

Contractor doctor: should I quit my job before applying for contracts?

Dear Contractor Doctor,

I'm currently a permanent employee and intend on going contracting. Do I need to hand in my notice before I start applying for contract positions?

Thanks

[Name supplied]

Contractor Doctor says:

Yes. I'll explain why.

When contractors are sought for positions the client generally wants them to be able to interview immediately with a view to starting within a couple of weeks.

The optimum time to start looking for a contract is when you are available the next day. If your availability is over about 3 weeks then you reduce your chances.

Also, a major factor is the agent. An agent will prefer to put forward a candidate that is available in the shortest available time to maximise their chances of getting their candidate the position. Often, even with 4 weeks to go I've been asked if I could leave earlier by the agent.

Worse for the agent than a long availability time is a permanent employee who has not yet handed in their notice. There is always the risk that the employer of the candidate comes up with a counter offer resulting in the candidate no longer being available and subsequently wasting the time of the agent and making them look bad in front of their client.

Sometimes a client will wait up to 4 weeks for the right person if there are after a niche skill which is difficult to find. This is rare though.

Basically, to optimise your chances considerably you need to hand in your notice and take the plunge.

Good luck with it all.

Contractor Doctor

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