So much about getting a job is hidden in mystery.

Job seekers often don’t know what to expect or how to set themselves apart from other candidates.

To help remove some of that mystery, we asked recruiters what they look for in job seekers.

1.3 million jobs

450 recruiting professionals

iCIMS conducted extensive research of the jobs created in 2013 and surveyed hundreds of recruiting professionals.
Cover letters are one of the biggest mysteries of the job search process, and you may be wondering: Do you actually have to write a cover letter to get an interview? We asked recruiters what they thought.

**Q: What is the value of a cover letter?**

- 59% Cover letters are useful sometimes
- 10% Cover letters are rarely useful
- 11% Cover letters are extremely valuable
- 20% Cover letters are a waste of time

**Q: Do you screen candidates out of consideration if they do not provide a cover letter with their resume?**

- 61% Yes
- 25% No
- 14% Only Sometimes

**Tip**

With 59% of recruiters considering the cover letter a useful tool, and 25% claiming that the absence of a cover letter will result in disqualification, it is in the job seeker’s best interest to submit a well-written cover letter with their job application.
The Resume Recruiters Are Looking For

While modern technology has made it a lot easier for job seekers to build creative resumes, like infographics and personal websites, the job seeker should proceed with caution.

- **54%** Recruiters say that the non-traditional resume should only be used when it is appropriate to the job for which you are applying.
- **42%** Recruiters do not like alternatives to traditional resumes, such as infographics and personal websites.
- **4%** I always like non-traditional resumes.

Tip: While creative resumes are attractive and eye-catching, typical applicant tracking systems cannot "read" graphical resumes. A functional or chronological resume will improve your chances of being found when submitting your resume online.
Now that we know that cover letters and traditional resumes are important, we should consider what skills you should highlight and explain.

Recruiters are constantly seeking people who possess the skills their company needs to succeed. Make sure that your resume and cover letter demonstrate your mastery of the skills required to do your target job. It is also important to note that hard skills are only part of the story. Recruiters are also seeking the soft skills necessary to be a great cultural-fit for their organization.

### The Skills Recruiters Are Looking For

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hard Skills</th>
<th>Soft Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Math Skills</td>
<td>Creativity/Innovation Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Media Skills</td>
<td>Willingness to Learn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Skills</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equipment Operation Skills</td>
<td>Management/Leadership Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering Skills</td>
<td>Common Sense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analytical Skills or Statistical Training</td>
<td>Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Skills</td>
<td>Interpersonal/Teamwork Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales or Marketing Skills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer-Related Technical Skills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Technical or Trade Skills (non-computer)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Tip**

Soft skills like **communication and teamwork** must be demonstrated by adding examples of past experiences in your resume and cover letter in order to make your resume rise to the top.
We’ve all heard that a job seeker’s online persona can impact your chances of getting a job, but is that really true?

Well, approximately 76% of recruiters say that they always or sometimes perform a Google search on candidates before hiring them. Furthermore, 40% of recruiters report finding online information that disqualified a candidate from consideration.

**Q:** Do you perform a Google search (or other web search) on job applicants to explore their background before hiring them?

- **Sometimes:** 24%
- **Rarely:** 21%
- **Never:** 18%
- **Always:** 37%

**Q:** Has information you found online ever disqualified an applicant from consideration for a job?

- **No:** 60%
- **Yes:** 40%

**Tip**

**Don’t wait** until you land an interview before you start cleaning up your online presence.
Once your resume does get noticed, you need to impress the recruiter and the hiring manager during an interview. In order to put your best foot forward, you must know what to expect so you can prepare.

45% of recruiters conduct behavioral interviews, in which the interviewer will ask the job seeker for specific examples of past work experiences.

Recruiters’ Preferred Interview Style

- **Behavioral Interview**: the interviewer asks for specific examples from your past work experiences to determine if you can provide evidence of your skills (ex. Give an example of a goal reached and how you achieved it).
- **Case Interview**: a job interview in which the applicant is given a question, situation, problem or challenge and asked to resolve the situation (ex. how many manhole covers are there in New York City?).
- **Situational Interview**: hypothetical business situations are described and you are asked to explain what you would do in these situations (ex. If you know your boss is 100% wrong about something, how would you handle it?)
- **Unstructured Interview**: Questions are based on the individual’s application documents such as their resume and so different variants of a question will be asked to each applicant as appropriate (ex. Tell me about yourself?)
- **Other**: 7.0%

Before going on your next interview, spend some time researching then practicing behavioral interviews with a friend.
When answering behavioral interview questions, the “STAR” technique is one of the best methods to structure your answers. By following this format, your answers create a story and are guaranteed to be effective, direct, meaningful, and personalized in a way that best identifies your qualifications.

STAR stands for “Situation,” “Task,” “Action,” “Result.” The following chart provides a summary of what information needs to be included in your answer.

**EFFECTIVE STORY TELLING:** direct, logical, meaningful and personalized

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prepare</th>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LISTEN to question</td>
<td>Provide context &amp; BACKGROUND</td>
<td>Describe problems &amp; CHALLENGES</td>
<td>Explain WHAT YOU DID &amp; how</td>
<td>State BENEFITS, savings, rewards, recognitions, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THINK of an event</td>
<td>“Our customers complained ...”</td>
<td>“We faced supply chain shortage ...”</td>
<td>“We solved ...”</td>
<td>“The impact of ...”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan, ORGANIZE in 5 to 8 seconds</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: www.RightAttitudes.com
Want More Knowledge to Get Ahead on the Job Hunt? Check Out These Resources for Job Seekers Online!

Visit us at http://www.icims.com/HEI for more resources

Check out the latest research eBook from iCIMS
Start a Successful Job Hunt & Set Yourself Apart

Share This Research eBook with Your Network

© 2014 iCIMS, Inc. All rights reserved.