

Demystifying the “Employer”

To an active job-seeker, the term “employer” doesn’t simply refer to a human being who needs to hire another human being. Instead, it refers to a mysterious god-like entity who selects the “good” from the “bad.” Many job seekers believe that the key to a successful resume or cover letter lies in a magic phrase, word, format, or font that will immediately land them on the “good” pile. They believe that the hiring partner or recruiter is a proverbial Rumpelstiltskin, waiting for some insightful job seeker to say their names.

Our clients frequently ask questions such as these:

- Do employers prefer justified or left-aligned cover letters?
- Do employers like white or off-white paper?
- Do employers prefer that a two-page resume be stapled or paper-clipped?
- Do employers like bullet points or paragraphs?
- Do employers prefer that my heading be centered or flush left?
- Do employers like letters to be signed in blue or black ink?

When it comes to predicting exactly what employers prefer, there is no crystal ball that will tell you. Employers are individuals with their own unique preferences. While there are definitely some general rules with regard to what employers prefer, be aware that there is no secret formula that automatically guarantees success.

You also need to know that the person who puts out a job posting is not an evil monster, rubbing his/her hands together with glee while waiting to crush the hopes and dreams of every person applying for the job.

Here are some prevalent myths that we’ve heard:

- Employers will throw your resume out without looking at it if it’s two pages long.
- Employers will toss your submission if there’s even one tiny typo.
- Employers will contact your employer before speaking to you to find out if you were a good employee.
- Employers will disqualify you if you don’t include your GPA.

Employers WANT to like you. This might be hard to believe if you’ve had a frustrating job-hunting experience, but it’s true. Employers genuinely want to find people who will do a good job, and they are hoping that good candidates will come across their desks. Hiring qualified and competent people is in the employer’s best interest. Therefore, if you can impress upon the employer that you can fulfill his/her needs and add value to his/her company or firm, you will be considered, typo and all.

If there is anything that can approximate a magic resume and cover letter formula, it is this: employers want to know what **you** can do for **them**, not the other way around. Adopting this as a mantra will start you on your way to a successful job search. Your goal in finding a job may be to make more money and advance your career, but if you convey this in your marketing materials, you will surely find yourself in the rejection pile.