

## Your Applications and Our Advice

### Application Forms and Supporting Statements

#### Completing an Application Form / Providing a Supporting Statement

Being asked to complete an application form or supply a personal statement can seem rather unnecessary. But in fact, these are surprisingly common, especially in the Not-For-Profit and Education sectors where employers are particularly sensitive to ensuring equal opportunity measures are being observed.

So if the thought of completing an application form or proving a personal statement fills you with exasperation, read on for a few handy tips...

#### General

- Allow plenty of time - application forms / personal statements always take longer than you think, and it's worth giving yourself a chance to take a break from it (preferably overnight) before checking through and sending. Stick at it though – once you've done one, they get easier (promise!)
- Make sure you read the instructions and complete every part of the form as instructed. A computer often does the first sifting, and straightforward omissions or mistakes can get you booted out of the process before your application makes it to a real person!
- If a question is not applicable, don't leave it blank – put N/A
- Check and stick to word limits
- If you're also sending a CV and/or covering note, don't worry about repeating yourself on the form...assume that the reader will ONLY have the app form in front of them, so don't refer to other documents or use 'see attached CV'
- Use the correct tense – present tense for your current role, past tense for your previous roles

#### Qualifications and Training

- It may seem obvious, but be as accurate as possible. The type of company who use application forms are also the type who will check your dates and certificates, so don't be tempted to stretch the truth
- If your qualifications are not from the UK, it's worth pointing out what the UK equivalent would be i.e. 'equivalent to an A Level'
- If asked for details of professional training, only include courses that are relevant to the role

#### Employment History

- Again, be accurate and make sure that the dates and details on your CV and LinkedIn profile match – it's easy to cross-reference!
- Tailor to the role – cover your whole employment history (and explain any gaps i.e. travelling, caring) but for those jobs that are less relevant to the role, you can be brief
- For your relevant roles, start with a snapshot/overview of what the role entailed and then use bullet points to cover the key duties, checking that you are covering off the requirements in the job spec where possible. It should be as easy as possible for the reader to match your experience with the required skill

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### Providing a Supporting Statement

This may also be phrased as 'relevant experience' or you may be asked to write a covering letter

Some may be specific about what they expect you to cover, but others will give free rein to explain exactly why you're perfect for the job

Shortlists are drawn up based on how well you match the job and person specification so these should be your reference points

Write in the first person, but try not to start each sentence with 'I', as this can start sounding like a list i.e. *'Rather than 'I am a highly motivated, results oriented marketing manager with a proven track record...' try 'As a highly motivated, results oriented marketing manager, I have a proven track record...'*

- Start with an overview of who you are, what your career aim is, and why you're applying for the role
- Then address each of the requirements (or the most important/relevant ones) in the job and person specification and demonstrate how your experiences/character traits match them. Use specific examples where you can, supported by measurable results. i.e.  
*"Experience of managing new product launches." I managed the launch of ACME Product from start to finish, including product development, creating and implementing marketing plans across PR, website, email and direct mail. Sales in the first month beat target by 30%.*
- If you don't have demonstrable experience in an area, look for any transferable skills that might fill the gap, and if all else fails, an enthusiasm to learn is always appreciated!
- Don't worry about repeating details you've put in your employment history – you can't assume the reader is taking in everything or even reading every section, so if it's pertinent to the role, put it in
- Conclude with an overview of why you're the best candidate, thank them for considering your application and reiterate your interest/excitement. Don't be afraid to put some personality into this section - a little enthusiasm can go a long way!

### Final checks

- Re-read it, check you haven't missed anything and that you've followed the instructions. Ideally, give it the 'overnight test' and come back to it with a fresh eye for a final re-read
- Ask someone else to check for typo's, grammar issues and generally that it reads well. Your friendly recruitment consultant will be able to do this for you too!
- Take a copy! You'll need this to refer to when you're called for an interview...

### Good luck

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