

## **Resumes and Application Forms - *Paper, Paper Everywhere!***

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The hiring process is paper intensive – even when you recruit online. If your recruiting efforts are successful, you probably have an array of documents to review: resumes, emails, etc. In addition, you will obtain an Application Form from everyone who comes in for an interview. If you have invited people to “apply in person” you will have application forms from people you don’t want to interview. You might be scratching your head right now and thinking, “Geez, if I have a resume or a referral from a trusted associate, why on earth should I create more paperwork with an application form?” Here are a few reasons.

Resumes won’t contain negative information because they are, after all, written by someone looking for a job who wants to put everything in a positive light. Gaps in employment are ignored or explained away – sometimes, quite creatively. Resumes usually don’t contain an accurate salary history or reasons for leaving a position – especially when the person was discharged. Oftentimes, “position eliminated” is stated as a reason for leaving and that sounds reasonable given the state of the economy at times. But, when I’ve called and asked to speak to the (insert title), I’ve generally been connected to a real, live person. It’s obvious the position still exists; it’s the former incumbent who was eliminated.

Referrals are usually oral and, like resumes, seldom raise a red flag. Ask yourself how the referring person knows the person he/she is recommending. Have they ever actually worked with that person? Are they related? Are they just social friends or acquaintances? For a jobseeker, networking can and does open doors. Once they are in the door, however, you still have to do your job. That means you must obtain and analyze information that is related to your available position and find a good match.

There are many good reasons to use an application form. Application forms are a way to obtain additional information such as starting and ending wages, names of supervisors, reasons for leaving, etc., that you won’t find on a resume. A proper application form includes language to protect you if misrepresentations are discovered later and you choose to dismiss the employee. It should also include a release that allows you to check the accuracy of information you have obtained.

For most dealerships, driving remains an essential part of many jobs, so it is imperative that you check driving records. Your casualty insurance carrier should be able to provide a release form for this purpose. Make it part of the application process.

In an ideal world, you would have an opportunity to check the application before you interview a candidate. This is the real world and that doesn’t always happen because, most of the time, you will obtain the application when a candidate comes in for an interview. Regardless, take a few minutes to look over the application to be sure it is complete. If the applicant has written in things like “see resume” or “will discuss” – instead of providing the information you requested – politely explain that they need to

actually fill in the information. You aren't going to be able to check the validity of "will discuss" when you do your background checking. Also, be sure the applicant has signed the form. If it isn't signed, your releases aren't valid.

Application forms become important company documents and should be treated as such. Because the application is a basis for a personal interview, you may wish to make notes – do it on a separate piece of paper or form. Altering an application form with interview notes or filling in blanks for the applicant can void any releases. Application forms should be kept in an employee's file. Forms for persons you do not hire should be retained for no longer than one year. This should be stated on the application form with the added statement that the form may require updating if it is more than 90 days old.

If you would like a review of the application form you are currently using, you can FAX it to me at 913-648-6798. If you are not using a form and would like a sample, please contact me by e-mail at [Lesley@taxfavoredbenefits.com](mailto:Lesley@taxfavoredbenefits.com) or toll free at 800-683-3440. Next month I will discuss personal interviews.