



PROSPERITY PATHWAYS

Nail Your Application

and increase your chances
of scoring an interview



Get the interview you've been waiting for



Applying for a job may sound self-explanatory. But the fact is, this is the step that people most often trip over. And blow their chance for an interview in the process.

So how can you avoid making the same mistakes?

This guide walks you through how to get that interview you've been hoping for.

Apply the Right Way



There is no standard application process across all companies. Each job posting will specify how you should apply. The most common methods include:

- Submitting a resume and potentially a cover letter via email or a direct upload.
- Submitting an online application, which may include an assessment, qualification questions, and/or an assessment. Very often these application portals require you to create a profile.
- Emailing the hiring manager to express your interest. In this case, you will likely receive a reply email with further instructions.



Your ability to follow the application instructions will make the difference between scoring an interview and landing in the “no thanks” pile. Think of the application as your first test: the hiring manager wants to see that you are paying attention to details.

Think of the application as your first test from the hiring manager.

Match Your Resume to the Job

Once you nail the application, you need to make your resume stand out. Think about it: there could be hundreds of people applying for this job. How can you make YOUR resume be the one that pops?

The answer:

Customize your resume for each job you apply for. This doesn't mean you have to rewrite your resume each time. It does mean pulling out certain experiences that line up with each job's requirements.

Make sure to include accomplishments in quantifiable terms. For example: I increased customer service satisfaction by 85%. Or, I lead a team that decreased the turnover rate of our employees by 88%.

Take a look at this sample job description for an Agreement Administration Advisor.



As an Agreement Administration Advisor, you will be working in a fast paced, dynamic environment. The Agreement Administration Support Advisor is **responsible for answering questions and providing prompt, reliable and accurate assistance** to Apple customers and partners regarding contractual support agreements. Candidates should be able to navigate a variety of support tools while maintaining effective communication and ensuring the highest level of quality in every interaction. This is a work from home position, and we can consider candidates from cities across the US-you do not need to live in the city this is posted in to be considered.

Key Qualifications

- **Minimum of 2 years of customer support experience**
 - Requires strong organizational and multitasking skills
 - Requires strong written and verbal communication skills
 - Serve as a point of contact for Apple, Apple's customers and our partners by **answering questions and providing assistance in resolving contract issues** for customers.
 - Familiarity with Mac OS X
 - **Must demonstrate strong typing skills 40-50 wpm**
 - Requires ability and willingness to work non-standard business hours including evenings, weekends and holidays
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It's easy to build your resume with generic information that could potentially get the hiring manager's attention.

But if you want to stand out – and increase your chances of getting an interview – there are some relatively easy ways to prove you're a good fit for the job.

Take a look at the red phrases. These are key indicators of what a successful candidate looks like. You want to make sure the experience you're detailing on your resume demonstrates your skills in those areas.

Job Description	Your Resume	Example
Ensure service levels are met and key performance indicators are met.	Highlight any awards or service recognition received and be specific	Received 4 monthly Performance Star awards for achieving top performance in upsells and customer satisfaction
Minimum of 2 years of customer support experience	Include the length of service at your customer support positions	Lands' End Call Center, Customer Service Representative Call Center, 2003-2006
Strong typing skills 40-50 wpm	Include your typing speed in your Skills and Abilities section	Typing 50-60 words per minute
Answering questions and providing assistance in resolving contract issues	Demonstrate how you've worked with customers in prior roles	Responsible for one-call resolution for customers contacting Lands End about contract pricing disputes



In each of the examples above, you may already have generic bullet points that hint at that experience. But by getting specific with your experiences that align with the job description, you're showing the hiring manager that you paid close attention to the description and are a viable candidate for the job. And that increases your chance of getting called for an interview.

This does not mean you should be dishonest about your experience, however. You should highlight and specify your actual experiences in a way that demonstrates how you are an ideal candidate.

Make the Most of Your Cover Letter

Some companies require a cover letter while other make it optional. Still others only want a resume. A lot of people treat the cover letter as “fluff”, using it as a generic introduction. But if you can submit a cover letter, you are given valuable “real estate” to further demonstrate why the hiring manager should interview you.

Let's look at our fictional job description again.



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The highlighted phrases are qualifications you can address in your cover letter. You would want to specify your availability on evenings, weekends, and holidays. You'd also want to affirm your familiarity with Mac OS X. And you should offer some brief examples proving your written and verbal communication skills. For example, if your call time was below average, this may show that you are able to effectively and clearly communicate with customers and reduce questions.

