

# TIPS FOR JOB CANDIDATES SEEKING APPLIED POSITIONS

## (From Employers who Want You to Succeed)

You want a job. Employers want to hire qualified candidates. These tips are not unique for I/O job seekers, but following them will make a significant difference in your success as a job candidate. Trust us - employers are picky, and they will pass over poorly written resumes and turn down applicants who are unprepared for the interview.

### Resume Tips: Increase your chance of getting an interview

You have about 10 seconds in which to make an impression on an employer, so key pieces of information must stand out while the entire document is appealing and attractive. Consider the following tips to increase the chance that your resume will be noticed.

Resume Section	Tips
Objective Statement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include this <u>only</u> if it indicates a specific preference in job content (e.g., surveys, selection), employment environment (e.g., external vs. internal consulting), or geography. If you are open to any options, don't include an objective statement.</li> <li>• If your objective statement reads "To contribute my I/O knowledge to drive business results," skip it. It doesn't give valuable information to the employer.</li> </ul>
Degree	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If not complete, be realistic in your estimated date of completion (e.g., multiply your timeline by 3!).</li> <li>• Consider including the status/stage of the research (e.g., proposal accepted, data collected, analyses completed) on your resume to support your estimate.</li> <li>• Be prepared to discuss the status of your thesis/dissertation and why your estimated timeline for completion is accurate. This is especially important if the timeline looks accelerated (e.g., if you proposed last month but expect to be done next month, state that you already had your data and are in the process already of writing results).</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don't just indicate your title and tasks; include your accomplishments and results. Bullet them in descending order of the business impact you had.</li> <li>• Include information about specific skills gained or utilized in different experiences.</li> <li>• Use active verbs to refer to what you personally accomplished in each job or role. Be sure to indicate your scope of involvement (e.g., a leadership role vs. part of a team).</li> <li>• List job experiences in descending chronological order</li> </ul>
Publications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If you have many publications, list only a few examples. In particular, limit the number of technical reports you include.</li> </ul>

## **General Resume Tips**

- Avoid acronyms other than those very commonly used in the I/O industry.
- Keep the format simple, easy to read. Some employers will scan resumes into various systems, so the format has to be simple. Use a standard font (10 or 12 point) and left-justify.
- Refer to the array of websites or books available on writing effective resumes.

## **The Cover Letter: Increase your odds of being noticed**

- This is your chance to express your specific interest in the job and customize a message to the employer. Some considerations:
- Keep it brief.
- Highlight something that the employer may not get out of the resume and that will add to making you stand out as a candidate.
- Do not tell the employer what he/she needs in the organization (e.g., "In this competitive environment, you need customer-focused employees"). Believe it or not, we've seen this!
- Tell the employer why this job interests you. This will be easier to do if you've done your research, and if you've spent time thinking about what you most want from a position and organization.
- If your resume has been updated since your posting, point this out. Some employers may have a list of candidates whom they have selected to interview on site, and you could get added to the list on the basis of your updates.

## **A Little Preparation Goes a Long Way**

Do your homework on organizations that interest you. Prepare for potential interviews.

- Visit prospective employer's web sites/gather other relevant information on them.
- Practice answering interview questions. Lists of frequently asked questions are available on websites and in books.
- Assess your skills in advance. Review the job postings to identify types of skills that employer's value.
- Be prepared with multiple examples of what you've done in the past to demonstrate various job-related skills (i.e., expect a behaviorally-based interview).
- Be prepared to talk about your research (if you are a recent student or graduate). Prepare a brief summary; you can always add more detail if the interviewer asks

follow up questions. Try to show the relevance of your research to business if it is an applied position.

## **So You Got an Interview: Increase your impact**

Volumes have been written (including by our colleagues) on how to conduct interviews. As employers, we are often surprised how varied candidates are in their level of preparation and professionalism in the interview. These tips may be "obvious," but not all I/O job seekers appear to consider them:

- Be yourself - or, the best self you can be. The interview is not a time to be overly casual, even if the interviewer may take a very casual approach.
- Balance your descriptions of what you personally did with how others contributed to team efforts.
- Do not say anything negative about a former manager/professor/etc. People will wonder what you might say about them.
- Dress professionally for every interview, regardless of how others dress. Business attire is appropriate (e.g., men -jacket and tie; women -jacket and no bare legs).
- Ask questions to show your interest in the position and organization.
- End the interview by thanking the interviewer for his/her time. Ask what the next steps are in the process. Re-state your interest in the position.

## **Close the Sale**

Send a thank you note. When interviewing at the conference, many employers are juggling papers and tasks, so send the thank you note after the conference. It will more likely be remembered and appreciated.