12 Things You Should Never Do When Applying For a Job

By Business Insider - Daniel Goodman

- ***Never make your cover letter or introductory email longer than three paragraphs***

Here's what you should include:

1. Why you are sending the cover letter.

2. How (or from whom) you heard about the opening.

3. Something specific that cannot be inferred from your resume (i.e. work situation, special skills or the kind of job you're looking for).

Here's what you shouldn't include:

1. Don't state what kind of pay you're looking for since there are many different components in a salary package that can confuse a recruiter. This is the kind of thing that can be discussed during or after the interview

- ***Don't put your name and contact info on the side, bottom or back of your resume — they should always be at the top***

This sounds simple, but Herzog says this universal rule's been tweaked with in the past. This is how it should be done:

1. Put your name in bold face and/or regular caps.

2. Include your full address and home, work (optional) and/or cell phone numbers and your email address but do not bold these.

- ***Don't assume everyone knows your company if it's not well-known***

If the company you worked for isn't a Fortune 500, add a brief description of the company before your title and job function. Providing a description will make your position seem more credible, especially if the company is small or isn't well-known. For example:

The Norinchukin Bank, Ltd., New York, NY

Japanese Commercial Bank — 81st largest bank (ranked by assets) in the world

Assistant Vice President — Real Estate Finance Group

- ***Don't include an objective — especially if you're applying for a job that's different than your listed objective***

- ***Education should never be listed above experience — unless you have five higher education degrees***

Or if you've recently completed a degree and don't have too much of a work history. The rule here is that you can list "Education" first if you've graduated within two years.

Also, always list the most recent degree first and continue in descending order.

- ***Don't be arrogant***

In fact, it works in your favor to be humble.

In his book, Herzog referred to a candidate who wrote that the recruiter will "surely want to learn more" about him after reviewing his resume. This kind of language is arrogant and cocky and no one should have this kind of cover letter.

- ***Don't include any time gaps without an explanation***

If you took some time off to care of your kids, fill this gap in your resume with a "Homemaker" or "Child care provider" position. This is a smart and innovative way not to raise a red flag when recruiters see a big time gap in between your jobs, Herzog says.

You can always explain this "job" further during the interview and it will keep you from being eliminated before you actually have a shot to explain why you took so much time off.

- ***Don't break the one-page rule unless you have more than 8 years of experience***

"Nobody wants to read a book on your life," Herzog says. But if you have a lot of experience, then two pages can be used — just don't fill up the second page. Here are the basic rules:

1. A full-time job that lasted less than three months doesn't need to be included.

2. If you have 3+ years of work experience, omit summer jobs, but internships related to your current job experience can still be included.

3. If you have 15+ years of work experience then your first job doesn't need to be included, especially if it's unrelated to your industry or to the position you're applying for.

- ***Don't include short, worthless descriptions. Back up your credibility with some impressive numbers***

If you're applying for a job within the same industry, include some big numbers that will surely place you closer to the top of the pile. For example:

- Manage a portfolio of $750MM
- Billed over $500k in 2010
- Market to Fortune 1000 companies with a minimum of $1B in sales

- ***Don't include skills that aren't applicable to your job description***

Instead, list your computer skills, honors and awards, affiliations or licenses.

- ***Don't confuse your potential employers with statements like "references will be furnished for your comfort"***

- ***Whatever you do, don't be cute***

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