The cover letter is your hook, the thing that catches the hiring manager's interest



Think of the cover letter as the hook, the thing that will make the hiring manager stop and want to read more about you. In the first sentence, talk about the company's first and then how you match perfectly. If you can clearly demonstrate your value in the cover letter, the hiring manager will want to see your resume. And if you've taken the time to customize your resume to the job description, you're more likely to get that interview request.

Comparing Culture

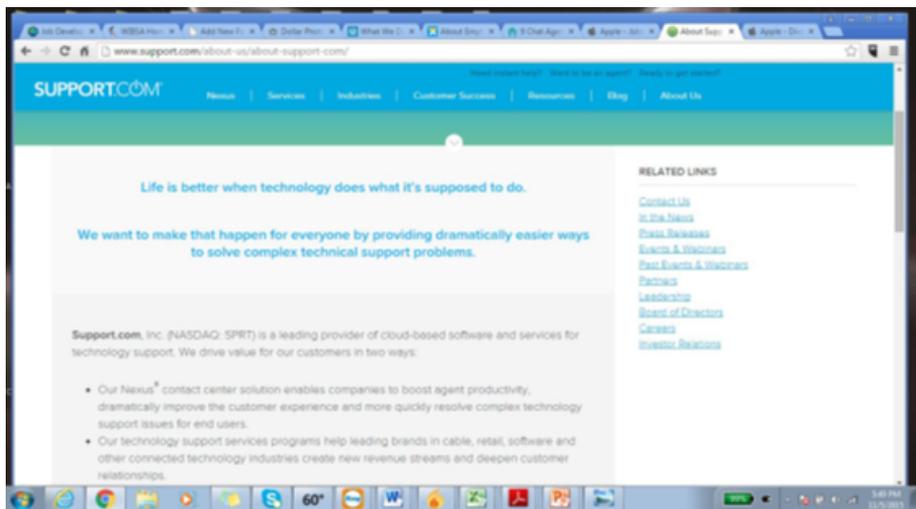
Are you compatible with the company's culture? If you are writing a cover letter, you should briefly demonstrate that you understand and fit with the culture. The Human Resources Department doesn't want to invest time and money into hiring someone that doesn't mesh with the company's values and mission.

Getting to know a company's culture takes a little bit of research, but doing so pays off in two major ways:

1. You gain a competitive advantage over candidates who have not looked into the culture. You can make yourself stand out in the cover letter and by demonstrating your knowledge of the company in an interview.
2. You may learn that the culture isn't a fit for you. And while this may be disappointing, learning now, before you spend time preparing for an interview, saves you time and potential heartache.



Some job descriptions include a brief snapshot of the company's culture. But to learn more, visit the company's About Us section on their website. Imagine you were interested in applying for a job at Support.com. This is what their About Us section tells you.



It's clear that the company is passionate about making complex technology easier. In your cover letter, you would want to address your commitment to working as part of a team that's dedicated to making customers' lives easier.

Don't take it word-from-word off of the company's website. Not only is that plagiarism, but it won't be an authentic representation of you.



If the company's About Us talks about their dedication to diversity or innovation, then use 1-2 sentences in your cover letter to talk about how much you value learning from others of different backgrounds and experiences.

"XYZ company values innovation. I thrive on learning from others of different backgrounds and experiences."

You can also use what you learn about a company's culture in the interview. Many hiring managers will ask if you have any questions.

Prepare for this by coming up with questions based on what you learn about the company's culture. For example, "I know that Support.com believes in innovation. What kinds of programs or initiatives do you have for employees to share their ideas or feedback?"

It feels like a lot of work. But taking time to learn about the culture and demonstrate that knowledge in your cover letter and interview is a sure way to stand out from the hundreds of other applicants.



Get on LinkedIn

Once you make it into the "Interview" selection, the hiring manager or Human Resources Department is almost always going to go to LinkedIn to check out your profile.

Your next step is to start one and get it to "All Star" status. Some research suggests that people with "All Star" profiles are up to 40% more likely to get called for an interview.

To achieve an All Star profile, do this:

- Make sure your profile photo is clear and professional. Look as relaxed and approachable as possible.
- Complete the section on work experience.
- Write a good summary that demonstrates your strengths, experience, and goals. Be conversational but clear and to-the-point.
- List your skills and, if possible, connect with others on LinkedIn who can endorse you for those skills
- Include your education
- Make your headline interesting but understandable
- Add your industry and location



Land Your Work-at-Home Job

The #1 way to land the work-at-home job you've always wanted is preparation.

- Apply the right way
- Match your resume to the job description
- Do your company research.
- Get on LinkedIn

This is absolutely within your reach.

prosperitypathways.com

