SIMPLIFYING THE APPLICATION PROCESS
If you have ever tried to apply to a certain job through an online platform, chances are that the process was a bit long and tedious. You probably had to submit the usual requirements such as your CV, cover letters, and letters of recommendation, fill more than a few forms, and on top of it all, answer some essay-like questions.

In past publications, we’ve spoken about the fact that there has been an important shift in the job market during the beginning of the 21st century. **We are now living at a time where people get to choose where they want to work due to the saturation of job positions in the market and the low numbers of people to fill them.** So why on Earth would a company make workers go through a lengthy and tedious process just so they can apply? This is causing companies to lose employees before they’re even hired.

It’s no surprise that, according to a study by [CareerBuilder](http://www.careerbuilder.com), when faced with an application process that is too complicated, more than half of the prospective hires simply give up on the whole process due to the unnecessary complexity of applying. Needless to say, this finding should be proof enough for companies that some traditional practices are completely outdated and are causing them to lose the opportunity to work with incredibly talented people.
The Problem

When it takes a candidate more than half an hour to apply to a certain job, regardless of the level of specialization of the job, you should know that there's something wrong. Keep in mind that this is probably the very first contact between your company and the candidate, and the last thing you want to do is scare them away.

The Current Model

How complicated it is to apply for a specific company or position is going to depend on several factors, including the level of the position available, the type of platform where the vacancy is being advertised, and the particular requirements of each company.

First, there's the hierarchal level of the position in question. More often than not, for entry-level jobs (i.e. restaurant servers, cashiers, tellers, or retail clerks) the application process is not overly complicated. Most employers will only require a CV and sometimes some references. This makes sense since these workers will not be given big responsibilities and the candidate pool is very large; but what happens for jobs that are a bit higher up the ladder?
This is where things might start getting overly complicated. In order to apply for mid or high-level jobs, it is expected that candidates possess the necessary qualifications, the right education, and the proper skills to perform the job. In other words, the number of qualified applicants becomes scarcer with each requirement, making them harder to find. So why would anyone make it harder for them to get to you?

Some companies and online job platforms have the strangest requirements for applicants, from page-long essays to numerous attachments, putting their candidates through the most exhaustive and absurd processes just to apply. Some of them will even require applicants to create a login and password, which is, let's be honest, not the most productive thing to do. We can all agree that the standard candidate isn't one who visits your career site weekly, or even less likely, daily. So, why ask them to create a login and password for a website that they probably won't visit in months, or ever again?

All this goes to show that the major problem is recruiters treating the application process the same way the hiring or selection process should be. But that's exactly the root of the problem, in order to have a good selection process, you first need a good pool of candidates!
Application vs. Selection Processes

A good recruiter or talent acquisition professional should know the differences between application and selection. It’s all part of the hiring process, but in order to have things working at top efficiency, it’s crucial to divide tasks and work from the basics to the specifics. Asking for the minimum requirements during the application stage will guarantee a good pool of candidates from which you can later pick the ones they feel should move on to the next stage of the hiring process.

During the first point of contact between a company and a potential hire, asking for minimal information is a best practice. At this stage of the game, less is more! This serves as a way to simplify the process, not only for the candidate, but also the recruiter, who simply needs to filter out the best suited candidates using their ATS and weed out those that are not a good fit for the job.
Imagine that an ad goes out from a company saying that they are looking to bring on a new senior accountant to their staff and, in order to apply, a candidate must fill a form with their personal information, provide references, cover letters, do a test of mathematical skills, and answer three questions about previous job experiences. **Keep in mind this is an example, but it is not far from reality!**

Now, let’s say that 300 people see the job ad requirements come up, statistically, more than half of them will not complete the application process; and even if they did, what recruiter is going to read 300 cover letters, see the results of 300 math tests, and read 900 answers to the questions they posted? People think that this ensures that only dedicated and hardworking people apply, but this is an idea without any real evidence.

In fact, according to our data, most North American people looking for a job do so between 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. on week days, making it likely that the average job seeker is actually currently employed and browsing for a job during their lunch break. We call those “passive candidates”, as they are not actively looking for jobs, like someone unemployed would. Now, passive candidates certainly don’t have the time, interest, or energy to answer a never-ending list of questions and fields, even though they probably have the skills and expertise you’re looking for.

Even if only 50% of the people who see the job ad complete the first application process, that still implies a lot of work (i.e. reviewing hundreds of documents, cover letters, skill tests, and essay-like questions) for the recruiters or hiring managers in charge.
The problem with having so many steps to fulfill before a user can submit their application is that you will only get applications from candidates who are desperate enough to go through such a time-consuming process—and passive candidates aren’t. In most cases, if an applicant is willing to go through a 20-minute long process, chances are they’re not the right person for the job. An obvious exception to this would be junior positions since new graduates are usually rather eager to get their foot in the door.

A much better way to go about this is to simply ask for the most basic requirements. All the information necessary to make an informed selection of candidates can be pulled from their CVs (i.e. personal information, past experiences, skills, and educational background). From that point on, the recruiter can simply screen or filter out the candidates with the skills and qualifications that best match the job.

With a smaller group of candidates at hand, the recruiting team may then proceed to ask for references, tests, and whatever questions or other information regarding their skills and past experiences can be easily obtained during an interview.

The idea is that once recruiters have selected a group of prospective candidates, then they can proceed to ask them for more specific requirements, perform tests, and provide further details about themselves.
Summing Up: Key Aspects to Remember

The application process is only a small part of the bigger picture. Although it’s a very important step, it’s not the best place to test candidates out or ask them for numerous documents—leave that for later. So, what is there left to do in the application stage? Here’s what you should keep in mind:

Long and tedious application processes don’t necessarily bring better candidates.

On the contrary, you might attract desperate candidates and make those who are actually qualified for the job lose interest. Especially considering that the best person for this position is probably already employed and applying while on the job. They don’t have time to go through a never-ending application processes.

Keep track of your drop rates and see where you can improve.

Data-driven decisions are always the ones that bring the best results. It’s time you take a look at what may be scaring your applicants away by tracking and analyzing at which stage of the process they choose to give up.

Stick with the basics.

Focus on crucial requirements, those without which it would be impossible to start filtering applications. Avoid asking the candidate to copy/paste information from their CV to your form and don’t ask them to include any attachment you won’t make use of at this step of the process.

One of the best ways to simplify the application process is by advertising your jobs through the best platforms, those that take into consideration the valuable time a candidate takes to apply for a job.

Get in contact with our team and learn how neuvoo takes care and improves your candidate experience by offering a simple and straight application process.