

Too good to be true

FIVE WARNING SIGNS A JOB OFFER IS NOT WHAT IT SEEMS

CAREERS

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The Australian job market is bursting with opportunities. Job vacancies are at record-breaking highs and with the unemployment rate at 3.9 per cent, described as close to full employment, it is a jobseekers' market.

But this is no ordinary competition for talent. It is aggressive, ambitious and even brutal. Three quarters of Australia's chief executives are concerned about the availability of key skills, and worldwide 54 per cent of companies report talent shortages. Is it any wonder the global cry for skills has been dubbed our other pandemic?

It is an opportune time to change jobs and careers with increased salaries, promotions, and flexibility all on offer.

But beware – the increased choice can make it harder, not easier. Here are the signs an offer may be too good to be true.

1 Your mindset

If you are working in a toxic environment and are desperate to escape, it might be hard to remain objective.

Your frame of reference may showcase only the positives of the new opportunities and diminish the negatives. On the other hand, if you are happy in your role and receive a headhunt call, pay attention to what your mind is telling you.

It may find reasons to fault your current position when you were perfectly happy a week ago. Before embarking on any interviews,

compile a list of what you desire and issues or conditions that are deal-breakers. This will keep your mindset in check.

If you're content in your role and still open to explore other positions, remind yourself of the good points of your current job and company. The attitude of gratitude will assist in being sensible and grounded.

2 Verbal agreements and vague answers

Watch out for when the offer comes through, and the contract is fine, except for some finer points. These could be as innocuous as not mentioning you need to finish early twice a week or include your flexible working hours, hybrid options, parking etc. You follow up and are told, "all will be OK" and to take their word.

This is a sure sign your verbal agreement will be tested and likely not fulfilled. What if the person providing you with the verbal agreement leaves or does not have the authority? Vague answers to specific questions concerning the job, reporting lines and responsibilities are also suspect.

Take heed. You might be signing yourself up for a job you are unaware of. And do not be fooled by the title, thinking it fills in the blanks.

3 The money is great

In fact, the money is surprisingly great. This is a difficult conundrum in our current market, where salaries across the board are on the rise.

Asking the right questions will uncover if it is danger money or on point.

How long has the role been vacant, why is it available, and why did the last person leave? These three questions reveal a lot.

Be clear about what is expected

from you for hours, skills, responsibilities, tasks etc.

Interview the interviewer. Ask scenario/ behavioural based questions, and don't be afraid to do so. Probe carefully about how certain challenging situations are handled. Ask for actual examples. If the role is a step up, how will your mistakes and even failures be viewed, and what support is offered, especially in the early formative stages.

4 You have not met your boss

This must be the biggest red flag of all. With technology at our fingertips, there is no reason on earth for this not to happen. Even Charlie's Angels would insist on this now.

5 Decision non-reversible

Possibilities and temptations can be a wonderful indulgence, especially on a superficial level.

With options galore, we all can fall victim to wrong decisions.

An extravagant purchase with no need for it? Buyer's regret and some guilt, but it's not going to affect your future.

This is not always the case for poor job choices. A wrong decision can set you back years, both financially and career-wise.

Warning signs are guardian angels when a vital decision is to be made. When it comes to any offering or opportunity, correct information is critical.

The difference between warning signs and insufficient information is delicate. Choose not just the opportunities but your regrets carefully.

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