

## Your Resume – Selection Criteria Heats Up

By A.J. Bond

*Due to increased competition for public sector jobs, this article discusses the resulting need for job seekers to ensure their applications meet the exacting selection criteria requirements.*

The job market for government roles has become tighter since the onset of the GFC due to a combination of shrinking government budgets, layoffs and the reluctance by incumbents to budge from existing roles. Private sector redundancies have compounded the situation, as those laid off seek more stable employment prospects in the government sector.

As a result, there has been a substantial increase in competition for the fewer public sector roles that become available. It has been estimated that job applications are currently running at anywhere between 2-5 times higher than a decade ago. The situation is tightest at the mid to higher echelons of public service, where incumbents, due to market uncertainty are hanging onto their jobs, resulting in career bottlenecks.

With the resulting increase in competition for limited roles, the importance of properly addressing selection criteria has taken on even greater significance. Those working or having worked in government roles will generally be well acquainted with the requirement to address selection criteria when applying for roles.

For those intending to apply for public sector roles for the first time and those unsuccessful applying for public sector roles in the past, the importance of addressing selection criteria cannot be overstated. There are many instances where otherwise ideal, well credentialed candidates get rejected early in the process simply because they fail to properly address selection criteria.

Applying for government roles typically requires candidates to specifically address each of the selection criteria outlined in the position description. But that is not the end of it. There is also a strong preference to address the selection criteria using a prescribed format or model, which is known as the STAR model.

The STAR model dictates that you frame your response for each selection criteria in the following manner:

- **SITUATION:** Outline of the situation in which you used the skill
- **TASK:** Provide an overview of the role and responsibilities

- ACTION: Outline the activities you performed
- RESULT: Provide results

With greater numbers of candidates applying for roles, recruiters and managers have become more discerning when reviewing applications. Applications that may have succeeded in the past may not get past initial screening in the current market.

In the current environment, the failure to adequately address selection criteria or producing a poorly written selection criteria response that is not comprehensive or does not use the STAR model can meet with swift rejection.

Whether applying for a public sector role for the first time, moving roles within government or having to reapply for your existing role, your chances of success will be greatly enhanced by ensuring your selection criteria responses are thorough (address each selection criteria individually) and use the prescribed STAR model.

A.J. Bond, is the proprietor of Absolute Resume, an Australian based consultancy specializing in the provision of Resume, BIO, Cover Letter and Selection Criteria writing services.

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