

VOLUNTEERING: A TRUE PATH TO EMPLOYMENT

It's possible that if you find yourself out of work, your job centre advisor has encouraged you to take up some volunteer activity while you search for employment. You might also have dismissed this advice as a load of nonsense, or thought you're too busy for such a thing.

But believe me, volunteering is the best thing you could possibly do if you are out of work. It is a sure way of helping you land the job you want. I know this, because it happened to me.

After an unfortunate career move, I found myself out of work with no prospects on the horizon. I registered to a stack of recruiters, searched hard via job-related websites and waited for the phone to ring!

Only it didn't ring. Recruiters dithered, job applications were ignored. Weeks became months, and my optimism started to wane.

So I approached Community Impact Bucks, thinking if I couldn't get paid for my work I'd do it for no charge. After all, any employer would be impressed by a person determined enough to work that they would do it free, wouldn't they?

It took time though. I first started volunteering for Community Impact Bucks using my professional skills one day a week. I then expanded to volunteer for a different group for a further few days, so effectively I was treating my volunteer work as a full time job: getting up each morning, setting out and completing a full week's work.

From being embarrassed at my CV and unwilling to put myself out into the job market, I was able to fill the gap in my career history. I then started my job hunt again with a revised CV and a renewed vigour to find that elusive offer.

And sure enough ... things started to happen. My applications were picked up, and I was invited for a series of interviews – six in as many weeks! Three of those resulted in second interviews. And in all cases, the questioning centred on my skills and experience – not a single interview questioned my recent lack of paying employment.

And finally, the job offer came. And not just any old offer ... a permanent role and in my professional field too.

As I mentioned, the road to employment was not a fast one. And you have to get off your sofa and work hard for it – harder than you will ever imagine.

But it is a fact that volunteering was the key reason for me landing a job. It gives an unemployed person credibility in a competitive job market, works as a great confidence booster, improves your interview performance and enhances your CV considerably.

So in two words ... do it! It will be the best decision you ever made.