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| HR |

HR's Diary: Recruitment

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A candidate on a career move: the power of a professional job ad

It was one of those sultry summer afternoons, slow paced and boring as it could be, the sound of the ceiling fan whirling into the monotony of the last hour. Almost all the staff had left the office; Zahid was alone, not exactly feeling like going home.

He was flipping through the pages of The Bangladesh Observer, not really reading anything. It was kind of a habit of browsing each and every column. Suddenly, an attractive job ad caught his sight. An MNC was looking for a Security Manager. The design was catchy and the language used was as though they were looking for Zahid. Although young by age he was holding the position of a Deputy Director of a government directorate dealing with security matters. There was no need for him at that moment to switch the job, he knew; but the ad got into his head. He has attained his MBA from the prestigious business school of the country but that could in no way add any value to the job that he was performing. It was there very much in his mind all the time, silently making him inch towards an unconscious move for a new career. But he was in the so-called job security generated complacency leading to career stagnation.



As it looked from the ad it was an attractive job; but reading between the lines one could easily feel that it would be a dead-end job. No doubt, this posed a silver lining in the career move, as he always subtly wished for something to happen after completing MBA. But then he needed a

triggering point somewhere and he felt that this could be the 'one'. He suddenly remembered Mr. Hussain, a well-wisher and a mentor, who was fond of saying whenever an opportunity comes to life 'take a plunge'. Zahid could never fathom what he actually meant by this; but taking a 'plunge' at this moment would definitely be jumping out of the comfort zone and diving into the sea of uncertainty which matched the literal meaning of the word itself. He once again concentrated on the add.

A vivid description of an organization through a simple ad

The ad gave a clear picture of the MNC. In short but with crispy words the ad described the FMCG company along with its proud legacy, envisioning the business expansion. It was a couple of sentences at the most but what a description! He was clear about what the Company does, about its past, what sort of people it engages, what is the type of environment it fosters, the career growth opportunity it offers, about its personnel and, last but not the least, the competitiveness of its benefits package it would offer to the deserving ones. It was as if his dream organization was talking to him. It spread its wings in front of him to take the decision in favor of applying. He was clear in his mind that this was the organization he had been dreaming about to climb up a corporate ladder. Zahid looked through the window - a bird chirping on the branch of eucalyptus with dried leaves as if indicating an option for perfect exit from the bureaucratic career and an entrance to the corporate world.

What is the job all about?

Apart from learning about the organization, Zahid became eager to know exactly what he would have to do if he was selected and inducted into the job. Would he be able to do that and how would he assess his own capability of doing those, but above all would he like to do those in the first place? All these questions started to unfold in his mind. He got his answers when he saw the job description in bullet points right below the organizational introduction. Not in many words but clear ideas about the major responsibilities were articulated. A sigh of relief came when he saw that the job holder would be a member of the senior management team of the department; this would go with his current situation.

Zahid started comparing the job description with his own responsibilities, weighing to see what new and exciting the job could offer him. Another point caught his eyes which stated responsibilities of security policy formulation and monitoring the same - this has been his expertise. He then went point by point and then weighed his own capabilities vis-à-vis the capabilities of the other imaginary contestants vying for the position. His mind got stuck at one point about the 'industrial security' which he did not have any practical exposure to; he has simply theoretical knowledge from attending security courses. But then he thought about the current advisory role he had been performing successfully for the nationalized industrial sector. He went over the job description over and over until he was totally convinced about his candidature for the position.

What about the background required for the position?

Zahid was getting more excited as he was able to tick off the experience side, but what about the other requirements? The position required a Masters from any discipline which he was. The skill and behavioral competencies articulated for the position also matched what he has been possessing as described by his superiors in the last couple of years' ACR (Annual Confidential Report - the performance evaluation process for the government employees). After a quick re-

run he felt that the ad did not discourage him at all from applying; he found himself to be fully qualified for the position.



It also stated that the job was located in Dhaka but required extensive travelling throughout the country to the plant locations and sales centers. This part excited Zahid much as he always liked traveling and he got lost for a few moments imagining the lush green country side that he would be touring by road or train.

Company contact information

Having been sure about his candidature, Zahid checked the contact information where he would send the application. He found the whole lot at the end in bold and italics. There was the mention of the contact person of the HR Department to whom it had to be addressed, the address and post box number along with telephone and fax. He felt comfortable seeing that he had one whole week in hand to think through and apply.

Reminiscing

Looking back to the whole episode, Zahid still feels that what a great ad that had been which allured him completely in taking a very significant turn in his career. Whenever he designed any job ad afterwards or took sessions on recruitment and selection he always thought about that particular ad which was like designing the building blocks to attract a suitable candidate. Over the past two decades, the job market has certainly evolved, but that job ad had the right approach presented with a simple but catchy design, and it still retains its attractiveness. Zahid would still prefer to see such a Job ad that has

I a description of the organization in a short and crispy manner talking about its legacy, business vision and other pertinent information

I a Job title reflecting what the job is about. This can alone 'trigger' the right mind and produce expected response.

I a specific set of requirements highlighting the key one, otherwise it is likely to end up in attracting résumé that did not match the hiring needs

I a carefully crafted concise background for education qualification, knowledge, skills and

experience requirements to discourage unqualified applicants from applying

I the location of the job clearly stated with any special attributes like touring or working at odd hours

I benefits package indicating its competitiveness in the job market. This helps the aspiring candidate to make the decision on applying for the job

Specific company contact information is a must not only to send the application but also to place it to the right department or specific person, without being 'lost somewhere'. The mention of the mode of communication (fax, post, email, website etc.) and the last date also gives the candidate time to prepare his candidature appropriately.

Description should not be a laundry list. If there is a sizeable list of responsibilities or background requirements, use of bullets help to make the job descriptions an easy read and also makes the ad more noticeable. Not to forget that the conciseness of the ad also reduces cost.

On-line advertisement

In today's world, on-line job ad has become trendier alongside the newspaper ad perhaps due to convenience and economy. Zahid feels creating an on-line job is not much different from creating a newspaper ad, with a few exceptions. First, the date has to be included of when the ad was posted for the benefits of users to browse through a list of on-line job postings. Then there has to be a job title, the place where the job is located, whether the position is full-time or part time, and a brief description for qualifications and benefits. Sometimes, it is good to add some attractive information pertaining to the Job or organization that might help potential job seekers applying for the position.

Job ad is the gateway

Zahid always feels that a job ad is the most crucial part of the hiring process - whether through printed or electronic media. This is the gateway and the first interface the job seeker has with the company. It has been one of the most effective tools for employer-branding besides attracting the right kind of candidate and enjoying the wide spectrum of choices for selection. It has been a question in his mind ever since as to why the government jobs get advertised through 'circular' instead of a 'job ad' like the corporate world. It surprises him how he got attracted by a simple job ad of the MNC to leave a secured senior position in the government service - which in our social context is a 'dream job' to many.

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