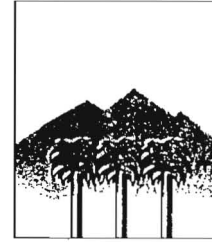


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## What personnel managers look for in a job candidate

**H**uman resources or personnel professionals are the gatekeepers into a company. Most businesses with more than 100 employees will have a human resources or personnel manager who oversees the employment function. Usually, when a position becomes available, a classified advertisement will be placed in a local newspaper with a brief description of the position along with the qualifications.

When the ad is placed, it is not uncommon these days for an employer to receive hundreds of resumes for the one position.

I asked a number of human

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resource managers what they look for in a new employee, and here is a summary of what they said:

### ■ Reviewing the resumes

When resumes are sloppily done or have typographical errors, they are screened out. Contents of the resume for qualifications, experience and education will be reviewed. The candidates who meet the qualifications most

closely will be selected for further review.

### ■ Cover letters

Human resources professionals look for cover letters. If they are poorly written, then the resume may not ever be reviewed. The company may have

more than one opening, so cover letters should indicate the position for which you are applying.

### ■ Scheduling of interviews

After prescreening hundreds of resumes, several candidates will be selected for interviews. Sometimes employers will screen candidates over the phone. Be patient. This screening process could take a couple of weeks to months, depending on the availability of the human resources staff and the hiring manager.

### ■ The interview

Being prompt to an interview is critical, along with the ability to answer interview questions effectively. Always come by yourself, do not bring your relatives or children. Be independent.

Sometimes, you may have to wait a while before the manager is available to see you. Do not

exhibit any outward signs of anxiety or anger about having to wait. The receptionist can sense this and it could be reported. Bring something to read to pass your time — business related material is appropriate.

Dress appropriately, with a generally conservative appearance.

### ■ Reference checks

Recent surveys indicate that more than 50 percent of job seekers inflate their background experience and education. Most employers will check references. Honesty is the best policy. Be prepared to list three to five references from past employers or businesses — colleagues who can vouch for your experience and character. Be sure to get their permission first.

### ■ Desired characteristics

Human Resources professionals look for job candidates

who are good problem solvers as well as having excellent interpersonal and leadership skills. You should be able to demonstrate the ability to perform the job at hand. Also you should be able to articulate and validate your experience in detail. It is important that you know something about the company. For management positions, the ability to motivate and develop employees is also important.

Successful job seekers stand out from the crowd. Writing thank you letters after your interview can certainly help in the successful job search process.

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