How to conduct in-depth research into a role

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Remember the times when you could successfully apply for different roles with the same resume? Also, do you recall the good old times when the job market was far less developed and the same role in two different companies meant almost the exact same job? We know today that those times are over, regardless if you are from a highly competitive, extremely developed job market or a yet developing market from an emerging economy. Research and personalization are the key to become a successful candidate for the role of your aspirations. Let us look at the most important aspects of pre-application research.

Market research

It may not be obvious, but there are certain times, when the employment market is not fruitful when it comes to job offers for a specific job role. It may be a slow-down time for a specific industry, it may be a lack of particular roles in a specific location or it may be about a highly competitive market with a large candidate pool, where job advertising is not necessary in order to attract candidates. Make sure to stay up-to-date with the industry news and employment trends in your location. It can help to follow some thought leaders in your industry on LinkedIn or downloading some reports on employment market conditions from local recruitment companies and market development agencies.

Company research

If there is a specific company you are targeting as a candidate, following the news on the company should now become your everyday morning coffee read. Stay up to date with press releases about the company, and connect with the employers on social media, i.e. follow their Facebook page and Instagram account. Make sure to read independent news about the company by setting up notifications about references to the company in Google News. Finally, try to map a few leaders from this company on LinkedIn and follow their profiles, to review their posts and articles in your news feed. You may also want to verify what people are saying about the company as an employer on platforms like Glassdoor.

Function research

You may be surprised, but the broad access to data these days will allow you to even track the news about the particular team or function you are aiming to join. Imagine a large global consulting company being your target employer. The company may be doing different kind of investments in different parts of their business. Perhaps they are the market leader in one area but are still developing other parts of their business. Do follow specialized industry forums and news.

Role research

Finally, you need to do the research on the role of your dreams – how would you know otherwise, that the role is such a great fit with your skills, expertise and experience? The job description is the most important place to start. Do have in mind, that most possibly the company already hires people working in the same role. Try to find their profiles on LinkedIn using the company name and the role title. Check how they describe their responsibilities – it's a great reference point against the job description, which might be too general or even a little outdated. There is no harm in connecting with these people and asking them some additional questions about their day to day activities, challenges and responsibilities. While assessing your fit for the role, try to understand the company structure and the precise seniority level of the role. Do review other job postings from the same employer and try to cross-reference some of the data you see.

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