

Why you didn't even get an interview

 By [Marion Scher](#)

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Just recently I was involved in helping a client recruit a media liaison person for their organisation, an NGO involved in mental health. We gave very clear specifications in the advertisement and received literally hundreds of replies. Where to start...

Well, first of all we threw at least half out because even their covering letters were unintelligible. Here are a few examples - and these were the better ones left after initial weeding out by the NGO:

*I have a strong passion and curiosity to Mental **Diesease** studies in South Africa. I want to be in an **enviroment** that enables me to gain indepth exposure to this phenomena through means of researching and being **apart** of raising awareness **to Mental Diseases** in South Africa.*

*I believe I do possess the **skills that is** required for the position of Media **Liasion** within...*

*I have work for **gauteng** office of the premier*

*I am with **sound understanding** of journalism gained through academic and working experience, combined with outstanding communication, research, analytical and administrative skills.*

*Please **attached receive my CV** I am confident I am in **great position** to assume this responsibility and utilize my previous experience in managing a successful brand.*



And on and on they went. Then there were the covering letters which told us how wonderful the candidates were. We had phrases such as *'I'm a really talented.... I'm a dynamic individual with... Your organisation really needs me...*

The one that wins the prize for irony stated: *'I Have a real eye for detail...*

And then there were several that were obviously seeking completely different jobs - *"I should be very grateful for the opportunity to progress to graphic journalist"???*

Finally the numbers were whittled down to a handful of real prospects. I must say here that we had some outstanding applications, but as this is an NGO the salary sadly didn't match their expectations.

The day of the interviews came and out of the six we had lined up four cancelled, two asking for later dates - really???

Now as for the actual interviews rather than give you a rundown of what happened, let me give you a few tips:

- When you arrive be friendly to the receptionist - she may well report back to the person interviewing you
- Dress appropriately - low cut tops, micro-mini skirts and torn jeans and takkies not so good
- Enter the interview room with confidence and a broad smile
- Shake hands with conviction - limp, wet fish handshakes say a lot about you
- Find out just what the organisation is all about before the interview - it has a website!
- Bring examples of your work (in the case of media) with you
- When the interviewer asks if you have any questions don't sit there looking dumb
- Above all, show some energy and enthusiasm - this goes a very long way

So who got the job? Our last interviewee - a young woman with a strong media background who walked through the boardroom door with a huge smile, a firm handshake and energy pulsing out of her. She'd read the job specification properly, knew all about the organisation and was thoroughly prepared for the interview.

What this exercise sadly showed is how many people out there need jobs in the media but it also shows the weaknesses in skills needed for these jobs. What's going wrong? Many of these applicants had honours degrees plus other qualifications. Something is wrong in the state of media...

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ABOUT MARION SCHER

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