sort of behaviour is transparent and obvious and results in rejection. This is not the out come we are seeking, yet why do so many people not treat the interview process with disrespect.

Employers are seeking people who are motivated and interested in working for them in the role advertised. It's about ENGAGEMENT making the employer feel that you are interested and challenged by the role they are offering. It's simple, yet so many of us fail at this level.

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## SUCCESS

Is taking your job search and your career seriously, it means continually upping your level of service offering and depth of service. Invest in your own development, learn the systems, learn the technology, and apply it.

Develop a strong cv that actually explains the value that you bring to an organization. Give clear concise examples to demonstrate your skills and competencies. Expand on one or two key projects in depth.

Research companies and roles, target key companies that you want to work for. Work with recruiters and they will work with you. Be prepared to put in effort that separates you from the rest of the people searching for employment. Think about your cv and use the "SO What CHECK "? If I've written something and my response is "SO What "it is usually too generic and there isn't any compelling evidence for me to say – yeah I can see value.

Target the type of roles you want. Do not just allow a quick job alert from a job board to send off a cv. Think about what you are looking for and do not just hit the send button.

Success is getting the role you want at the company of your choice. It is not a random act of chance but a journey of dedication and effort.

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