ASK ELLEN – relocating for work

12/7/11

Today’s question is from an internship student who is nearing graduation:

Q: What would you suggest in cases where you are applying for a job in a different state or country? Should you stress local roots (if they exist) in the cover letter? Should the resume be changed? Is there anything special that should be added to prevent the HR person from discarding your application right away? Is it important to write that you are willing to locate or should such stories be kept to yourself?

A: I would include (briefly) in the cover letter your reasons for applying for a job that’s not near to where you’re living now. What you’d want to do is figure out the employer’s possible concerns re: a long-distance applicant, and address them up front.

One concern of a potential employer may be that you would expect relocation assistance, which is not offered by many employers these days, or the employer may think that you are applying to anything and everything, and not really considering the magnitude of change of a move to another city, or country. So if you are definitely planning on moving to that area anyway, I would say that.

I would emphasize local roots too, if you have them, as the employer may be concerned that if hired you’d be making the move without understanding cultural differences (and/or cost of living/salary, weather, transportation, language, etc.) between the NYC area and wherever you’d be moving. Of course you would want to stress your flexibility and adaptability in the cover letter too. Those are good to emphasize anyway, but you would want to take extra care to emphasize those traits if you are applying for jobs that require a move.

The Library Career People’s archive of their Q&As about relocating: http://www.lisjobs.com/CareerQA_blog/?cat=45

Good luck!

Thank you,

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