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Over 50 and applying for jobs? Read this first

Retired Worker's 5 job application tips for older workers

Toronto, ON (May 13, 2008) - Job-hunting is never easy, but for older workers looking to return to the workforce after retirement - and who haven't had to apply for a job in years - it can be daunting. However, according to RetiredWorker.ca, following a few simple tips will help ensure your application ends up on top of the pile.

"It's important to remember that a job application has one purpose: To get you the interview," says Sarah Welstead, Managing Partner and co-founder of RetiredWorker, Canada's largest employment website designed specifically for older workers who want to re-enter the workforce after retirement. "A successful application is one which piques the potential employer's interest and isn't overloaded with irrelevant information."

According to Welstead, 38, older job-seekers can improve their chances of getting to the interview stage by following these simple guidelines:

1. ***It's a resumé, not a memoir:*** As a general rule, resumé's should never be more than 2 pages long. "Older job-seekers often have 35+ years of work experience behind them, and it can be hard to whittle it down," says Welstead. "But if you're applying for a part-time job at the local garden centre, detailed information about your job as a bookkeeper in 1982 is irrelevant - so don't let it take up more than a line or two."
2. ***Follow the application instructions:*** If the job advertisement says that you should apply online or by email, but you phone, fax or mail in your application instead, you're making yourself stand out - but not in a good way. "All you're doing is making it look like you can't follow simple instructions," advises Welstead. "Which means your application will end up at the bottom of the list - or worse, discarded without a second thought."
3. ***Make it clear which position you're applying for:*** Many companies have several job openings for which they are recruiting simultaneously, and it's not unusual for hiring managers to receive hundreds of resumé's per week. A resumé or application which clearly identifies the position stands a better chance of being routed to the appropriate person and processed faster. "If the hiring manager can't figure out what job you're applying for, s/he will simply move on to the next applicant."
4. ***Don't forget the 'cover email':*** "One of the most common mistakes we see among older job-seekers is the assumption that emailing their resumé obviates the need for a cover letter," Welstead reports. "But nothing could be further from the truth - in fact, more than 82% of recruiters and hiring managers say that a brief, informative and well-written covering email often makes the difference between getting the interview or getting passed by." The cover

email should clearly identify the position for which you are applying (typically in the 'subject' line); a brief outline about why you'd make a good candidate, including a reference to your relevant skills, experience and interests; and mention that you have attached your resumé. But don't go overboard: the cover email should be less than 200 words - just enough information to get the recruiter or hiring manager interested enough to take a look at your resumé instead of just passing on to the next applicant!

5. **Use a common file format when sending your resumé:** To ensure that the employer can open and read the resumé you sent as an attachment, it's important to use a standard file format. "The majority of recruiters prefer to receive resúmes in Microsoft Word format, with the .doc extension," comments Welstead. "However, if you don't have Word on your home computer, you can also send a PDF or RTF resumé. If you submit a resumé in an old or obscure file format - such as WordPerfect - the recipient may not be able to open and read it, and will just hit 'delete!'"

Welstead's final word of advice? "Think of a job application as an advertisement for a product or service - *you* . Like all advertising, the goal is to attract attention quickly and favourably, and encourage the person seeing it to take action. A good job application will make the potential employer think 'This person looks interesting - let's call them in for an interview.' And the interview will give you the opportunity to sell your skills and experience in person."

About Retired Worker:

Retired Worker was the first - and is still the largest - employment website in Canada designed for retired people who want to work on a part-time, temporary or contract basis. Launched in Toronto in October 2003, Retired Worker now has more than 25,000 registered job-seekers across Canada. For more information, visit www.retiredworker.ca.

About Sarah Welstead:

As a recruitment consultant specializing in workforce demographic trends, Sarah is the Managing Partner and Co-Founder of Retired Worker. Considered a pioneer in the field of older workers, and a passionate evangelist for the value of the 50+ demographic in the workforce, she is a popular speaker and media commentator on the subject. Most recently, she appeared on The Current on CBC Radio 1 along with Barbara Moses, Moses Znaimer, and David Foot.

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