

Deciphering Advertisements

The clue is to read between the lines for an understanding what the job involves; and what they really want (it's not always very clear). You need to give them a good reason to bring you in for an interview so that you can convince them you are the right person for the job. Remember that nothing is more attractive to any business owner/operator than being recognised and appreciated by outsiders AND there is no better way to demonstrate this than to show you have done your homework and checked them out.

- **Read through the advertisement carefully** and then write up a point by point list of what it is they actually want. Next, under each point, list examples of how you match their criteria. Where it doesn't match exactly, find something comparable. Do not leave any points unaddressed – it looks as if you didn't bother to read the advert completely and you are not really interested.
- **Read similar advertisements.** Often they will give you useful wording for your application. Try to also research the role itself – what it actually entails and what skills are required. Familiarise yourself as much as you possibly can so that you are well informed.
- **Now research the company/business** itself so that you understand exactly how this role contributes to the value of their bottom line.
- **Consider how you should respond to their criteria.** Which most describes you? a) I fit the job description – I'm confident; b) I have a 50/50 chance; c) Really want it but don't have the experience.
 - a) **Don't overplay it!** There may well be others equally qualified. Your role is to focus on your achievements that demonstrate your capability to do the job and how you would add value to the company/business. It is all about what **they** want - not what **you** want. Try to put yourself in their shoes.
 - b) **Attitude can often tip the balance.** It is a better investment for a business to take on someone eager to learn and teach them than to alter bad habits or retrain them. Demonstrate the areas that match their criteria and where you lack experience, compensate by focusing on your intention to continue to learn and desire to be successful at whatever you do. Initiative and commitment are two qualities employers value highly.
 - c) **You may be lucky** enough to find an employee that is looking for a 'rough diamond' – someone they think has the right potential and is worth the investment to train. Emphasis your willingness to learn (and that you are fast) and point out your skills that are complementary.
- **AND don't talk yourself into or out of the job before you begin.** Don't think it will be a breeze: overconfidence can come across as arrogance or being a know-it-all – both attitudes are unattractive, and suggest that you would not respond well to being told what to do. On the other hand, if you really want the job and are confident that with training you could do it (and do it well) then go for it. Enthusiasm and determination have won many a game despite going up against more qualified opponents.
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