

Interpretation of standard rejections

Standard rejections are a nuisance for applicants. Anyone who has received them knows how they can affect your morale and self-esteem. Even if you can reduce the number of standard rejections by carefully selecting the positions and making preliminary enquiries by telephone, they cannot be completely avoided. It is therefore even more important that you interpret them correctly.

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There are understandable reasons for companies to send standard rejections. On the one hand, the sheer volume of applications suggests standardisation for reasons of efficiency. In addition, a large response to a job advertisement contains many «standard applications» for which applicants have made little effort. Unfortunately, job seekers often apply for too many jobs and focus on quantity rather than quality.

For these and other reasons, recruiters avoid discussions with applicants by formulating rejections as follows: «Thank you for your interesting CV. We have received applications that better match the job requirements. Therefore...».

Protect your mood

A customer repeatedly found this formulation in rejection letters. She had interpreted it to mean that she was not sufficient for the position. She had unconsciously translated the phrase «more suitable applications» into «better applicants». If she interprets rejections in this way, her self-

esteem will suffer over time as she thinks she is not good enough.

When I looked at the adverts for the jobs in question, the rejections could only mean that she was overqualified or possibly lacked very specific skills, given her good experience background. So, in most cases, the rejections meant: «You are too good for this job».

There is also overqualification!

Unfortunately, many applicants do not realise that they are overqualified for more and more jobs as their professional experience increases. For many of my highly qualified clients, this is the most common reason for rejection.

I often hear the objection that the companies might be happy to receive more than they asked for; they could secure a «bargain». This, in turn, can be a reason for standard rejections: Applicants are, from experience, hard to convince that companies don't want more than they need.

I always respond to the objection about the «bargain» with an analogy: if I want to buy a Smart car to do the occasional shopping in town, I don't want a Rolls Royce. If I got it as a present, I would sell it immediately, because: It's too expensive to maintain, too complicated to drive and doesn't fit in any car park. Plus, without a chauffeur, it looks terribly nouveau riche;-)

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