

# **THE DO'S AND DON'TS OF AN EMPLOYMENT APPLICATION**

If you submitted a Resume or CV and have now been sent an employment application, you have already made it past the first hurdle in this company's interview process. Companies only reach out to candidates they feel could be a fit for their position.

Your answers on an application form often determine if you are interviewed or screened out of consideration.

## **ANSWERS THAT ENHANCE YOUR CHANCES OF BEING INTERVIEWED**

Your answers should always stress the benefit of hiring you for the opportunity this company has available.

### **Read Instructions Thoroughly**

Before you begin to fill out an application form, read and follow the instructions carefully. Some application forms want you to "print" your responses. Most application forms require your signature. You want to make sure you are responding in the proper spaces provided, to avoid any mistakes. The way you complete the application form is a sample of your attention to detail and the ability to follow instructions.

### **Fill out the Application Form Neatly and Thoroughly**

If you have bad handwriting you may decide to print your answers. Don't rush when completing the employment application. Think about your answers and the best way to express them before writing anything down.

### **Check for Consistency**

Have your Resume or CV in front of you when you are filling out an application, so the information is consistent.

### **Proofread**

If you are given an application form in advance, copy it and fill out a sample before you transfer the information to the actual employment application. Check for spelling, grammar, punctuation and content errors. If possible, have another person proofread your employment application.

### **Differentiate Yourself from Your Competition**

Whenever possible, list your accomplishments on the application and show the impact they had on past employers. Think about what you did faster, better or more efficiently than the person who had your job before you. If you have ever saved a past employer time or money, quantify the impact of your accomplishments.

### **Black and White**

If the employment application is asking for a specific answer, do not answer with a vague response. Whenever possible, provide an example of what you have done.

### **Check for Red Flags**

Review your answers through the eyes of the hiring authority and check for any possible red flags that could cause you to be screened out.

### **Proof Accuracy Online**

If you are completing your application online, do not only depend on spell check. Too many errors will not be identified especially words that sound alike but are spelled differently (i.e. there and their). Trust your own proofreading abilities to catch this type of error.

### **Always Keep This Specific Job in Mind**

When you are writing down answers, always remember the requirements of the specific job. Whenever possible, stress areas that would be most desirable to this specific company or hiring authority.

### **ANSWERS THAT CAN CAUSE YOU TO BE SCREENED OUT**

When someone is reviewing your employment application, they initially view you as an expense. Your answers must not draw attention to anything that would be considered a red flag or negative.

### **Reasons for Leaving**

This application form is being read by a hiring authority. Never make negative remarks about a prior company or employer. Your reasons for leaving must be viewed as a positive response.

### **Leave Blank Spaces**

If a question is not applicable to you, just list N/A. Never write down “see my Resume or CV” on an application form.

### **Don't Provide Vague Answers**

Be specific when answering questions and provide an example of what you've done wherever possible.

### **Don't Write Down and Then Have To Correct Your Answers**

Think before you write or type.

### **Be Smart When Being Asked To Rate Yourself**

If you are asked to rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 10, don't be modest. Rate yourself as high as possible, always being honest. Example: If a company asks you to rate yourself on a scale of 1 – 10 for punctuality or attendance, and you rate yourself anything less than a 10 – chances are you will be screened out.

### **Don't List Weaknesses**

This question can be the kiss of death. When asked your weaknesses, state that you know how your past employers wanted things done, you knew their policies and procedures very well. However, there will be an initial learning curve when you are hired for you to learn how this particular company wants things done.

This response has given a subtle commercial for you and shows you are willing to learn how they want things done and are not set in your ways.

Follow this advice the next time you fill out an employment application and you will greatly improve your chances of being interviewed.