

Would you apply for a position that you don't have all the qualifications for?

Have you ever seen the perfect job (that's on your career plan!) for a charity you love, doing the work you've been hoping to get into, but the job description starts listing some skills you don't have? The dilemma is whether to apply or not, here are some tips to help you decide.

Find a Way to Stand Out

Your skills might not stand out compared to other jobseekers, so focus on getting noticed and remembered in a positive light. E.g. a unique or outstanding cover letter that shows you have done your research; talk about the charity and what inspires you about them and why you would want to work there.

Accomplishments Can Trump Years of Experience

If they want 10 years of experience and you only have two years it might not be a good idea to apply - as you really are not qualified. But if you do have four or five years and you've accomplished a lot in that time then give clear-cut examples of tangible accomplishments and it could make up for the years of experience you lack. E.g. highlight the project you worked on or idea that you had that led to a huge increase in fundraising income.

Show, Don't Tell

Maybe your work history isn't what they're looking for, but that's no reason not to show a potential employer how you can benefit the company if they hire you.

Research the charity and come up with a slide show presentation for the interview to propose a new revenue stream or brilliant fundraising idea. If they see enough initiative and potential, your sparse work history will be overlooked.

Focus on Your Strengths

If you don't have a skill on their list, don't pretend you do and don't try to deny it. Instead, use your resume to highlight the attributes you do possess. For instance, if the job requires working knowledge of specific software that you don't have, stress a similar one you do know and talk about how quickly you pick up new skills and how you value training.

Get a Referral from someone in the charity that is hiring

This works if the company is hiring directly (i.e. Not using an agency). Getting an internal referral takes your CV from 'cold' to 'warm' and means that it will certainly receive added consideration. If the job is going through Execucare, you will need to convince us that you can do the work first, then name-drop on your cover letter so that the hiring person will have a conversation with them!

This is why it's so important to make connections and maintain your professional networks, (especially via FINZ) with a view to connecting with the people at charities you're targeting during your job search.