

TIPS FOR LANDING YOUR FIRST TECH POSITION

Denton WWCode Meetup - April 28, 2016

Lauren Ko, Supervisor, Software Development Unit

Nancy K. Reis, Communications Specialist

Mark Phillips, Associate Dean

Digital Libraries Division, UNT Libraries

DISCLAIMER

- Not certified hiring authority
- Speaking from personal hiring experience

INTRODUCTION

- Applying for jobs
- Considering your resume
- Standing out with a cover letter
- Preparing for the interview

APPLYING FOR JOBS

- Target jobs matching your interests

Applying for Jobs

RESEARCH POSITION, PRODUCTS, DEPARTMENT, EMPLOYER

- Determines if you want to apply
- Allows tailoring your resume and cover letter
- Informs questions for the interview
- Impresses hiring team

Applying for Jobs

MAKE IT EASY FOR HIRING MANAGER

- Read the instructions on the job posting
- Avoid conflicting info on application and resume

RESUME

- Adapt for the specific position
- Contextualize your tech knowledge
- Don't **only** list skills (HTML, JavaScript, CSS, Python)
- Describe projects using the skills relevant to the position

Resume

Developed a voting app in the Python Django Web Framework using a PostgreSQL database. Used Bootstrap to build the HTML, JavaScript, and CSS front end components.

Resume

MAKE IT EASY FOR NON-TECH PEOPLE

- Expect non-tech people on hiring team
- Use tech words from job posting
- Don't over describe projects
- Link to code/online projects
- Check for typos

COVER LETTER

- Use business letter format
- Acknowledge specific position/employer/products
- Describe how you personally fit the position
- Show your potential
- Explain oddities (e.g. seeking a pay cut)
- Check for typos and grammatical errors

COVER LETTER: BAD

Dear Hiring Manager,

I am a recent computer science graduate with coursework in algorithms, Java, and C++. Based on my qualifications, I am a perfect fit for your job.

Please contact me at 555-555-5555 to set up an interview.

*Sincerely,
Someone who doesn't care that much*

COVER LETTER: BETTER

Dear Ms. Hirey,

I found your Digital Libraries Programmer position listed on the UNT HR website. I am excited to apply because I would like to be part of an organization like UNT Libraries that makes resources available to a global community with projects like the UNT Digital Collections.

I already possess several skills your job posting lists as desired. I recently graduated with a degree in computer science where I specialized in building web applications. This has given me experience working in a Linux environment deploying PHP applications in Apache with a MySQL database backend. While I do not have much experience working in Python, I have recently begun learning the language and am using it to build a small web application to catalog my personal music collection. The code is available at <http://github.com/imajobseeker189x/py-music-catalog>.

I currently work as a customer service representative where I have gained experience working as part of a team and serving customers' needs. Such work has trained me to collaborate with others and to be considerate of user needs. I believe that this experience, combined with my technical background, makes me a strong candidate to serve your library's user community.

I am available to discuss the position at anytime that is convenient for you at 555-555-5555. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Ima Jobseeker

INTERVIEW

Interview

THOSE DEFAULT THINGS

- Dress up more than hiring team
- Show up on time (not late or too early)
- Be respectful

Interview

YOU WILL BE NERVOUS

- Lots of tech and non-tech questions
- It's okay to not know answers
- Be honest if you don't know
- Express an interest to find out
- Show your potential and confidence

Interview

EXPECT TO WORK PROBLEMS

- Write pseudocode to show basic programming/logic understanding
- Design a class for an object
- Explain a code snippet

Interview

Write a program that prints the numbers from 1 to 100. But for multiples of three print "Fizz" instead of the number and for the multiples of five print "Buzz". For numbers which are multiples of both three and five print "FizzBuzz".

- <http://blog.codinghorror.com/why-cant-programmers-program/>

Interview

EXPECT TO WORK PROBLEMS

- If you struggle, talk problem out and explain how you would approach it
- If hiring team helps you work problem out and learn, that's a good sign
- If hiring team is mean about your effort, it's a bad fit

Interview

ASK QUESTIONS

- Interviews go both ways
- Hiring team likes to be asked questions
 - What projects are you working on?
 - What do you use for version control?
 - What are the biggest challenges you see related to programming?
- The answers indicate their values and direction
- The answers let you know if you want the job

SUMMARY

- Employers need to hire tech people
- You don't need every desired skill
- Show your intelligence and potential
- Convince employers you want their jobs

DISCUSS