

APPLYING FOR JOBS ETIQUETTE

Have you ever stopped to think what happens after you apply for a job? Ever wonder if your application is getting read? Have you sent many resumes in, never to hear from anyone, and wonder why, so you apply for every job that you see?

So what are you thinking about when you apply for a job? Well, the first thing likely is that either you need a job now because you don't have one, or have made the decision to leave the one you are in, and you feel you have nothing to lose, so why not just apply for any and everything that looks interesting, right? That's one way to go about it. This is the volume approach. What generally happens in this case? Most positions you will never hear anything, and in some cases, you will hear back, but they aren't interested in you! So, is there a better way? Sure there is. Let's look at it from the recruiter or hiring manager perspective.

When posting a job, the job author is looking for experience and skills that are specifically a good match, and to not just fit the job, but to excel in the job. The chances are that you are not going to be the only applicant for the job. So, how will you stand out from the rest of the applicants? This means that when you are looking, your chances will go up tremendously, if in your application, you are demonstrating exactly how well your skills and abilities fit that job. In other words, whether you are a sales person or not, you must sell yourself to be considered for that job. And, you must not only sell yourself, but you must do a better job than all the rest of the applicants.

Let's take a look at what the job applicant screener is looking for:

1. A work history that clearly states who the employer is, the job title, and clear dates of employment including months.
2. Job continuity. That means there either should be no gaps in employment, or clear explanations of what took the place in the gap, i.e. 18 months to finish a Masters degree.
3. Results delivered, not just achievements. Actual performance numbers on productivity or percentages of growth. Examples could be something like this, 30% increase in sales from \$3.8 million to \$5.0 million, year over year, along with gross margin improvement from 20% to 22.4%.
4. Clear communication methods in the best way to reach the applicant including personal cell phone and/or personal email. Recruiters and HR managers are trained to protect privacy and confidentiality, but providing a company email address is not advised.
5. Any additional industry recognized certifications, trainings, education, or highly visible leadership roles. Examples include PCA license, a P.E., an office in an industry association, or achievements that few others can earn.

Do you see a pattern there? As mentioned at the front of the article, the job author is looking for experience and skills that are specifically a good fit to be able to **not only** fit

this one job, but to excel in the job. If you want to know why you are not getting called back from many of the jobs you've applied to, maybe it's time to re-evaluate what information you are sending. If your resume doesn't spell it out or you don't have enough experience to qualify, then you must do a very good job of providing the extra information that will get you considered. That could be in a cover letter. It could be that you just need to give your resume a little more thought. Or, it could be that you just do not yet have enough skills to fit the job you are applying for. It could also be that you are applying for a job that requires a substantial relocation and if you don't explain in a cover letter or elsewhere that you are willing to relocate and why, you may get passed over.

Read the ad or job posting in full. If asked, answer the questions concisely and accurately. If there are instructions to follow, follow them. If you cannot follow the application instructions, you are sending a message that you can't assimilate to the company's ways of doing things. In the recruiting business, the client companies are the ones that dictate the key parameters that they want, for the job you are reviewing. Just applying to multiple jobs won't get you looked at any better if you are not supplying the information asked for, and if your resume is not showing the key items as listed above. Actually, applying for many jobs with a recruiter sends the message that you likely didn't read and prepare very well for the job(s) you applied for and that you are trying for the shotgun approach. Too many implies desperation and a tendency of a lack of preparation.

What will throw your resume off the interesting pile? Let's start with typos and misspellings on resumes. How about zero mention of accountability, inconsistent information, absent information from previous jobs, half-completed resumes? Another pet peeve, is listing your job responsibilities so your resume looks like a job posting of the requirements, versus a listing of what you actually accomplished.

If you are a serious player, and you want to separate your candidacy from the sea of competition, we suggest you take your job search seriously. Take your time. Who you are being in your job search is a reflection of who you will be on the job.

Don't address us by Dear Sirs. You've made a gender assumption in that kind of an address, and assumptions will generally be a mistake. Also, don't send a copy of another cover letter you just sent to another company or competitor, without taking their name off of it. You've definitely indicated that you don't proofread well when that happens.

Do your homework. Job searching is a sales process. *You* are selling *us* on why we should invest time in *you*. That takes positioning, discernment, listening, questioning/probing, and salesmanship. You'll get time and attention when you've shown that you have skills and have spent quality time on the quality of your presentation. On the other hand, you can have a great presentation and not yet have the skills or competencies to fit the position. It just may be a reach for you. Even if you don't fit the position, your information does go into our database, and a later search for

candidates with matching skills for other positions will be much more likely to appear on our matching list if you have actually listed them in your resume in the first place.

A good rule of thumb is to continually think about what you are accomplishing in your career and making notes of it. Your resume should be a continual improvement process, whether you are looking now or not. This will not only help when it does come time for you to seek something new, but it will also help you set some goals in your current role and when you achieve or exceed them, then make a note of it. Being productive for your current employer is bound to improve your personal stock. Keep on improving.

