

Gail's Story

Written by JOC Europe

Friday, 30 July 2010 14:52 - Last Updated Monday, 07 October 2013 13:07

"They always promise they will contact me, but they never call back"

Gail, 22 years, Belgium

For 3 years I've been registered at all interim offices in Oostende, and the reason I'm so mad, is because today I was again disappointed. I came here because they called me to say that I could begin in the supermarket here in Oostende. Thrilled, I came to the interim office for my validation.

Then the lady said that the job will not continue. The supermarket stated that it is 'on hold' and I can no longer work there. They always promise that they will contact me but they never call back. And then they ask me the same questions: "Is your address still the same? Has your phone number changed? And what kind of work do you want? "

I know all the questions by heart.

It's just a tape machine that goes off every time.

I saw several times in the shop windows a job vacancy hanging for a saleswoman. But whenever I ask about it, they say that the job is no longer available. This happened several times. Other times they had a job in another shop. She promised to contact me, but after two weeks I heard nothing, and I went to see them and then had to come home because suddenly they knew nothing about that job...

You have to constantly go to the agency with proposals for what you want to do, otherwise, they only propose things that have nothing to do with your hopes and wishes. They did have some proposals, but they do not take into account the fact that I have no driving license for example. I have wanted a license for so long, but I cannot afford it. So I want to find work in the region of Oostende.

I sometimes get automatic text messages to go to Brussels, Antwerp and Gent to work. When I arrive later at the interim office, they say to me: "Did you get a text message?" When I reply that these places are too far for me, they always say: "Do you really want to work?"

They know that I am searching for work in sales in the non-food sector, but I was sent to a bakery to go and clean. I really feel inferior, or that maybe it is my dark skin.

If they ask, again and again, if I want to work part time or full-time, I say part-time. Then they always answer: "Part-time? Why?!"

Maybe you don't really want to work? " First, they do not know why, they just need to find me work. And second, my mum has been sick for three years, so I have a lot to do to take care of

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my little sister, which does not allow me to work full-time until my mother has recovered. But they do not know that.

I once said full-time because I was afraid to get the same answer as always.

You know what their answer was? "Excuse me, but there is almost no place for a full-time saleswoman to get started, almost all sellers now work half-time". It doesn't matter what you say, they always have an answer ready.

I have worked here in a shoe shop with weekly contracts. I continued to do so until I was fired, but they've never fully paid me. I did not get the wage that was promised me. Another time, I also applied for a job where I could take orders. I went there, and the job was actually baking bread, but this was not the job profile. I went back to the interim agency, to ask how it was that I had to bake bread rather than take orders.

There they told me they knew nothing.

I told them that I would last a week, but I expected that within the week I would be able to take orders as a task I knew I could do. During that one week I was still baking bread, so I went back to the interim agency. Their answer was that they could not change that.

I stayed there, but was really unhappy because this really was not for me.

I'm at the agency every week, but nobody recognizes me there. Nobody knows that I am registered because they ask me repeatedly to fill-in the file for any changes (always the same questions I already know by heart).

I wonder what they do with those files.

I have a feeling they like to see me go rather than come.

In one interim agency I was really surprised. I was there only two days apart and no one recognized me when I came. The computer is their best friend.

They only look at their screen, but almost never look straight into my eyes.

And then it starts to play again like a cassette recorder. For them you're just a sheet of paper with a number.

I'm furious. It takes so much energy from me.

I live with my boyfriend, but our relationship is very difficult because I have no work. I had been lying to him that I was working. I would get up earlier to pretend. But lying is not good, then I lost everything.

It seems wasteful energy.

I sit there and feel completely terrible.

I get 150 euros per month, and it gives me a feeling of dependence compared to my friends.

I'm hopeless and frustrated.

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I know all interim offices inside by heart. I have spent hours in the interim agencies waiting, waiting, waiting.