

Four golden rules to remember when applying for Mzansi jobs online

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Applying for jobs online can be tedious. Here are four simple ways to get the edge over other jobseekers (Slay!) when you're looking for your next big break.



1. Complete all required fields *and* include your CV upload

There's a reason we ask for both. Although it may feel as annoying as a 'babalaas' after a big night out, you do need to upload your CV and type in your work history manually too. This 'duplication' is necessary because, when it comes to online recruitment platforms, the info you type in your profile is more visible than the CV, which recruiters would have to click to view.

Recruiters use the individual fields to shortlist candidates who meet their requirements. For example: "Five years' experience in the IT industry" would be two separate fields recruiters can shortlist on – namely the number of years work experience you have, and the sector you're in. If the candidate hasn't completed these in the required fields, they likely won't be in the running if a recruiter filters based on these two fields. The CV then allows for the system to read keywords in case recruiters want to search by specific terms once they've done their shortlist, and also allows for more personality to come through – should they decide to open the CV after shortlisting through filters.

Don't be shy to express your personality when describing your skills and experience to date, however you should also ensure that you use the correct formats and don't make any grammar or spelling mistakes. Bottom line – if your profile is sloppy or not completed in full, you won't be considered for the role.

2. Include work experience that is relevant to the job you're applying for

You may have worked as an au pair during your gap year in the UK. Although this role won't be relevant if you're trying to land an IT job, you may have picked up some skills that would be good for the recruiter to know, such as time management,

conflict resolution, and so on.

If you don't have much experience, consider including special projects, non-profit causes or sports teams that you've been a part of. You can include "piece jobs" (part-time work) so that there are no gaps in your CV, but don't go into detail about that cashier job at Checkers or waitressing job at Mugg & Bean if it isn't relevant to your current career aspirations.

As a general rule of thumb, you should include your last three jobs that are relevant to the industry and the role you're applying for.

3. When it comes to skills, be thorough – and mention your soft skills too

Hard skills are technical knowledge you've learned or training that you've undertaken, like budgeting, project-management and other specific skills like coding, a third language etc. Soft skills, on the other hand, are personal habits and traits that make you ... YOU – they represent your personal brand and give recruiters an idea of how you work and what is important to you. Soft skills are essentially "people skills" such as critical thinking, time management, communication, stress management etc., and candidates with strong soft skills tend to be in high demand for a wide range of jobs.

Jobseekers often make the mistake of simply listing their level of computer literacy when completing the 'skills' section on their online profile. Make sure you share detailed information about your hard skills *and* soft skills as well as the level of proficiency (basic, medium, good, expert) you have for each skill.

4. Do not underestimate the importance of the cover letter

A cover letter provides a great opportunity for you to align your skills and experience with the criteria for the advertised position. It's where you can allow your personal brand to shine and show that you've done your research by speaking directly to your potential employer's company values and mission statement.

Although the system doesn't actually search keywords in the cover letter (as it does in the CV), a recruiter scanning 100s of cover letters will pick out the important words that match the job spec they're written, improving your chances of standing out and being added to the "shortlist" pile.

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