

Hire Platform

A recruitment epiphany

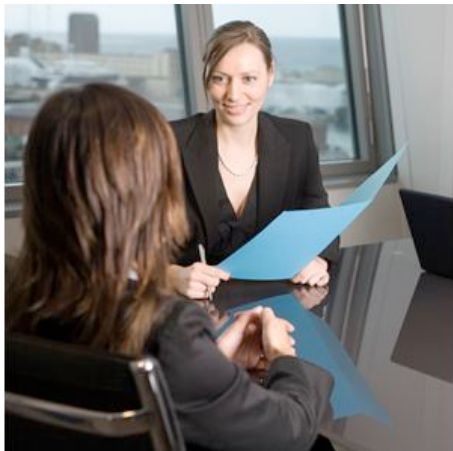
By Sandra Cherry

At the beginning of last year my partner was offered a position in another city so I happily resigned from my job, (which had well and truly passed its use by date) and we relocated.

Once we were settled in our new city, I made a concerted effort to find a new job. I went through the usual job seeking channels, (the internet and newspapers) and I applied for a number of suitable positions. I saw the prospect of finding a new job exciting and I was ready to roll.

I applied for, and was then invited to attend an interview for a position that I was keenly interested in and I did everything in my power to make sure I was the preferred candidate for the job.

The position up for grabs was Executive Assistant to the General Manager and the company employed about 60 people. I had worked in a similar role in the same industry in the past and I was excited by the prospect of working in the field again.



My preparation for the interview included undertaking research into the company and their current and previous activities; studying the position description and selection criteria and check-listing my skills against them so that I could be clear in my mind about how best to present these skills when questioned at interview. I brushed up on my strengths and considered what could be deemed weaknesses whilst assessing how I might creatively 're-work' these into strengths. I was prepared for any curve ball questions and felt confident that I had the skill level, experience and attitude to succeed in the position.

Further preparation included shopping for a (much needed) new business suit and new work shoes. I got online and looked up where best to park on the day as parking in the CBD is usually a challenge, and I made sure I had enough ready cash to cover the parking costs. With all this preparation for the interview, I was as prepared as I could possibly be.

Of course, I did not know how many other candidates would be interviewed. However, I expected that all would have gone to the same level of preparation that I had and, given the attractiveness of the position, I was sure that the number of applicants would be many. I also assumed that the employer had only short-listed the top candidates who were more than likely to have similar skills and experience to me.

With all this preparation and all the experience and skills that I could confidently demonstrate at the interview, the one variable that I could not control was 'professional chemistry'. In a position requiring a close working relationship with another person, there needs to be a 'professional chemistry' between both parties. It is vital that both parties operate in a way that complements the other. There also needs to be mutual understanding and respect. At times when the pressure is on this chemistry is very important.

Here is what I concluded.

The 'professional chemistry' is more than likely going to be established within the first few seconds of entering the interview room. We all know the rules of first impressions and their potency. Well, these rules apply here.

So what happens if the potential employer decides straight away, after meeting me, that I am not the 'one' he is looking for? If he has already made up his mind that another candidate interviewed earlier was the one, what does this mean for the other candidates he is yet to interview?

All candidates will still be interviewed even though the decision may have already been made.

So there goes a number of hours of the General Manager and HR department's time interviewing candidates that they have no intention of hiring. And there goes a lot of energy, effort and expense by the applicants who have attended the interviews as well.

The prospect of the above scenario playing out occurred to me in the car on the way to that very interview.

That's when I had an idea – in fact, I had an epiphany.

Why not meet me briefly first before the interview? The employer already knows that I have the skills to do the job – he short-listed me. By meeting me first, he will get a better sense of who I am and whether I would be a good fit for the company and, indeed, whether he wants to work with me.

I am not talking about physical appearance or stereotyping, I am talking about first impressions and giving the employer a sense of 'who I am'; how effectively I communicate; and how I present myself.

It occurred to me that interview short lists could be reduced if potential employers could meet candidates first. Also, candidates that might not be otherwise considered for a position might have the opportunity to attend an interview if they present themselves well.

How do we make it possible for employers to meet job applicants first before deciding who to short list for interview?

Simple! Today's technology, such as cameras, smart phones, laptops allow a candidate to create an introductory video that can be viewed by an employer as part of a job application. The employer will see the applicant before the interview process begins.

Think about it. How much time and money would it save all concerned if job seekers just included a brief video (say no longer than 30 seconds) with their job applications? In fields like hospitality and retail this tool would be especially invaluable.

I could have saved myself a lot of time and money if I were the 'wrong' candidate for this job. Although I did need the new suit and shoes for other interviews, so that expense was warranted. However, child care, fuel, city parking (and even public transport) can be expensive and most people on the job market don't have a lot of spare cash.

On the employer side, in this case, the time the General Manager and the HR Manager spent preparing for and undertaking the interviews was costly to the company. If candidates were able to introduce themselves through video first, the short-list would have been shorter and the time saved, considerable.

With this idea in mind, how would it work?

Taking into consideration the confidential nature of recruitment, it occurred to me that emailing introductory videos or posting them on to an unsecure site might be risky. In addition to the issue of confidentiality is the issue of compatibility. Formats of videos aren't always compatible and there is no framework to ensure continuity and professionalism if an applicant sends a video to an employer directly with their written application.

So, my mind took a little wander and I thought about how best to facilitate this process and make it an integral part of the job application process. My solution was to create a website that is video hosting, confidential and offers job seekers and employers a platform to meet.

Voila! Enter... www.hireplatform.com.

The site provides a platform for job seekers to password protect their resumes, cover letters and introductory videos, and offers employers the opportunity to invite job applicants to upload their introductory videos and personal profiles on the site in a confidential and professional way.

Job seekers create their own confidential profile page, and the link to this page is emailed to the potential employer. The employer then clicks on the link, logs in and they can then view the candidate's introductory video and print off their resume and cover letter.

Employers can also customise the content of the introductory videos by inviting candidates applying for a particular position to answer two or three relevant questions in their introductory video. This will further clarify a candidate's suitability for a particular position saving the employer and the job seeker even more time.

Visit www.hireplatform.com and see for yourself how Hire Platform can help you with your job search and your recruitment needs.

As for me and my job application, well it turns out that I was the preferred candidate after all, and I was offered the job.