

Recruitment expert says a hobby can land you that dream job

- Unemployment surges through 2m
- Seven jobseekers for every job in south west (ONS)
- 59% of employers claim hobbies give clear indication of candidate's fit (Yell.com)
- Leading hobbies show comes to the south west in April (www.swmee.co.uk)

18 March 2009, Bristol: With recent news that unemployment has surged through two million, and that there are seven jobseekers per job centre vacancy in the south west (see note 1), a leading recruitment consultant is calling on jobseekers to address the most overlooked aspect of their curriculum vitae.

The hobbies and interests section may come at the end of a CV, but, according to Ian Robinson - founder and director of Crystal Clear CVs and Bristol-based recruitment consultancy Montgomery Cox Associates – using it properly will set you apart from the competition.

“Your CV is your only means of defining to the employer who you are, what you are made of, and why you are absolutely right for that job,” he says.

“Several candidates will have the relevant qualifications and experience for a job, and so employer moves on to the person as a whole; and will review the CV for proof that the candidate will fit and can adapt to their company's ethos, culture and values,” he says.

“The problem is that many CVs look and feel the same, and to the reader there are no real differences. With so many people applying for the same job, a hobby or pastime can lift your CV above equally-qualified candidates.

“Hobbies can indicate to them what intrinsic skills and attributes a particular candidate has, and how that can transfer to the workplace.

“Employers are also very interested in the work life balance. They need people to come to work refreshed and to have that spark that an interest outside of work will provide and bring to the workplace additional inputs that maybe it does not have,” he says.

Mr Robinson also says that, when you are at an interview, a hobby or interest on your CV may also prompt an opportunity for you to talk about a topic that you can talk about with expertise, knowledge and passion.

“Several years ago, I presented a candidate to a major insurance company for a senior role. He did not stand out until the interviewer noticed that his hobby of metal detecting hobby. Apparently they shared a common interest. The interview over-ran by 30 minutes and he got the job,” he says.

Mr Robinson’s experience is born out by the results of research from Yell.com (see note 2) that shows more than half (59%) of the nation’s employers claim that life outside work gives a clear indication of whether or not a person might fit well with a company’s culture.

Commenting on the Yell.com research, Claude Littner, Sir Alan Sugar’s trouble shooter and international company turnaround specialist, said: “People are clearly missing a trick - employers want to know if a candidate is going to fit in with the team. It’s not just about qualifications and experience, but also personality. Whether you dabble in photography, sweat it out at the gym or throw yourself out of aeroplanes at the weekend, it all helps a potential employer see the real you, and most importantly, helps make your CV stand out.”

According to Mr Robinson, jobseekers must ensure that they include hobbies that have relevance to the employer.

“I have seen thousands upon thousands of CVs where the candidates say things like ‘enjoys reading, going to the cinema, socialising and the like, but as thousands of others are saying the same thing, where is that unique difference,” he says.

“Being bland does not add extra value. Make sure your hobbies are working for you.”

One person who thinks he can help people find a good hobby is Scott Hider. He is the organiser of the South West Model Engineering, Model Making and Hobbies Exhibition (www.swmee.co.uk), which is due to take place at the Royal Bath & West Show Ground over 18-19 April.

“If you want a new hobby, then you can’t miss the show,” he says.

“As the leading interactive hobbies show, we have the widest range of models actively being flown and ridden, shown and driven anywhere in the UK,” he says.

“All visitors can learn about, and take part in, a huge array of activities, with more than 130 clubs and traders on hand to encourage you and lend support.”

Mr Robinson says that model engineering and model making are excellent examples of hobbies that would interest a large body of employers.

“They show ability to follow precise instructions and to translate technical information into practical application,” he says.

“They also demonstrate the ability to plan, organise, project manage, overcome problems and deliver solutions; that you are numerate, logical and have attention to detail.

“Even hobbies like tabletop wargaming demonstrate strategic, operational and tactical planning. They provide proof that you are able to manage risk, evaluate, manage conflict, make decisions and solve problems.

“And if you enjoy a hobby that involves others as a group, or as a social network, then it further develops core competencies, such as, communication skills, influencing skills, team building, and leadership skills.

“These are powerful skills sets in any work scenario.”

The two-day South West Model Engineering, Model Making and Hobbies Exhibition will feature the widest range of models on display anywhere in the UK.

The show is being held at the fabulous Royal Bath & West Show Ground, where visitors can take part in a huge array of activities, and talk with a vast array of modelling enthusiasts and clubs.

Airfix, Humbrol and Games Workshop feature heavily and indoor activities include model engineering displays, award-winning model railway layouts, military vehicles, live presentations and workshops.

Outdoors is dominated by a huge flying display, marine demonstrations on the boating pool, and a miniature ride-on railway.

Young or old can take the controls of a flight simulator, experience a 200mph model plane display, go slot car racing or check out the petrol buggies.

There will also be remote control car and truck races, together with stunt displays.

Opening hours are 10-5 on Saturday and 10-4.30 on Sunday. For further information and tickets, visit: www.swmee.co.uk or call 0117 907 1000.

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Editor's Notes

Note 1

According to the January 2009 figures obtained from the Office for National Statistics' Nomis service (www.nomisweb.co.uk), job centres in the south west advertised 10,379 jobs to 76,814 jobseekers.

<http://www.tuc.org.uk/welfare/tuc-16119-f0.cfm>

Note 2

Yell.com research reveals more than half (59%) of the nation's employers claim that life outside work gives a clear indication of whether or not a person might fit well with a company's culture.

<http://www.yellgroup.com/espanol/media-pressreleases-2007-yourhobbiescouldlandyouthatdreamjob>

Images/Interviews

A gallery of images are available at <http://www.swmee.co.uk/photos.asp>. For hi-resolution copies, further information, interviews or press passes to the SWMEE show, please contact:

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