



## International Leadership Institute

*Dedicated to leadership development since 1985*



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PO Box 950-788  
Lake Mary, FL 32795-0788  
publications @ili.cc

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# CAREERS

## Editing your CV

by Sara Tusek

*Here's a real-life interview dilemma. It's based on a CV and cover letter sent to us by a person looking for a job. Only the name is changed!*



Dear Jan,

You have given me an interesting situation to consider! Thank you for letting me assist you in your job search.

Here are some quick observations. Please remember that these are just my opinions, but they may have some validity, as I have been reading resumes and advising people in the job search for 27 years!

1. Your writing style is very good. It flows well, and is easy to understand without being overly simple.
2. You have a real challenge in this job ad because it is so non-specific.

**Vacancy description:** XXX company is looking for bright, energetic, positive and determined people to join our vibrant multicultural team!

Experience is not necessary, but we do require:

- Fluent Czech speaker
- Open minded
- Positive
- Flexible
- Driven to succeed

Nowhere can I see what kind of job they are offering. I wonder if this is just a "catch-all" ad to gather resumes and review them, at leisure, to see who looks interesting. This makes your job much harder, as you don't quite know which skills to highlight.

3. Which brings me to your personal dilemma. Your cover letter and resume portray a highly-qualified person with extensive experience as a translator, writer, artist, etc. But you don't know, because the ad is so general, which parts of your experience and skills to stress.



*In Jicin, Czech Republic*



### International Leadership Institute

WAS FOUNDED IN 1985 IN  
PRINCETON, NJ

DEDICATED TO HELPING  
PEOPLE DEVELOP AND USE  
LEADERSHIP SKILLS

OFFERS PERSONALIZED &  
EFFECTIVE PROGRAMS  
AND SERVICES TO  
ENHANCE LEADERSHIP,  
CAREER, AND ENGLISH  
LANGUAGE SKILL  
DEVELOPMENT IN THE US  
AND IN EUROPE

HAS RUN MORE THAN 90  
EXECUTIVE EDUCATION  
AND LEADERSHIP  
DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS  
IN THE US, FOR EUROPEAN  
CLIENTS

HAS PARTNERED WITH THE US  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE,  
THE UNIVERSITY OF  
NORTH FLORIDA, THE  
JACKSONVILLE CHAMBER  
OF COMMERCE AND MORE  
THAN 780 OTHER  
BUSINESSES,  
UNIVERSITIES, RELIGIOUS  
ORGANIZATIONS, PRIVATE  
CITIZENS AND  
GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

## Editing your CV *(from p. 1)*

4. Therefore I suggest the obvious! Send them a letter which mirrors their ad. Without being a parrot, use their language to write your letter. At the same time, severely edit your letter and resume, omitting anything that's not asked for. This is a counter-intuitive exercise, as most people feel obliged to state everything about their abilities. However, if you do, you may end up overwhelming the person who is screening resumes, and portraying yourself as someone who is a potential disturbance to the balance of the organization.

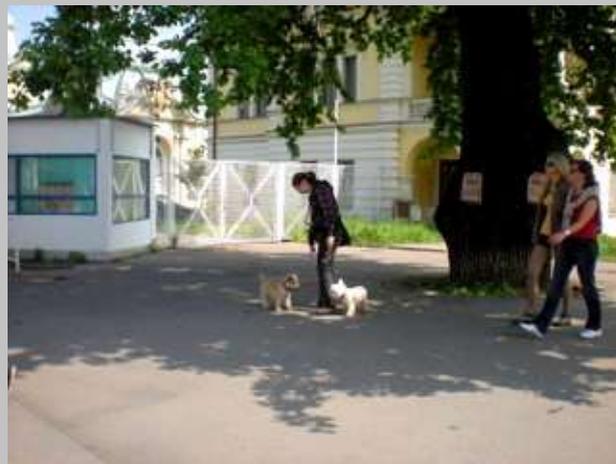
5. So, if you decide to go with point #4, you will end up with a shorter, snappier cover letter--about 3/4 page at most. It will mirror the job ad, but do so skillfully. It will also offer intriguing hints that you may have more to offer than what's being stated. Your resume will be one page, at most, with only relevant information, written in bullet points. At the bottom you can say "complete CV available upon request."

6. In all my experience, both in my own career and in helping 1000's of people in their career development, I have found three key truths:

***Your resume will most often prevent you from being interviewed, not help you, as it will always include something that the employer finds irritating or irrelevant. You can't avoid this.***

***Employers decide on whom to interview by factors that are unpredictable--usually something that's familiar or that reminds them of someone they like.***

***Since you can't control most of the factors of interviews, don't take rejection personally. Just keep looking. The best way to get a job is by hearing about it from a friend, or by chance, before it is advertised. Circulating socially in a variety of situations is the best way to get interviews.***



To get a job, you first need an interview, and usually a CV. People hire people, not CVs, so the interview is your chance to listen carefully, find out what the employer needs, and communicate effectively to determine if you can help. By doing your best to edit your CV, then never letting anyone see it unless he/she insists, you have the best chance to get an interview, talk with the potential employer, and get a job you can like and do best.