

5 of the Best Personality Traits to Get That Payroll Job

Applying for a job is a lot like putting yourself out there on dating apps like Tinder. When hiring managers interview applicants, it takes but a few minutes for them to decide whether to swipe right or swipe left. And like dating, prospective employers are looking at everything you'd bring to the payroll position they have open, including your best personality traits.

To land a great job, give interviewers a strong impression of who you are and how your temperament will be an asset to the payroll department. Here are the five types of payroll professionals businesses want to hire:

1. Communicators

These professionals are experts when it comes to the soft skills of tact, diplomacy, empathy and both written and verbal communication. They make friends easily, including with people outside of finance, which helps to improve interdepartmental collaboration. Communicators are especially good candidates for management positions.

Most interviewers will talk about soft skills, asking behavioral questions such as, "Tell me about a time when you've had a difficult conversation with a colleague." When responding, demonstrate your intuitive understanding of people and that you know how to get your message across. Don't forget to mention the importance of listening to others as one of the best personality traits a person can have.

2. Self-starters

Some people need constant guidance, but not self-starters. They have an innate sense of what needs to be done and how to get the job done right. These personality types enjoy working alone, but in a team environment, their energy motivates others. Payroll managers like self-starters, as these workers don't require a lot of hand holding.

To emphasize this aspect of your personality, focus on projects you've initiated, such as researching payroll systems and choosing the best one for your company. Problem solving is an essential element of being a self-starter, so relate anecdotes that begin with a predicament and end with the successful implementation of your solution.

3. Explorers

Explorers are curious about everything. They are the first to embrace change and new platforms, and quickly find innovative and more efficient ways of completing tasks. As more payroll systems move to the cloud, these are the ones who help guide coworkers and other users.

During interviews for payroll positions, explorers easily demonstrate their comfort level with new technology. But a grasp of IT is only one aspect of this personality. They have an equal

level of understanding of the most current legislation regarding tax rates, withholdings and compliance requirements. When talking about yourself, mention all the ways you keep up with industry trends, such as the blogs you read, the newsletters you subscribe to and the training you seek out for yourself.

4. Perfectionists

These payroll employees have an eagle eye. They recognize discrepancies from a mile away and pride themselves on a near-zero error rate. They're careful and talented, but also efficient with their time. When a perfectionist is on the team, managers don't have to worry about anything falling through the cracks.

Attention to detail is one of those best personality traits for any payroll professional, but perfectionists go one step further. When meeting with prospective employers, talk about your near obsession with getting things just right. Back up your assertions with real-life examples, such as when you caught an error that saved the department countless hours of grief from underpaid employees. If you don't have such a story, that's okay. Talk about the common payroll mistakes you keep an eye out for, or your methodology for double-checking data entries.

5. Moral guides

If you have a strong sense of right and wrong, you might be a moral guide. These employees hate to see people treated unfairly, which makes them good at resolving disputes and customer service complaints. They abide by the rules and watch out for dubious practices. At the same time, they have a good sense of empathy and understand the importance of being flexible. These employees are vital for the smooth running of any payroll department.

Confidentiality is essential in payroll, where employees have access to so much privileged data. A large part of [navigating ethics](#) involves understanding the rules, so demonstrate your mastery of issues such as data protection and compliance requirements during interviews.

Whatever attribute you emphasize in the interview, the most important thing is to be honest. Don't pretend to be someone you're not, and be ready to talk in depth about any aspect of your personality. The most important personality trait at an interview is sincerity, and an experienced [interviewer](#) will quickly be able to tell if you've got it or not.

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