

### Selection of applicants based on grades - seriously?

Already as a personnel consultant over 20 years ago, I was amazed at the importance of grades in the selection of graduates. As far as I know, no scientific evidence has yet been found to link good grades to professional success. This recruitment practice puts people with unusual CVs at a disadvantage, not only for the applicants concerned, but also for the companies.

#### Peter Näf

Apparently, not much has changed in this situation, as the following example shows: Some time ago, a young man came to me for job application coaching shortly before graduating from a university of applied sciences. He was struggling to get an entry-level position in his preferred field. Recruiters had turned him down twice on the grounds that they had preferred an applicant with better grades. His grades were average, but not bad.

There are professions where grades can be relevant: Research-related or quantitative-analytical tasks require good academic performance in certain disciplines. However, companies usually check these skills again during the recruitment process, as the performance assessments of different educational institutions are not easily comparable.

#### **It's the overall picture that counts**

For the business functions for which my client was applying, grades were not that important. I was particularly surprised by his rejection because his other qualities would have been evident in his CV if recruiters had looked closely.

Briefly about his background: He had completed an apprenticeship and then continued to work in the company where he was trained; even

then in a position of responsibility. He then completed a one-year vocational baccalaureate programme and - although full-time - continued to work alongside this. During his business administration studies at the university of applied sciences, his choice of subjects and coursework already showed his interest in the field he wanted to enter after graduation. His studies were again full-time, but he also worked 40% of the time at a financial services provider in customer service. His certificate confirms his strong social skills, which were also evident in personal contact. He was also in the military for about a year and a half and held the rank of first lieutenant. And yes - what else is important to know: He was just 25 years old.

#### **Be proud of your career!**

There is widespread agreement that, in addition to a good education, certain personal skills are important for professional success. My client has already demonstrated these at a young age: Only those who are at least willing to perform, resilient, goal-oriented, ambitious, and well-organised can produce such a CV.

I was shocked by the effect the rejection had on my client: He had the feeling that something was wrong with his career, that he had made the wrong decisions in his career to date and should have invested more in his grades. If you have a similar background, I advise you: Please don't doubt yourself, don't let anyone tell you otherwise and be proud of what you have achieved. I am not the only one who recognises such careers for what they are: Outstanding.

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