

## No work experience necessary – just a sad story

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*Office workers hard at work at a company in Shah Alam. Jobseeking appears to have taken a new twist, with some applicants sharing stories of personal difficulties instead of their resumes.*

A new trend appears to have emerged on several social media platforms including corporate and professional networking sites such as LinkedIn where sob stories have displaced resumes for those seeking to gain the attention of would-be employers.

This development looks to have started after the country began moving towards a semblance of economic recovery in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic.

With sectors across the board seeking to jump-start their activity after months of restrictions, employers have been on the lookout for new recruits. Those who lost their jobs due to pandemic difficulties, meanwhile, have been eager to find work once more.

But instead of sending out resumes and cover letters in the manner of traditional job hunts, some have taken to sharing personal stories of depression, rejection and even family problems in order to land a position of employment.

One post sighted by MalaysiaNow was published by a user who said that his wife had recently suffered a miscarriage due to work-related stress, and that he wanted

to “cheer her up” by helping her find a new job.

And while job hunts normally entail at least one round of interviews for applicants to meet with prospective bosses, the so-called new way of seeking employment sees individuals asking interested parties to contact them with work opportunities instead.

The Malaysian Employers Federation, the central organisation of private sector employers in the country, said this method of pleading and looking for sympathy was inappropriate in any search for work.

Its president Syed Hussain Syed Husman said the process of employment was based on employers’ needs as well as the qualifications and skills possessed by the jobseeker in question.

He added that workers were employed to fulfil the manpower needs of the company, and that they should be able to contribute to productivity and competitiveness.

He also cautioned employers against falling for the sympathy technique which he described as an unhealthy practice.

“It is important for applicants to show their true potential and to always strive to build a positive character,” he told MalaysiaNow.

“It’s not easy for someone to find a suitable job, especially with the economy the way it is today. This should drive jobseekers to continue trying, and to constantly work on improving their self-esteem.

“Yes, the journey to employment is full of challenges, but this does not mean that applicants should easily give up.”

Checks found that the trend has been ongoing in other countries for at least five years.

On Quora, a platform for professionals to exchange knowledge and experiences, some employers said they had come across such situations before.

“I was interviewing someone who gave me a very sad story about his family (medical issues) and how he needed the job,” one of them said.

“He wasn’t qualified, though – how should I deal with this?”

The post was flooded with hundreds of replies, most of which advised the employer to focus on the quality of jobseekers instead of their stories.

They also warned that taking on unqualified workers might end in them being sacked for incompetence.

Back home on LinkedIn, mechanical engineer Mohd Adib Sofwan had posted a similar plea for work. He said he needed a job as soon as possible as he and his wife were expecting their first child.

When contacted, he said many had reached out to him and offered to help him find work after his post, published two weeks ago.

However, he has only received a verbal offer so far, with nothing down in black and white.

When asked what drove him to share such a personal experience on a professional networking site, Adib said it was a last-ditch attempt after meeting with failure on every other count.

He said he had tried everything, from scouring employment websites to going door-to-door at offices, asking if they needed workers.

“The competition is very stiff,” he said. “Chances are better if you can attract the attention of the hiring manager straight away.”