

# Meeting Job Descriptions

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# My Face Doesn't Fit

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Often you will see a job advertised that at first glance is your desired Job Title.

But then you read more and start to feel disappointed because of all the things mentioned that aren't You.

You decide not to apply as it is a waste of time.

You even worry that it might be waste of their time and put you in a bad light should another role come up with the same company.

And then you worry that there is never going to be a job that you can actually hand-on-heart apply for.

In this presentation we address some of the issues.

# What did they ask for?

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Most Job Descriptions are not totally written by someone who has done the job that needs to be done.

- They may have had a similar role in the past and are now a manager
- This may be a new post being created
- Some of the Job Description may be produced by HR as part of corporate policy
- The Job Description has to simultaneously entice the 'Right' applicants whilst discouraging the 'Wrong' applicants.
- So much of the description may be guess work or padding.

# Is there an Ideal applicant?

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Given the multipurpose content of the Job Description, it is unlikely there will be an Ideal candidate anyway.

We all know folk who appear to have 'met all the qualifications' and yet not been given the post. When followed up, the corporate response is often something woolly such as 'they seemed a better fit'.

Which makes sense really. Wouldn't you rather chose the candidate with 2 years of experience who can hit the ground running than one with the requisite 5 years who seems to have been less proactive in their previous job?

# What's am I to do?

## - Step 1

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### Can I do the job?

Irrespective of all the exacting requirements, is this a role that I am basically suited for?

It is not a matter of 'Do I want this Job?' or 'How much do I want this job?'

Are you realistically going to be able to deliver what you believe they are asking for?

So re-read the Job Description and try to get a sense of what the day to day tasks are for this role.

e.g.

- if it says 'writing experience', would I be competent to write concisely, persuasively and with proper grammar.
- If it says 'diagnosing', am I able to methodically work through a set of symptoms, analyse the observed behaviour and propose a set of probable causes.. etc.

After this step, you should have a better idea of what you have to offer in the way of skills and experience for the core of the role.

# What am I to do?

## - Step 2

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Identify the 'Bonus' requirements

As mentioned before, there are more than likely to be some additional requirements.

- the preferred candidate is degree qualified. HR have added 'from a prestigious university'
- The candidate has to write software in C++. But the Job description also lists a variety of other sw languages.

In reality, a company will not reject every candidate in the hope the 'Dream' candidate applies. Candidates with relevant qualifications and/or experience get interviews too.

So just because there is a list of desirable skills and qualifications tucked away at the end of the Job Description, or implied in the narrative, don't be distracted by them, just focus on the core skills you have.

(Consider the Dating Game – some wives have husbands who are multilingual, own a company and a yacht, but most wives are happy with a husband who is good for them.)

# What am I to do?

## - Step 3

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Write your cover letter carefully.

Whilst you know that there may be things lacking in your eligibility compared to those in the Job Description, you don't have to blurt it out!

Avoid things like 'Whilst appreciating I don't have the right experience I ... grovel grovel'

In one of our sessions we look at the Life Skills that are often missing from our CVs. Now is the time to consider what areas from your previous roles are similar to that of the additional requirements in the Job Description and find a way to introduce them if they are appropriate. This is what is called a transferable skill. Remember, the hiring manager is seeking a way to join the critical dots of your actual experience and those which the position calls for.

Be careful not to over-reach in doing this. If it looks contrived to you, then it definitely will to the interview panel.

- If you have Sales Experience, then this might be appropriate for Fundraising roles, because you are used to asking for money.
- On the other hand, avoid 'getting the kids to and from school' as an example of 'planning'

Transferable skills are not going to get you the Job on their own, but they make it easier for managers to justify not having the Ideal candidate sought by the advert.

# Useful Phrases

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- In my role at ( previous job) I was able to demonstrate my skills in (missing skill) by (give an example that isn't the particular one in the Job Description that you lack, but in something related)
- I have had the opportunity to show (missing skill) through my work with (...) where it was essential to maintain (key characteristic)