

## Job Agency Scam : No work, no fees

Written by Administrator

Thursday, 10 September 2009 10:49 -

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IT'S another scam where people get ripped off. Unlike the "black-money" or the get-rich-quick scheme which played on the element of avarice, the latest scam involves people in real need and not those needing more than they have.

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Contrary to scams where the gleam of easy money made victims of the gullible, job scam agencies prey on ordinary folk who just want a way to put food on the table.

With the hike in prices rising at a faster rate than money taken home at the end of the month, many are driven towards new sources of income. And this is where the blood-suckers with the darkest of intentions make their appearance, preying on the innocent by masquerading as true-blue businessmen out to make an honest ringgit.

The modus operandi involves agencies, often manned by smooth-talkers with an uncanny ability to dupe people, offering mediocre jobs for a small "administrative" fee. For the desperate, parting with as little as RM50 is not painful, especially with the prospects of larger returns.

But this is where the very basic of business principles comes into play: the element of volume of trade as opposed to number of customers. The agencies rake in profits from the large number of people taken in by newspaper advertisements that offer exactly what they want: a not-too-difficult job that can be done from the comfort of home or at a place not too far away.

The number of unsuspecting people paying agencies fees at the onset for jobs is on the rise with the National Consumer Complaints Centre receiving 680 complaints last year, 150 more than the previous year. There were 265 cases filed last year with the Consumer Claims Tribunal against employment agencies. These figures may not add up to much but many cases go unreported.

For every case reported, 200 suffer in silence. What can be done to prevent more from falling victim to these tricksters? The Human Resources Ministry's employment agency, the labour exchange that has an electronic version, has to expand its scope and services. It has to include all bona-fide employment agencies.

The ministry must also be more proactive in clamping down on those perpetrating these scams. The average job-seeker also has to realise that nothing comes easy, especially menial jobs offering very reasonable remuneration. That only happens in the movies.

**NST : 27 April 2008**