



WHY SHOULDN'T I APPLY FOR EVERY JOB I LIKE THE LOOK OF?

So what's this all about? Read on to learn why applying for every job we host, that you don't match the criteria for, will damage your chances of employment.

The Unit List:

- is mostly for freelance television vacancies, occasionally some junior film / corporate / web roles
- is not aimed at graduates or students to guide them by the hand into jobs
- is not for on screen talent / contributors
- is not solely an advice group for new entrants

SO WHAT IS THIS GROUP FOR, THEN?

The Unit List group is currently a free, job listing with occasional information about issues/events TV freelancers may find useful/interesting. It has developed a good reputation for ensuring jobs advertised are bonafide, pay wages and operate working practices in line with UK employment law.

The additional information we ask from employers is to enable the freelancer to judge how accurately they may match the employers requirements. The more closely matched the freelancer to the job – the more often the employer will use The Unit List for recruitment.

WHY DO I HAVE TO BE A RUNNER IN MY FIRST JOB? I HAVE A DEGREE AND WAS A PRODUCER AT UNIVERSITY

Being a Producer at University, or on a hobby short film, is NOT the same role in broadcast TV. It is not subject to the same pressures or requirements of skill, experience or responsibility. It is NOT appropriate to apply for a job as a broadcast TV Producer when you have not had experience to at least Assistant Producer level on several broadcast jobs.

The role of a Runner is perfectly suited to even the most ambitious individual as it allows for a wide scope of observation and task experiences without the responsibilities of schedules, financial implications, editorial decisions, Health & Safety considerations or kit/technical requirements to match a creative brief.

Putting a graduate/junior production team member into a more senior role loads responsibility on to someone who will often be ill equipped to think on their feet and find last minute solutions or lead a team. The bottom line is every decision, made by every member of the team, has a creative versus cost implication.

The job description of a Runner is not to make the tea, it is to support all departments as directed. It is up to the individual to progress, ask questions, make contacts, offer to assist on specific tasks and gain knowledge of the process of making a television programme. They are not expected to run departments or shoots or make major creative decisions but they are expected to work as part of the team and contribute their ideas while fulfilling every task they are given and be forward-thinking individuals.

The [TV freelancer forum](#) put together tips on how best to develop an excellent reputation as a Runner and get that phone ringing to hire you again. You can download the document, full of invaluable tips, [here](#)

We don't expect you to not apply for jobs if your experience is appropriate, we are asking that you learn to walk before you try to run. Yes, there can be some decent wages earned the further up the ladder but you must realise this is balanced with a lot of responsibility and the wage reflects that experience.

Abusing the direct contact information that we impart on The Unit List, has a negative effect on the reputation of the group. It means that employers will think twice about advertising jobs on The Unit List or perhaps not use us at all.

WHY SHOULD GRADUATES / JUNIOR FREELANCERS NOT SEND THEIR CV FOR A JOB THEY DON'T YET HAVE EXPERIENCE FOR?

We are well aware that some graduates/junior production staff are exceptionally talented but within the television production industry 'talent' does not equal experience and they will not be hired as anything more senior than a Runner or Logger for a number of contracts. The only rare exception to this could be if their degree / further education directly relates to the content of the programme, this does not include TV/Film/Media degrees, and they may be a specialist researcher.

WHO SAYS I SHOULDN'T TRY ANYWAY?

The employers do.

The biggest complaint that those in hiring positions have of job advertising sites, is the deluge of inappropriate applications they receive from those who do not think they require some previous experience for the advertised role. There are also those who are chancing it and applying for roles other than that advertised by the employer, effectively sending spam.

For example, if you have some great experience at being a floor assistant / Runner and you send in your CV for the job of an Assistant Producer - the employer will immediately delete your CV as you will not have the required experience to deal with the responsibilities of that role. You have wasted both yours and the employers time.

In most companies, the people managing the recruitment process are also dealing with setting up shoots, processing payments, writing contracts, sourcing contractors, negotiating deals, overseeing compliance, Health & Safety plans, Risk Assessments etc so each wildly inappropriate CV in the inbox is wasting their precious time.

Try imagining how frustrated you might feel in the employers position when your time is short and you have an inbox full of CVs that don't come anywhere near to what you are looking for.

ANYTHING ELSE I SHOULD REMEMBER?

Please do not make the mistake that this industry is all about running about with some sexy, techy equipment, displaying your "passion" for the medium and "showing flair". The truth is that all content is a team effort, the production is balanced with a financial responsibility to the independent production company (effectively the 'contractor') and the broadcaster (effectively the 'client').

Oh and whenever you don't know or understand something, always ask. Nobody minds if you ask questions. Just use your judgment to do it at the appropriate time (don't do it in the middle of a viewing with the commissioning editor...).

YOU SAY THE UNIT LIST IS NOT RUN PRIMARILY FOR NEW ENTRANTS BUT HOW CAN WE GET STARTED IF YOU DON'T HELP US?

We are not here to lead new entrants by the hand into jobs but we do share information and have published documents to help you find your own opportunities. See the resources at the end.

In a small way, that we expect nobody to have noticed, we often refuse to advertise jobs for a variety of reasons to protect the inexperienced from ignorant or unscrupulous employers. This may be because they are unpaid jobs (which is illegal), does not meet National Minimum Wage guidelines, requires an extensive skillset without appropriate remuneration and other bits and pieces. Quite a bit of to-ing and fro-ing will happen to confirm various points before we are satisfied a job is appropriate to be advertised.

In addition, we contact employers directly if we learn they are not paying the legal National Minimum Wage for entry level jobs. We are really proud that we have managed to turn unpaid positions in various companies into fully paid ones, allowing new entrants the chance to turn an ambition into a reality. We don't publicize these victories. Well ok, sometimes we do a little bit.

THE UNIT LIST RESOURCE DOWNLOADS

OTHER RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/academy/collegeofproduction/>

<http://wanttoworkintelevision.com/>

<http://www.tvwatercooler.org/>

<http://www.creativeskillset.org/tv/industry/>

<http://www.creativetoolkit.org.uk/home>