

PUTTING THE PIECES TOGETHER: GETTING HIRED

An interview with Pat Martin

What do you look for in a resume? What encourages you to read it or toss it?

Martin always reads a resume in its entirety. She immediately discards resumes that have misspelled words and grammatical errors. She explains that because her business is a journalistic endeavor, these skills are a must. Martin also says these mistakes can tell a lot about the person and failing to do a simple "spell check" tells her they are not thorough. Martin also says she will discard a resume if it is not personalized to the job they are applying. Often the objective is too generic or vague, which tells her they are shooting out their resume to anyone and everyone in hopes of landing any job. She'd like to see people want to work for her company. Martin also stresses the importance of including a cover letter that mirrors the job posting—using the same wording and phrases in the job posting in your cover letter goes a long way.



Pat Martin, Publisher-The Park Cities News

I had the opportunity to interview Pat Martin, Publisher of Park Cities People newspaper in Dallas, Texas. I wanted to find out how she selects people to work for her company. This interview was written for the course *Introduction to Management* offered by University of Iowa and The Tippie College of Business





A cover letter helps the person reading it understand more about the job-seeker—"Think of it as a sales pitch, and what they are selling is themselves."

Does listing several jobs on a resume hinder your chances of landing the job?

Lack of longevity at past jobs on a resume used to be a red flag, and if someone worked less than a year at a job, Martin would question it. However, today's millennial or Gen-Y workers tend to jump around and have several jobs in a short period of time. She has come to appreciate the fact that these workers "are climbing... they are on their way up" and would miss out on great employees if she considered only their time on a job. Martin also understands that their newspaper is like a "training ground" for people to move on to their sister business, D Magazine, so knowing that going in makes the process of hiring, training and then the employee leaving, easier to take.

How do you feel about social media and screening prospective employees?

One big word of advice: Don't feel compelled to include a picture of yourself with your resume. They are often very distracting and makes it hard to take the applicant seriously, especially if they look like a match.com photo. Martin says she's going to hire you, not date you. She also looks up the applicant's Facebook page to get a feel for the person, so you may want to keep that squeaky clean.



Do you utilize job search engine sites like indeed.com or monster.com to find employees? How do you advertise your position?

Being that we are a newspaper and magazine, we, of course, advertise in our publications. We also get many referrals from associates of the magazine and advertise in trade and industry sites and journals, such as the Texas Press Association. We also post our openings at local universities.



Can you tell me about your interview process? How do you react to an overly nervous applicant?

Once Martin has selected a candidate from a resume and cover letter, they are administered two tests. The first test was originally designed for hiring salespeople, so Martin does not put a lot of credence in it unless she is hiring specifically for the sales department. She also gives them a test to find out about their attributes, which asks the applicants to rate themselves as being: assertive, creative, technical, etc. In the interview, Martin then asks applicants to tell her stories about themselves in which they used each of these attributes. She finds she can learn a lot about how that person works, and where they would fit in the company. She also stresses that candidates not "tell everything" about themselves, to keep it professional. As far as interviewing nervous applicants, she understands that most will exhibit some anxiety. Martin demonstrates a very relaxed and comfortable persona which usually encourages the applicant to

relax. If they are anxious the entire interview, she takes this into consideration, especially if they are applying for a position that requires an outgoing and self-confident personality, like sales or reporter.

"I THEN TAKE ALL THESE 'PIECES'—THE RESUME AND COVER LETTER, THE TESTS, AND THE INTERVIEW TO MAKE MY DECISION. EACH PIECE CARRIES EQUAL WEIGHT EXCEPT FOR THE INTERVIEW, WHICH CARRIES MORE WEIGHT. IF ALL THESE PIECES FIT TOGETHER, I WILL CALL THE APPLICANT'S REFERENCES AND HOPEFULLY BE ABLE TO MAKE A JOB OFFER."

