

## How recruiters read your application documents - yes, they still read!

Do you read a homepage completely from top left to bottom right and then click on the next page to continue in the same way? Of course not! Instead, you know what you're looking for and screen with your eyes until you find it. And what do you do if you don't find what you're looking for quickly enough? You go to the next homepage. Take this approach as an example of how recruiters read your application documents.

*Peter Näf*

I had one of my frequent discussions with a client who insisted on not putting her personal details on the first page of the CV. She wanted to get the recruiters to look at her professional qualifications first. She also insisted on her bold keywords so that recruiters would know what to look out for.

Now it is (still) people who read your application documents. And people are stubborn creatures who don't read what you put in front of them but look for what interests them. If you want to make your application documents reader-friendly - which I recommend - then make sure that readers find what they are looking for as quickly as possible. And above all, leave it up to them to decide what they are interested in, because you can't know that.

### **Recruiters have their own ways of doing things**

Why, for example, do I advise you to put the personal details at the beginning? Firstly, companies are not looking for abstract profiles, but people

with specific experience and knowledge. It is therefore a matter of appreciation that we first encounter the person and not their profile. In addition, some personal data determines whether recruiters read on or not: does the applicant have a valid work permit or how old - or how «senior» - is the person applying for a junior role.

Any attempt by the applicants to direct my attention distracted me from working efficiently. This could lead to me overlooking important information.

What's more, the little tricks for directing attention are well known to any reasonably experienced recruiter.

### **It works in a similar way in job interviews**

A classic is that more mature applicants bashfully put their date of birth at the very end of their CV or even leave it out. Guess what I did: I surmised from experience that the applicant was over 50 years old and checked my hypothesis by first consulting the references.

As I explained in the article «Of job interviews and gorillas», it works the same way in a job interview: applicants try to place important information in the interview. However, if they do so at an unfavourable time, the information is lost. Because in a job interview, too, interviewers only hear what answers their questions.

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