

Underqualified? Tips on how you can still clinch that job!

This might have happened to you. You go through recruitment advertisements and see a job which you know you would not only love, but would suit you to a “T”. You read on only to find out that you do not have the necessary experiences and perhaps, not even the right qualifications.

This is almost a case of lost hope. How would you be able to portray yourself as a qualified candidate when you do not have the necessary credentials and experiences to prove it? This situation would not be uncommon to graduates with limited experience and candidates seeking a career change in areas outside of their current fields.

Being under qualified is just as it is. How do you secure a job when you obviously do not possess the necessary and required qualifications?

We explore the following tips to pave the way to your success!

1. Experience and transferable skills

Showcase all the experience that you might have gained during your internships and part-time vacation jobs. Some of these experiences may not even be relevant but they are after all experiences and do form a part of what you might have learnt. You will also have picked up transferable skills such as organisational skills, software knowledge skills, teamwork, communication and leadership skills.

Such skills are labelled as transferable due to the fact that they are highly useful in whichever job you might land up in.

2. Resume writing

Instead of the usual listing of your past jobs in chronological order, try listing your transferable skills and experiences that are most relevant to the position which you are applying for. This may not be popular with recruiters who prefer to know exactly what you were doing previously but it may be worth a shot.

It would also be a good idea to highlight any vast experiences that you have to make it look more impressive. Your resume should be reader-friendly as nothing irks recruiters more than a messy and incoherent resume.

3. Do a reality check

A reality check is needed to ascertain that you are not too overly under qualified for the position. Apply for the job only if you know that somehow, you still remotely stand a chance of clinching that job. Should it be too apparent that you are completely under qualified, perhaps you should look elsewhere.

However, if you excel in some qualifications, do consider applying. Most employers do not expect the candidate they hire to have every qualification listed in the job posting. Job advertisements are usually some sort of an employer’s wish list, listing out all the ideal qualities they seek in their potential employees. If you excel in the most important qualifications, employers may be willing to overlook weaknesses in the less important areas.

4. Yes! Train me please!

Sometimes, companies are willing to hire candidates who are under qualified but are willing to be trained. Candidates who may be under qualified but yet demonstrate a positive and willing attitude may be given a chance to be trained to fit into the desired role. Indicate this willingness in your resume or interview.

5. How about a junior role

If you are only marginally qualified for a high-level job that you are eyeing, you may wish to be considered for a junior role, a position that reports to your ideal job. This shows your great interest in the position and allows you the opportunity to gain the required exposure in this field.

6. Interview time

Speak with confidence during job interviews and never read off your resume! Be forthright and share your previous job experiences and highlight areas that the client is looking for. Suggest how you can contribute to the company. Ensure that there is always a two way communication and never give one word answers during the interview.

7. Consider a career portfolio with work samples

Seeing is believing. If an employer is not quite convinced of your qualifications, you can bolster your case with a portfolio that shows your ability to do the job. Imagine how impressed the skeptical employer will be if you address under qualification concerns by showing living proof of your abilities. The portfolio can contain a sampling of your best work, including reports, papers, studies, brochures, projects, presentations, CD-ROMs, videos, and other multimedia formats, publications, reports, testimonials and letters of recommendations, as well as awards and honours achieved.

8. Consider volunteering to work on an unpaid trial basis

There may be no better way to demonstrate enthusiasm and commitment to a job for which you are marginally qualified than to offer to work for a short period on an unpaid trial basis. Strike a balance between how long you could afford to work without pay and a length of time that enables you to show you can do the job. Also be careful here not to come off sounding too desperate.

9. Some final thoughts

While these tips may perhaps help in the under qualified battle, they are not foolproof. At the end of the day, the reality is that many employers prefer to hire the most qualified candidate. However, there will be times when not the most qualified candidate gets the job but the candidate who is able to build a rapport with the interviewer or who demonstrates the most enthusiasm and confidence.

While waiting to land a job for which you may seem under qualified, consider pursuing training that will bolster your qualifications. Consider also doing an internship or volunteer work to build skills in your weaker areas.



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Under qualified? Fret not!

We would like to share a success story of how we managed to place one of our candidates who is in her 50s to one of our clients as a contract Credit Analyst. Though she is an 'O' level holder, she has more than 10 years of experience in credit control with several MNCs.

The initial requirement for this position was for a Degree holder with more than 8 years of experience. We arranged for the lady to meet up with us and after interviewing her, we found that she would be the ideal candidate for our client.

In addition, she was prepared to commit for the next 3 months. A meeting was arranged between the lady and our client, placing much emphasis on her commitment and her experience rather than her age and qualifications. Initially, the client was reluctant to see her but after much persuasion; the client relented and agreed to an interview. It was a perfect fit and the candidate was offered the job on the spot.