

Common mistakes when searching for a contract

Introduction

The process of contract search is a skill in itself. Learning that skill and doing it better than your contracting counterparts will minimise your gaps between contracts and maximise your revenue.

This article explains the top ten mistakes contractors make and links to a more detailed article on the topic.

Common Mistakes

There are a host of reasons why some contractors find it harder to secure contracts than others. Here are the most common ones:

- 1. Failure to research the market and establish market rate.**
This can result in pricing yourself out of the market, or not charging enough to maximise your revenues.
See [Determining the Contract Rate for Your Skills When Entering the Contract Market](#).
- 2. Attempting to move from a permanent position to contracting without handing in your notice first.**
Unless you have highly in demand skills agents are unlikely to choose you for interview over someone who is definitely available.
See [Contractor Doctor - Should I Quit My Job Before Applying For Contracts](#).
- 3. Poorly prepared and not targeted CV. Using a one size fits all CV.**
A poor CV means you won't get noticed and will lessen the chances of obtaining an interview. A high impact target CV is crucial to your contract search.
See [An Introduction to Effective CV Writing for Contractors](#).
- 4. Not phoning agents to chase positions.**
Unless you are the only applicant, which is unlikely, you will need to chase the business by phoning agents after making applications via email. Not doing so will seriously reduce your chances of being picked for interview.
See [How to Find a Contract: Guide for UK Contractors](#).
- 5. Quoting an unrealistic rate and not being flexible.**
Quoting an unrealistically high rate will result in no success at all. Appearing inflexible on negotiations will also put agents off picking you for an interview spot.
See [Negotiating your contract rate](#).
- 6. Focusing on rate too early before getting an offer.**
Too much detailed discussion and agreement on rates before the interview stage does not maximise your revenue. If you get a contract offer then you will be in a much better bargaining position and will be able to negotiate a higher rate.
See [Negotiating your contract rate](#).
- 7. Not applying for enough positions.**
Getting a contract requires playing the numbers game. Apply for everything that comes on your suitability radar rather than making applications one at a time. If you are fortunate enough to get too offers you will be in a strong bargaining position when it comes to rate negotiation.
See [How to Find a Contract: Guide for UK Contractors](#).
- 8. Not taking enough action. Assuming agents will be actively trying to place you.**
Searching for a contract is a task in itself. You should probably be spending about four hours a day to maximise your chances of getting a contract quickly.
See [How to Find a Contract: Guide for UK Contractors](#).
- 9. Not writing a small covering email with each application.**
Some web sites have facilities for applying on line by sending your CV on to the agency. However, it is better to send your own application via email with a covering note explaining why you are perfect for the position.
See [Applying for a Contract Via email](#).
- 10. Poor or minimal interview preparation.**
Good preparation before the interview should ensure you breeze through it and get offered the position.
See [Preparing For An Interview](#), [The Killer Interview Technique](#) and [How To Pass An Interview](#)

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