

Can You Think Beyond Your Job Description? Hiring Managers Would Like to Meet You

By Robert Half/Accountemps

If you're currently seeking a new payroll position, don't limit your resume to technical aspects of your experience only. Payroll specialists who can see beyond their immediate jobs and visualize what else they can contribute may find they have an extra edge in today's job market.

Employers look for professionals with a track record of flexibility, of going the extra mile when necessary. More than likely, you were expected during the recession to stretch your abilities and work on projects that weren't related strictly to your particular position. Perhaps you even had the opportunity to propose new ideas or weigh in on decisions that affected your department. These experiences can set you apart from other candidates.

What types of accomplishments should you highlight? Answering the following questions can help you target your professional portfolio – and prepare for a job interview:

- **Have you worked with others outside of the payroll department to resolve a problem successfully?** Perhaps you played a direct role in addressing a time card dispute with a longtime contractor, or assisted HR with switching employees over to a new benefits provider. Employers value the ability to use interpersonal skills to collaborate effectively with people inside and outside of the organization to achieve a common goal.
- **Have you found ways to reduce costs for the business?** Examples could include finding ways to get more employees to enroll in direct deposit, suggesting that the department take a paperless approach to certain types of interoffice communication, or recommending the use of temporary staff for a large project in lieu of paying excess overtime or having to hire new employees.
- **Have you helped to improve the organization's efficiency?** Think of how you may have played a role in enhancing overall productivity for your employer. Perhaps you were the one who suggested that the cloud-computing solution your department recently implemented could be used to enhance information exchange with the HR team. Or maybe you found a way to streamline the timesheet review processing that saves hours each week.

These are just examples of ways you can have a positive impact on your organization. You can no doubt identify your own, once you sit down and think about it. The point is, don't view contributions you've made beyond your core payroll duties as irrelevant or insignificant. What many employers want to see from today's professionals is the ability to visualize how even small measures can lead to big results for the business.

If you've shown throughout your career that you're consistently willing to take on new challenges and do more for the business than what may be expected of you, you'll likely find that you are the candidate many of today's employers seek.

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