

Tips for Measuring Up to Employer Expectations

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Too often, job seekers count themselves out of the running for positions before they even apply. It's not that they're uninterested or inexperienced. It's that they feel too inferior to apply for job ads that read as though they're calling for superhuman candidates.

Jim Bright and Joanne Earl, co-authors of the recently released book, ***Amazing Resumes, Second Edition***, remind job hunters not to let over the top language often used in job ads and descriptions discourage them from pursuing good jobs. "Behind all the bluster you probably have all the qualities the employer's looking for," say Bright and Earl.

To overcome overwhelming ads and descriptions, Bright and Earl encourage job seekers to analyze them until they can determine what the ideal candidate might look like.

"If the person you come up with could not possibly exist, you have probably gone wrong somewhere. Go back and reread the description to see where you might have exaggerated the required attributes, or where the employer might be being unrealistic," they say.

In their book, they also tell job seekers to be mindful of selection criteria that may be outlined in the ad or description. Selection criteria are very precise statements that outline the qualities, experience, training and behaviors an employer seeks for the position.

According to Bright and Earl, the most common components of selection criteria statements include:

- Competency
- Qualifier
- Behavior
- Importance

"Failure to explicitly and fully address selection criteria can, and very often will, lead to automatic rejection, no matter what your individual merits may be," they stress.

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To help job hunters ensure that they're addressing selection criteria when applying for a job, Bright and Earl offer the following tips:

1. Create a document that is separate from your resume.
2. Title this document "Statements addressing the selection criteria" (or use the phrase that is included in the advertisement).
3. Use each of the selection criteria as headings.
4. Address each criterion carefully, providing evidence to back up your claims.
5. Ensure that you have addressed all aspects of each selection criterion.
6. Draw upon different evidence and examples in support of different criteria. Do not repeat the same achievements over and over for each criterion.
7. Use positive and unequivocal language. Avoid using qualifiers such as:
 - Quite good
 - Some
 - A little
 - Average
8. Use your investigative skills to ensure you understand what each of the criteria means.
9. Check for a word limit. If there is no word limit indicated, you can assume it is acceptable to write more than a few sentences per criterion.
10. Make sure every claim you make in addressing these statements is consistent with any claims, achievements or job history contained in your resume.

*More tips can be found in *Amazing Resumes, Second Edition*, which is now available at all major bookstores and from the publisher (www.jist.com or 1.800.648.JIST).*