

What to Do When Filling Out an Application

What You Should DO!!!



DO provide as much information as possible.

Take the extra time to look up addresses, phone numbers, supervisors' names, and anything else the application asks for concerning your former employments. If possible, call your former employments to get the human resource department's records of your dates of employment and salary.

DO be honest.

If your reason for leaving was that you were fired, list that. If you only worked somewhere for a week, list that.

DO read the background check waiver carefully before signing.

Only check "Yes" for "May we contact your present employment?" if you mean it. Checking "No" does not reflect poorly on you, or insinuate that you have something to hide (other than that you do not want your current employment to know that you are job-hunting, which is perfectly understandable.)

DO provide references that fit the criteria asked of you in the application.

A few definitions:

Professional reference = Someone with whom you have worked.

Personal reference = Someone who knows you well, such as a friend or mentor

DO request permission for people to be your references, and keep them posted on your job search activities.

When a reference is called without warning, one of two things happens: The best case scenario is that they are pleasantly surprised, and do their best to give a good recommendation off the cuff, even if they are flustered, repeat themselves, and forget to include some good points.

The worst-case scenario is that they mistrust the company calling them, and refuse to give a reference. They also become annoyed because you did not ask permission, and give a lukewarm reference. When you ask permission, they will appreciate the courtesy, and will be ready to give a glowing, well-thought-out recommendation.

DO include information such as other names you have used, including maiden names, if applicable.

If your high school graduation or college degree needs to be verified, it will be helpful to have the full name you used at the time.

What Not to Do When Filling Out an Application



What NOT to do!!!

DON'T fill in blanks with what you know to be erroneous or incomplete information.

If you are uncertain, it is better to leave a field blank than to fabricate a phone number just to appear to have a complete application.

DON'T disclose any unsavory information that your former supervisors may not disclose.

For example, if you were fired because you were frequently tardy, simply list "Terminated." A former supervisor will confirm this statement, but may not divulge anything further. However, if you list "Terminated because of frequent tardiness", the supervisor will probably confirm that statement, which tells the potential employer more than they need to know.

DON'T list someone other than your actual current supervisor as your supervisor, in an attempt to not let your supervisor know that you are job-hunting.

If your listed supervisor is unavailable, and you have checked "Yes" to "May we contact your present employment?", then a background check company may ask to speak to another one of your supervisors. In this way, your supervisor could still find out that you are job hunting. Simply check "No" if you are uncertain.

DON'T provide references that may be unhelpful, unavailable, or do not fit the criteria.

For professional references, do not list a person who is high up in the company where you were an intern, but has no idea who you are. Also, do not list someone with whom you have not worked. It is better to pick your well-spoken former co-worker from McDonald's than the Governor for whose campaign you handed out cotton candy.

For personal references, do not list a friend of your parents, who has no idea about your interests or activities. Also, do not list a family member or significant other. This is a good place to list a former teacher or pastor. Also, do not list someone who is away for an extended period of time, hard to reach, or bad at returning phone calls.

*NOTE: If you do not have much job experience, it is permissible to list fellow students and professors as professional references. Make sure you pick fellow students who are ready to list your academic accomplishments and professors who know you well.

DON'T list all your references from the same company, if you can help it.

Your references should represent a job well done in several different arenas. Although companies do want to hear about your student teaching experience, for example, they also want to know that you can be friendly to customers in a retail or food service context, or that you are a hardworking person in the context of manual labor. Being well-rounded is a good thing.