

Career Resources

Internal Job Applications: How to Prepare for the Possibility of a Promotion

By Emily Sanderson

Presenting a solid resume and cover letter in response to an internal job announcement at your company can be just as important, if not more so, than submitting these documents elsewhere. Frame your current job responsibilities and accomplishments in a way that will emphasize the transferable skills that will best complement the responsibilities you would assume in your new role.

You may have accepted the job offer for your present job with the intention of seeking a promotion within the company within two or three years of starting there. Given those intentions, you have acted accordingly and have considered your time there as an extended job interview for the position that you ultimately seek. You have:

- Volunteered to do projects over and above your current job responsibilities.
- Worked overtime even if compensation was not offered.
- Taken extra care to learn about the "nuts and bolts" of the company for which you work in order to gain perspective on where you fit in the equation.
- Performed research about your company's competitors and the well-being of the industry in general.
- Kept apprised of current events in your industry and in the larger marketplace by subscribing to trade journals as well as the *Wall Street Journal*.

In short, you have made yourself an excellent candidate for a managerial position in your company. The next step is to prepare a winning resume and cover letter.

A solid resume for an internal job application within your company is just as important, if not more so, than one you would present elsewhere. In an internal job search, you have less control over how you are perceived, given that the interviewer will have access to more data about you. Most likely, you have established a rapport with this individual, but if not, the individual will seek a recommendation from your present supervisor.

Present yourself in your resume not as a company yes-man but as a career-focused, goal-oriented individual who will offer new perspectives, in addition to the on-the-ground knowledge about the company you have gained by working in your present position. And remember, you deserve the promotion you are seeking. Although you may have become friends with those with whom you work on a daily basis, you have something to offer the company that goes above and beyond your coworker competitors.

Eileen Zimmerman of the *New York Times* recently addressed the subject of how a promotion may test a friendship: "The promotion of one friend over another is often a point where a friendship deteriorates, according to research done by Patty Sias, a professor of communication at Washington State University in Pullman, who studies workplace relationships. Preserving the relationship will require guidelines for behavior inside and outside of the office that recognize your obligations to the company as employees and to each other as friends."

Being able to maintain working relationships with your colleagues after your career promotion will be an asset to you down the road when making business decisions that require their trust. You have a lot to offer your company, and the skills and experience that you bring will not only benefit the bottom line but the careers of everyone with whom you work. Find a balance between being ambitious and being a team player.

As a manager, you will have to make difficult decisions sometimes that you don't have to make in an entry-level position. This requires maturity, perspective, and a good business sense, as well as charm and grace.

Making Difficult Decisions, by Peter Shaw, scheduled to come out this summer, discusses the subject of

making business decisions and provides many examples of business decisions that have been made in different industries, as well as in government.

"At the heart of effective decision-making is balancing clarity and conviction," Shaw writes. "The courage to make decisions is sometimes a bit elusive. It is difficult to find the calmness to be able to make and live with those decisions. There is so much that can be learned from the experience of others."

You may just be submitting your resume for a promotion right now, but you should be aware of how a changed role in your company would affect you and those around you. If you are comfortable with the role you will play, your confidence will be apparent in the cover letter you prepare and in the way you present yourself in your job interview. You have much to offer your company. Prepare now for the changes that an internal promotion will present.

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