

How do I compare the job description with my background?

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You have found a job you might be interested in. You want to send a cover letter with your resume. How do you really know what to look for to make sure there is a match? I personally do not believe in just sending a resume to any job that you see. I think that “targeted” selections for job applications is much more productive.

Here are some ideas about what you can look for:

Job Title:

Is this the same or different from what you have had before. Is this job a step up for you or a lateral move? Sometimes job titles depend on the size of the company. For instance, I used to be the Accounting Manager at a start-up company. I probably would have been an Accounting Supervisor at a larger company because I only had four people who reported to me.

Job Functions:

Look at the verbs! The verbs will tell you what functions you will be performing on the job. Some possibilities include: sell, manage, facilitate, analyze, monitor, teach, organize, schedule, produce and develop.

These verbs can tell you if this is a supportive position or one that gets things done directly. Is the position focused internally (mostly working with other employee) or externally (working with customers, vendors or government agencies)?

Reporting structure:

Who does the position report to? What department is it in? Who will be reporting to you?

Measurement:

Can you tell how the job will be measured? Decrease in customer complaints? Increase in new clients? Decrease in production time?

Candidate Requirements:

This is the company’s “wish list” for things they think someone needs to have to be successful in the job. Pay attention to the words “required”, “preferred”, “a plus” and so on. Even if you don’t have everything the company lists, if you think you can do the job, go ahead and apply!

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Other Considerations:

Look at the job description and candidate requirements sentence by sentence. Unfortunately, some job descriptions are written better than others. Take each item mentioned in the description and compare it with your own background.

If you can do the job, go for it! But remember, if you don't have all the requirements or you haven't done all the duties before – using your networking to find someone in the company who can present you will make a big difference! Remember that most jobs are obtained by people talking with each other, not through internet postings!

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