



# Look Better Than a Local

YOU CAN IMPROVE YOUR CHANCES OF FINDING A NEW JOB BY TAKING YOUR SEARCH ON THE ROAD, BUT YOU'VE GOT TO BE STRATEGIC IN SELLING YOURSELF. *by Daniel Bortz*

**THREE OUT OF FOUR** hiring managers recently surveyed by Challenger Gray & Christmas reported a shortage of local talent. So theoretically you could have better luck finding the job of your dreams if you're willing and able to move.

Problem is, many companies are hesitant to hire out-of-towners because of concerns over relocation, money, and local knowledge. But you can put hiring managers at ease by preemptively addressing these three issues in your application:

## HOW WILLING YOU ARE TO MOVE

Transparency is crucial. "If a recruiter in Pittsburgh sees you've been working in L.A. for 10 years, they'll want to know why you're applying," says Marcelle Yeager, president of Career Valet, a professional coaching firm.

Don't skirt these issues or, worse, lie by using a local pal's address. Instead, write beside your address that you would be eager to relocate to the area for

the right career opportunity, recommends Jaime Klein, founder of Inspire Human Resources, a New York HR consulting firm.

## WHAT IT WILL COST THE COMPANY

Hiring costs are top of mind for recruiters when evaluating long-distance applications. So pay your own way for an in-person interview if you can swing it, says Stefanie Wichansky, CEO at Randolph, N.J., management consulting and staffing firm Professional Resource Partners. A subtle approach: Indicate that you are frequently in the area and can make yourself available at the hiring manager's convenience.

Definitely *don't* bring up needing relocation assistance in your cover letter. "That makes your candidacy less attractive, as you'll be a more expensive hire compared to the local competition," says Wichansky. Wait to raise the issue until the company has determined that you're the

best candidate. "You're in a better position to negotiate once you've proven the value you can bring to the organization," she says.

## HOW WELL YOU KNOW THE AREA

Unless you have a skill set that's unique or in high demand, you're going to need to convince a hiring manager that you're not hampered—and wouldn't hamper the company—by your lack of knowledge of the local market, says Yeager.

One way to tap into the market from afar, besides following local news and blogs, is to join region-specific industry networking groups on LinkedIn. Start discussions to gain an insider's perspective, then demonstrate this knowledge in your cover letter. An out-of-towner looking for work in commercial real estate, for example, might study neighborhoods and establish relationships with local developers to show he can hit the ground running. **M**