



Pippa's Advice on Recruitment

With the third ever London PA Awards looming, I thought it might be nice to talk a bit about the business of recruitment itself and what the process of becoming a Tate PA entails. It seems particularly timely because this year Tate are sponsoring the above wonderful awards; in itself a huge honour but perhaps not surprising given how many career PA's have been produced by them, myself included!

Originally from the North, I shall never forget arriving in London some years ago now, green around the ears, terrified I'd never get a job, yet beyond excited to discover what the future would bring. In the beginning there were days when, being honest, I was tempted to just give up and get the first train home. I felt lost, a tiny wannabe PA minnow in a sea of more experienced, more worldly sharks. But then I heard about Tate and everything changed.

Even then I definitely knew I wanted to be a PA. It was a career I was drawn to for many reasons. Firstly, if you're good at it, it's a job you can make a great career from. There's room to grow and to be promoted and to earn more as the years go by, based on your experience and how invaluable you can become to either an organisation or an individual. I had surmised that my strengths would make me a good PA. I'm not particularly creative, nor am I an 'ideas' person but I am very organised, efficient and thrive on problem solving and on staying unflappable when things are hectic. I get a real sense of achievement from ploughing through tasks while making sure they're all done well. However, it was all very well me knowing all these things, and all well and good being determined and hard-working but none of it meant anything if I had no clue where to start in terms of applying. And truthfully, in terms of that, I was hopeless and didn't know what to do so it made sense to find people who did. Enter Tate stage right.

Thankfully Tate decided to take me on and I've not looked back since and of course many of you who are reading this will also be with Tate and therefore have experienced exactly the same process I did. But, for those of you who haven't, this is what happens when one of the biggest and best recruitment agencies decide to recruit you.

1. Step One – Getting to Know You.

Once I'd made initial contact, the first step toward becoming a Tate temp was a phone interview. I clearly remember the woman I spoke with instantly putting me at ease to the point where I soon forgot I was being 'interviewed' and found myself easing happily into the conversation. Let's face it, talking about ourselves is something we're all equipped to manage and the Tate consultant made it clear that there was no risk of sounding self-indulgent. The whole point of the conversation was to glean what I was all about. She wanted to know about any previous work experience, my general background and what kind of work appealed to me. Once that had all been ascertained and I'd managed not to say anything strange or embarrassing (yay) she explained that I'd need to fill out a form and that then a face to face interview would be arranged. So far, so good! It was the most amazing feeling to finally have some support, some help and to hand over the task of finding me a job to someone who knew what they were doing.

2. Meeting your Consultant

A date and time was set to come into Tate in the London City branch for an interview. I loved this part for it meant getting suited and booted and making my way into the City. Country girl that I am, I remember marvelling at the landscape, craning my neck up to look at all the skyscrapers and noticing and feeling quite thrilled by the palpable 'busy', urban edge in the atmosphere, which was such a contrast to rural Cheshire. I had been unemployed since I'd arrive in London and everyone needs a purpose, or at least I do anyway, so frankly I was deliriously happy just to have something constructive in the diary. I think I'd been spending far too much time, gazing at my phone, waiting for some news from somewhere, anywhere, while daytime telly

blared in the background. So I was nervous too, though that's probably only natural. I was desperate to make a good impression and to avoid giving my consultant any reason to decide I wasn't 'Tate' material. I needn't have worried though, my consultant, who remains my consultant to this very day, put me at ease instantly and made the whole experience very easy.

What I especially appreciated was her honesty. Just as a good hairdresser will tell you if your haircut is doing nothing for your bone structure, a good consultant will tell you if your CV needs reworking. Mine did. In fact, it turned out that there was quite a bit about it which needed improving and yet I didn't feel criticised or embarrassed, just supported and helped.

Of course, one has to remember that it's in Tate's best interests to have you in as best shape as possible since you'll be representing them out there on the work force battlefields. Hence why they will go the extra mile to make sure their candidates are as up to scratch in every way. I left that meeting feeling like it was the best decision I ever made to seek their help. I'd found a company who would try to place you in a job you were suited to, with professional help and expertise on hand at all times. It was a no brainer!

3. Feedback and Updates

And so it began. The next step was being sent out for interviews. It felt like such a luxury having someone else do the initial legwork in terms of getting me seen. After that it was down to me but I felt prepared and ready. I suppose that to some extent being with Tate is like having an agent. They've got your back and after each interview will give you feedback. This is very helpful and means you're able to improve and work on elements of your interview technique. I remember the thrill and excitement of landing my first job and I haven't looked back since.

4. Training

If you, or someone you know, wants to be a PA but doesn't have the right qualifications, Tate will help advise you on what you need to learn or study or train for. You have to remember that a company as vast as Tate are always on the lookout for excellent new candidates so if they think you've got all the right ingredients they will want to help you pull them all together in order to be equipped and ready for a role. There are so many courses one can take to brush up on computer skills for instance, or shorthand or other things you might need to know about. The consultants at Tate are even happy to advise you on what to wear. Being well presented and exuding the right sort of image is an important part of the overall package of any candidate.

In a nutshell being with Tate has being a wholly fantastic experience for me and I hope it is for you too. As for The London PA Awards 2016 which are taking place on July 1st, I'm hoping to get a ticket this year and I cannot wait. And in 2017, you just never know, maybe I'll be nominated. Well, a girl can dream.....

See you soon,
Pippa x