

Elimination criteria:

Avoid being eliminated during the screening process Page 1 of 7

1 SCREENING OUT CANDIDATES

As a rule and for all jobs combined, when a company places a “job offer ad” it gets (as an average depending upon the type of job, the location, the field...):

- 50 to 150 answers/applications when this ad is placed in a newspaper/news magazine/magazine;
- 250 to 1500 answers/applications when the same ad is placed on the internet (job board, company site...). As a rule Internet seems to generate 5 to 10 times (estimation: not proven by any survey) more answers than traditional media (paper).

Then, the screening process (elimination of applications starts). Usually, this is done by computerized expert systems without any human intervention (with the exception of the initial setting of the parameters of the software used to screen people out).

Some of these criteria are illegal, unethical... and usually completely irrelevant! (Since they do not cover self management skills, transferable skills and job contents skills).

These experts systems [difficult to identify and discover]:

- Can be bought online;
- Or are developed by the IT division of those companies.

2 ONLINE APPLICATION (ON THE COMPANY'S APPLICATION FORM)

When you apply on line, you are invited to fill out boxes that are:

- Perfectly legal;
- Non compulsory or compulsory.

Some of the information that you provide may be used to screen you out.

By answering some questions, you may actually “shoot yourself in the foot” and screen you out yourself, without realizing it.

Therefore you have to be very careful when filling out those boxes.

Some applicants use an original and safe strategy. They ask a friend to apply in their own name, and answer every single question and to print all the screens that they have filled out.

Then, they carefully study those screens to find out:

- What sort of information is asked for;
- Where the dangers and traps are;
- How to ensure consistency between their answers.

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At all times, when you answer, make sure not to lie and/or bluff, but ensure consistency and relevancy (do not be naïve, though).

However, phrase your answers strategically and decide:

- For “Compulsory” boxes (usually marked with *), and provided you have the choice, enter the “least worst alternative”;
- For “Non Compulsory” boxes decide to provide or not provide the information. Remember that *“Less is more”*.

When:

- It is a “plus” provide it;
- You do not know or it is a “minus” do not provide it (or manage) to “softer” its negative impact.

3 ELIMINATION CRITERIA

Here is a non-exhaustive list of elimination criteria that some companies may use to screen candidates out (on files).

This list has been established on the basis of information gathered among participants attending our “Job hunting seminars” and who worked in companies that used some of these criteria (once or systematically).

All those criteria are questionable, either because they are illegal or irrelevant.

For each one of them, we have asked participants the kind of strategy they have developed to protect themselves.

In the majority of cases, the strategy used has consisted in managing retention of information (while being honest at all times).

It seems to be, by far, the most efficient and frequently used approach of all. In this case: “the end justifies the means” since the goal you serve is particularly noble and fair: use your talents and work!

- Some candidates simply “forget” to mention this information that they consider as highly penalizing and dangerous.
- Other candidates do not use a résumé/CV... Therefore eliminate the source of their problems.
- Others, eventually, use “tricks” that appear here below in the “strategy” column.

It is up to you to choose your strategy. We do not recommend specifically anyone of them. We can only write that these types of obstacles are quite frequent, perturbing, discouraging and... most of the times... irrelevant.

4 APPLICATION VIA HARD COPIES OR EMAILS

When you apply by sending hard copies or virtual documents, those are scanned and stored on a data bank.

As mentioned above, in the recruiting process, some companies (not all of them) use computerized systems to assist them sort out the applications and, hence, save time.

This takes place where the number of applicants is too large.

Those “recognition expert software” read those documents, break down the information, and analyze it so as to:

- Either, keep the application;
- Or, scratch it.

Here is an example.

A company XYZ looks for people in the 30-40 age brackets. The software will look for:

- Either the birth date of the candidates and/or their age;
- Or in case one candidate has not provided her/his age, the system will add up years of experiences mentioned and add them to “20” or “25” (age at which the candidate has most probably completed her/his studies and entered the professional life. This is their way to get the answer they are looking for.

