

Job Searching: Library Managers' Perspective: "Greatest Hits" Survey Results

Application and Resume Tips:

1. Don't downplay your qualifications, even if you're overqualified (87% of respondents)
2. Resumes are generally best if kept under two pages (38%) but the length of the resume should ultimately depend on your background & position to which you are applying (40%)
3. No colored resume paper beyond off-whites, greys, and neutrals (92%)
4. Top ten least favorite words/terms to appear on a resume are: *detail-oriented, team player, people-person, problem solver, motivated/self-motivated, multitasker/ing, knowledgeable, loves to read/ loves books, looking for a challenging job, perfectionist*
5. Resume font tips: clean and easy to read, never script or curly, no more than two different fonts per resume, never under 10 point, and Times New Roman is a little boring
6. Resume "Objectives" are out of date (74%). Instead, include a summary of qualifications
7. It's best not to include hobbies on your resume, unless they truly apply to some aspect of the job (71%)
8. However, it is fine to include non-library professional organization memberships (69%)

Cover Letters: So Important They Get Their Own Category:

1. Always include a cover letter, even if the application doesn't ask for one (95%)
2. Many managers consider the cover letter to be as important if not more important than the resume
3. It is extremely important to customize the cover letter to each position
4. Include examples of ways in which your qualifications meet the requirements of the position
5. Mention the mission statement of the organization to which you are applying (60%)
6. Managers thoroughly examine the cover letter for clues about an applicant's attention to detail (grammar), communication style (writing style), and personality (anecdotes, tone)

Interviewing Tips:

1. In addition to your appearance and interview attire, managers make a point to notice your: haircut/styling (51%), facial hair/grooming (50%), shoes (43%), nails (39%), makeup (37%), accessories (35%)
2. If you must wear perfume/cologne, wear only a little (66%)- though some managers are extremely sensitive to even the smallest amount (22%)
3. Sandals are a no-no and some managers don't want to see any toe at all (12%), many are ok with a peep of toe (36%), and most prefer to judge it on a shoe-by-shoe basis (56%)
4. It's a good idea to bring a portfolio or examples of your work with you to the interview (77%)
5. Practice a short "elevator speech" about yourself and qualifications for the job (74%)
6. Be careful when asked, in an interview, about what you could improve in the workplace. Some managers are extremely sensitive to any perceived criticism (16%) and others advise to tread lightly (38%). However many managers are always open to constructive criticism (29%)

Post Interview:

1. Most managers like thank you notes or e-mails (81%)
2. Be careful to not appear too desperate in a thank you note (*I really need this job..*) and refrain from using it as another opportunity to sell yourself. Be sincere.
3. Follow up phone calls to check on the status of the job offer are generally acceptable, but only if the specified notification deadline has passed (61%)
4. If you did not get the job and you want to know why, some managers are willing to discuss this with you (54%) but many are forbidden by HR and liability concerns to give you any post-interview guidance (46%).

BEST QUOTES FROM THE SURVEY:

On Qualifications:

Be honest about your qualifications. If overqualified, state why you are applying for the position in a cover letter. Do not belittle the position offered by implying you could do it blindfolded underwater etcetera. Do not be overeager and start asking about frequency of other openings or talking opportunities for advancement until the interview. State that you will do this job to the best of your abilities

Job applicants bring a wealth of knowledge and experience, including life experience that is likely beneficial in ways that may not be obvious to the applicant - or even readily apparent to the employer, until it is expressed.

On Resumes:

In response to "please list your five least favorite words to appear on a resume": 1. incarceration, 2. felon, 3. high achiever, 4. policy violation, 5. home manager

On Cover Letters:

If you actually want the job, a cover letter is required UNLESS the opening specifically says "No Cover Letters".

They tell me if you're capable of writing and organizing your thoughts and if you have a basic command of the language. If you don't, maybe better leave it out! :-) <- and don't put emoticons in, either!

Appear energetic. I also say something about having a "sense of humor in busy times" towards the closing of the letter.

On interview appearance:

Does the candidate look professional and "put together", or does his/her appearance have a "I couldn't be bothered to try very hard" quality to it? Even a slightly sloppy appearance can be a distraction, and it is certainly noticed by a prospective employer.

Overall Job Search:

Remember the basics: at every step of the way, ACT PROFESSIONALLY. Get someone to go over your application/resume; get someone to look you over in your interview clothes; get someone to role-play the interview with you. Take the time to go over a prospective employer's website (we ask about this in the interview). If you smoke, DON'T SMOKE BEFORE THE INTERVIEW (I can smell it on you). Don't shake hands like you're touching a dead fish, but don't use the Vise Grip of Power, either. A Tic-Tac can be your friend, but don't suck down the whole container in the course of the interview. A portfolio of your work gives you a chance to show off your presentation and course-design skills. Once you've had the interview, remember the thank-you note. And keep looking - the right job for you is out there...I might even be looking for you and I just don't know it yet.