

Application Tricks & Interview Tips from SKF

SickKids Foundation knows that searching for a job can be a daunting experience and we'd like to share our guidance to help set candidates up for success:

Applying for the Job

Once you've reviewed the job posting and have a good idea of how you would benefit the employer if hired, customizing your resume will reinforce your key qualifications and show how you would be an excellent team member.

Most employers use applicant tracking systems that search keywords related to the job, so customizing your resume for the role will also help you stand out. It's important that your resume demonstrates job-specific skills, so include a summary or skills section with a bulleted list of skills that are related to the job.

Resumes should be error free, easy to follow and in chronological order so the employer sees a clear career progression. When listing your work experience, provide examples of your accomplishments, how you went above and beyond your job responsibilities and evidence to show the impact of your work to the organization. Be sure to quantify your accomplishments so the results of your work is understandable to outsiders.

When listing your education, in addition to undergraduate and graduate education, be sure to include any professional development to demonstrate that you are a continuous learner.

Even if your resume is lacking applicable work experience, you can include other elements that particularly suit you for the position. For example, leveraging social media and creating a rich, interactive multimedia resume that is both functional and attractive can showcase your creativity. Don't be afraid to tie in non-professional attributes and achievements if they relate to the job you are applying for.

Include volunteer work, mentioning leadership roles, participation in special initiatives, board or committee memberships, event planning or orchestration, and assistance with fund-raising. Volunteering shows you devoted your time and skills to a cause, and the experience may be relevant to the job you're applying for. Showcase the skills you gained as a volunteer and highlight if it is in the same field as your target employers.

Listing your useful tech skills and languages will also add value to your resume.

A thoughtful, well written cover letter can provide additional insight about you that may not come across in a resume alone. If you're transitioning from For-Profit, you can use your cover letter to explain why you are pursuing this career path and show your enthusiasm for this career. It's best to avoid generic terms such as "results driven", "proven track record" and

“excellent communication skills”. Instead, highlight your relevant years of experience and the key achievements that best show how your skills are transferrable to this opportunity.

In addition to a customized resume and cover letter, it’s a good idea to ensure your LinkedIn Profile is up to date and consistent with your resume.

Taking the time to prepare a customized resume is well worth the effort and will help you stand out to employers. Now to prepare for the interview!

Interviewing for the Job

We recommend preparing for your interview by thinking like an employer! That is, learn all you can before you meet. Review the job posting again, check out the organization’s Web site, read press releases and learn as much as you can about the organization’s vision, mission and core values. Read everything you can find about the organization and anything they send you. Interviewers expect candidates to know this material.

Below are some additional strategies to help you prepare for your interviews:

- Meet with people who worked at the organization, as well as providers, customers, or others in the industry. Ask about the organization and how they think the job would work. If you know of similar jobs at other companies, consider how they might differ.
- Prepare for questions about when you made a mistake or when things didn’t go as planned and be able to articulate what you learned from those situations.
- Be ready to share specific examples of situations when you demonstrated key skills which might include: providing a best in class donor or customer experience, problem solving, collaboration, innovation, managing competing priorities, service or a time when your work positively impacted the bottom line.
- Be able to “make your case”. Link yourself to the interviewer’s needs for the job and be able to articulate your personal value proposition. I.e. - define your skills, strengths, and accomplishments that set you apart from other candidates, and how you will add value to the organization.
- Prepare your own questions in advance- Have one or two good questions ready about the future of the organization or role you are interviewing for.
- Practice your answers out loud. You can ask a trusted friend to mock interview you and if there is anyone in your life with real world interview experience, ask them to practice with you.

During the interview, make sure you’re listening carefully and fully answering the questions asked. If it’s a complicated question, it’s OK to repeat it and then ask, “Have I got this right?” before you start to answer.

Skype Interview Tips:

If you are located a long distance from the employer, you may be asked to have your interview via Skype. Below are some additional considerations for this type of interview:

- Prepare your Surroundings. Set up a desk and chair, and be seated by a wall in a quiet environment where you can speak freely and be heard clearly.
- Plan Ahead. Test the video and audio settings, and run a test call to make sure everything is working.
- Look the Part. Do your homework on the organization's culture to see how employees typically dress. If you're unsure, it's always best to err on the conservative side.
- Be mindful of body language, make sure to smile and maintain eye contact like you would in a regular interview, speak clearly, and maintain a professional outlook.

Developing interview skills takes practice, and with every interview you have you'll be better prepared to ace the next one!

Additional Reading:

[Yes, Your Resume Needs a Summary](#)

[Job Search Guide](#)

[Useful Skills For Your Resume](#)

[Non-profit Resume Tips](#)

[5 Tips to Manage Your Online Reputation](#)

[How to Approach a Non-profit Job Interview with a For Profit Attitude](#)

[What You Should and Shouldn't Focus on Before a Job Interview](#)

[12 Ways You Can Zap Your Job Interview Nerves](#)