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N	Elimination criteria	Strategies
1	Abroad [Comes back from]	Avoid mentioning addresses of companies you have worked for.
2	Abroad [Has always worked]	Avoid mentioning addresses of companies you have worked for.
3	Abroad [Has no experience from]	Compensate by mentioning relative skills / talents that you possess and that they do not have and need.
4	Abroad [Has worked too long]	Avoid mentioning addresses of companies you have worked for.
5	Address [Lives too far away, i.e.; Australia versus Europe]	Modify your email address to adopt the one of the country where you wish to work.
6	Age [Too young, too old]	Avoid mentioning dates and / or duration.
7	Career gaps	Choose to mention duration rather than dates.
8	Children [Too many]	Avoid mentioning that you have children.
9	Children [Wrong ages]	Avoid mentioning that you have children and their ages.
10	Conflict with past employer	Do not mention this information. Choose to develop / produce a functional résumé.
11	Current professional position [In a job / Out of job]	Choose to develop / produce a functional résumé.
12	Dates / Durations [Not mentioned]	Mention one of them (but go for duration if you can).
13	Degrees [No / Self-made person] / No education	Compensate by mentioning relative skills / talents (that you possess and that they do not have and need).

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N	Elimination criteria	Strategies
14	Degrees [Too many] / Education (Too much)	Only mention your 2 or 3 most relevant degrees. Gather information and limit the ones you provide.
15	Degrees (Irrelevant)	Compensate by mentioning relative skills / talents (that you possess and that they do not have and need).
16	Driving license [No]	Avoid mentioning this information.
17	Education [Without / Wrong / Not enough / Bad]	Compensate by mentioning relative skills / talents (that you possess and that they do not have and need). Avoid mentioning dates and / or duration.
18	Employer in the past [Only one]	Choose to develop / produce a functional résumé.
19	Employers in the past [Too many]	Choose to develop / produce a functional résumé.
20	Experience [Irrelevant / Not enough / No]	Compensate by mentioning relative skills / talents (that you possess and that they do not have and need). Avoid mentioning dates and / or duration.
21	Experience [Too short / Too long]	Avoid mentioning dates and / or duration.
22	Family status [Single mother / One parent family]	Avoid mentioning this information.
23	Foreign languages [Not mastered / spoken]	Learn the most common 100 to 300 word and mention "Working Knowledge".
24	Foreign languages [Too many spoken]	State only those languages which are necessary for the job.
25	Foreigner (Is)	Avoid mentioning your mother tongue or that you masters it perfectly.
26	Handicap [Physical and invisible]	Avoid mentioning this information. Keep this information for the interview.

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N	Elimination criteria	Strategies
27	Handicap [Physical and visible]	Avoid mentioning this information. Keep this information for the interview.
28	Hobby [Not appreciated: hunting, fishing, corridas...]	Avoid mentioning this information.
29	Last job(s) too different from this one	Choose to develop / produce a functional résumé.
30	Marital status [Single / Married / Divorced...]	Avoid mentioning this information.
31	Nationality [Bad image / reputation]	Avoid mentioning this information.
32	Nationality [Not the one we're looking for]	Avoid mentioning this information. Compensate by mentioning relative skills / talents (that you possess and that they do not have and need).
33	Origin (Wrong / Odd)	Make sure not to specify your postal address or place of birth. Do not include your picture. Do not mention your mother tongue.
34	Past employers [Bad image / reputation]	Choose to develop / produce a functional résumé.
35	Picture [Bad looking / Wrong look / Odd face]	Avoid including your picture.
36	Picture [Not included]	Include it.
37	Politics [Wrong political party]	Avoid mentioning this information.
38	Qualification [Too much]	Limit yourself to the minimum. Adapt your vocabulary and change numbers into percentage.
39	Race / Ethnic origin [Wrong]	Avoid including your picture / photograph. Use the initial of your first name. Avoid mentioning your place of birth.
40	Religion [Wrong / Inadequate]	Replace your full first name by its initial only.
41	Salary [Expectations not mentioned]	Mention of a wide-open range. Offer to work 2 to 4 weeks for free.
42	Salary [Expectations too high]	Mention of a wide-open range. Offer to work 2 to 4 weeks for free.

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N	<i>Elimination criteria</i>	<i>Strategies</i>
43	Salary [Last too low / Too high]	Avoid mentioning this information.
44	Sect [Belonging to a]	Avoid mentioning this information.
45	Sex [Wrong, i.e.: woman / man]	Replace your full first name by its initial only. Do not include your picture.
46	Sports [Too risky i.e.: mountain climbing / diving...)	Avoid mentioning this information.
47	Unemployed	Do not mention this information. Use duration rather than dates.
48	Work permit / Visa [Without a valid]	Avoid mentioning this information.