

Job Application Materials: The Main Points

Sometimes you'll land a job without having to submit an application; most of the time, you won't. For almost all jobs, you'll need to do at least some of the following: complete the employer's application form, create a resume and write a cover letter. Doing a good job of putting together your application packet can be a big step toward landing that job that you want, as the materials you submit can impress an employer in showing how you are a good fit the job and their organization, and how much you want to work for them. Keeping the following main points in mind will help you create an application packet that gets you noticed in a positive way.

1) **TAILOR YOUR APPLICATION PACKET TO THE JOB** for which you are applying. Don't have just one resume and one cover letter that you send for every job; work to show the ways you fit what the employer seeks for that specific position.

a) **HAVE THE JOB DESCRIPTION** in front of you as you build your application packet. You need to be able to see what the employer is looking for in order to show how you fit those requirements.

b) **DO HOMEWORK ON THE EMPLOYER**; find out how you fit with their culture. You can find out about the employer by visiting their website, going into their place of business, or asking people what they know about that organization. In addition to helping you submit an application packet that illustrates why you are the perfect person for the position, employers will be impressed that you made the effort to find out something about them – and they like people who go the extra mile to do something well.

c) **USE THE INFORMATION** about the job and the employer to **SHOW HOW YOU FIT** that specific job and that specific employer. Talk specifically about your skills and qualities that match what they are looking for to both do that particular job and to fit into their workplace.

2) **MAKE A GOOD FIRST IMPRESSION** on the employer – don't eliminate yourself from consideration for the position by making a bad first impression.

a) **PUT YOURSELF IN THE POSITION OF THE EMPLOYER** who has dozens of applications. Often, they can't spend several minutes going through a single application or resume; find ways to make your qualifications stand out to someone who is scanning the resume rather than reading it carefully.

b) **MAKE A CONNECTION QUICKLY** in your resume and cover letter. In your resume for that job, put your specific qualifications for the job at the top of the page. In your cover letter, paint a picture of why you are interested in doing high-quality work in that position and for that organization.

c) **FOLLOW ALL DIRECTIONS** the employer provides about what they want in the application packet. They want to know that a prospective employee can carry out instructions.

d) **SHOW ATTENTION TO DETAIL** and remember that spelling, grammar, punctuation and capitalization count. Getting the little things right is something employers value.

3) Keep these things in mind: your **RESUME** should **LIST QUALIFICATIONS** for the job; while your **COVER LETTER** should **TELL WHY** the employer needs to hire you for the job.

a) In the **RESUME**, list your qualifications - **USE THE SAME WORDS** the employer uses to describe who they are looking for.

b) In your cover letter, tell the employer **HOW** you will **MAKE THEM MORE MONEY** and/or make them a more effective organization, and also to create in their mind a **PICTURE of YOU DOING THAT JOB** for them will look like.

c) Be sure to **EMPHASIZE POSTIONS AND SKILLS** that **RELATE TO THE JOB** for which you are applying as you create your resume and write your cover letter.

4) **BE TRUTHFUL** in all of your materials – application, resume and cover letter. Don't list skills, qualifications or experiences that you don't have.

a) If you are asked a direct question, respond with the truth – **IF YOU DON'T, THE EMPLOYER WILL FIND OUT** and you could be disqualified from consideration for the position, or dismissed from the job if you were hired.

b) If you have an issue in your background and **AREN'T ASKED** about it directly, **DON'T VOLUNTEER** the potentially embarrassing information.

5) **FOLLOW UP** after submitting your application materials.

a) If you submitted an **ONLINE** application, **VISIT THE EMPLOYER**, see the manager and drop off a resume and cover letter and tell them you wanted to be sure they know you are very interested in working for them.

b) If you applied **IN PERSON**, you can **VISIT OR CALL** to let the employer know you are still interested in the job.

Keep these things in mind as you put your application packets together, and your chances to gain an interview will be much better. And, once you've been selected for an interview, the information you have put together for the application packet is very valuable in getting ready for the job interview itself – it will help you answer questions more completely and specifically, and help you come up with questions you want to ask the interviewer about the job and the company.