

And how many cooks are working in your career kitchen?

After an introductory meeting about an application coaching, I felt somewhat unsettled. Had I really just discouraged a young man, albeit indirectly, from working with me? I felt like a “fat cat” with the attitude: “Warning – customer threatening to place an order!” What had prompted me to let this opportunity pass?

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After some reflection, I came up with an explanation: it felt as though I might be the one cook too many in the saying, “Too many cooks spoil the broth.” Why did I feel that way?

The prospective client had been referred to me by an acquaintance with whom I had successfully worked in the past. He had been searching for £ a job for quite some time and had become very insecure after receiving numerous rejections. It turned out that he had already spoken to friends, consultants and people working in HR. And, of course, he had also consulted AI extensively. I felt like the last resort.

When advice creates more confusion than clarity

I had his CV in front of me and could see considerable room for improvement. At the same time, I sensed little motivation on his part to revise it yet again. He had already rewritten it several times – always based on somebody else's advice.

In my view, one of the most dangerous things in a job search is talking to too many people. The advice often contradicts itself completely, and each new piece of input tends to create more

confusion than clarity. For the same reason, I am often sceptical about additional job search workshops when job seekers are already receiving individual support.

More advice frequently creates more confusion than clarity. Likewise, while some people appreciate exchanging ideas with others in a similar situation, others find it of little help or even discouraging.

Your best adviser is common sense

I have a clear view of what matters in a job application. At the same time, applications can be approached in many ways, and more than one path often leads to success. What rarely works, however, is the uncritical implementation of advice from a wide range of sources.

In response to my recommendations, I often hear clients say: “I used to do exactly that, but someone told me that nowadays things are done completely differently.” Many job seekers replace their common sense with the most recent piece of advice they have heard. When I ask whether they themselves found that advice convincing at the time, the answer is usually a clear no.

To stay with the cooking metaphor: before allowing a new chef into your kitchen, check where they learned to cook. And even if they know their craft, only let them in if you are certain that you remain the head chef. Otherwise, they may well be the one cook too many who spoils the broth.

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