

Job Agency Scam : Once bitten, twice shy

Written by Administrator

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THE advertisement in the newspapers seemed like the perfect opportunity for Shanti Kerishnan to contribute financially to the family while staying home with her young child.

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Stuffing envelopes for RM50 a week seemed an easy enough job for this 37-year-old housewife. Shanti and husband, Babanaselvan Selvaraju, 43, decided to visit an employment agency where she was promised a job within two weeks. This "guarantee" came with a catch - they were asked to pay a RM150 administration fee.

Although sceptical as the place looked like a makeshift office with no computers and little furniture, the couple paid the amount anyway. Their hopes were high when they received a call within a week informing Shanti of a job opening. But that was it. "We were informed shortly after that the company that was going to employ Shanti was full and they had to look for other openings. "The employment agency said they would get back in two weeks with information on available jobs. "We went back to the company four times but got the same excuse." Angry at being given the run-around, they called the customer service manager whose number was listed on the receipt. "We calmed down initially because the manager was mellow and soft-spoken. He assured us they were trying their best and told us to be patient." But after numerous calls to the manager proved futile, the couple took the matter up to the National Consumer Complaints Centre (NCCC).

Roslina Sulaiman had a similar experience. When she was guaranteed a job that would pay a minimum of RM350 to RM500 a week, the 24-year-old was excited. "It is a lot of money and I was willing to pay the administration fee of RM182 because the company promised me a good data entry job. "The agency said the money would be used, among others, for documentation processing services, phone-call expenses, consultation sessions and an e-photo." But call after call to the company was of no use as they always gave her the same answer. "They said they had to give my profile to company B. Soon, there was company C and company D."

Salina Shahrul Hameed, 26, was promised a home-based assignment after two days if she paid a processing fee of RM179. "When I called the agency two days after my first visit they told me the company ran into some financial problems and they had to pass my application form to another agency." After failing to receive any job offers, Salina threatened to lodge a report with the police. "They told me I could do whatever I wanted. They said they didn't even care if I destroyed their office. "I am disappointed and sad that I lost my money. I was taken for a ride and on top of that the agency representatives were so rude." Friends of Salina, Muhamad Rafi, 20, and Logeswaran Anavi, 20, suffered the same fate. They were enthusiastic about working from home when one of their friends earned up to RM600 from an employment agency. But because that agency did not have vacancies, they had to look elsewhere. "I had my doubts about the agency so I recorded my conversation with the consultant using my mobile phone. But they convinced me that it was a sure deal. "After many visits I demanded a refund. The company first agreed to return my money but later asked for a letter requesting the refund and I gave one. But I never heard from them again," said Muhamad Rafi.

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