

Online Job Searches Peaks and Pitfalls

Online job postings and application processes are now the standard for most organizations. What does this mean to you? To conduct an effective job search and expand your options, you will need to be able to successfully navigate the online job search process.

The Internet is a primary job search resource that makes looking for jobs quick and relatively easy. Flexibility is a great benefit. Job seekers can use the big job boards, such as Monster and CareerBuilder, college career centers' job sites, or company sites to view jobs at any time. Keep in mind that it is important to use many sources for your job search instead of relying only on online options. Networking with friends and through professional organizations is often the most effective way to land a great job.

Résumés & Applications

Chances are good that you will be using the Internet to send your cover letter and résumé a majority of the time. Electronic versions of résumés and cover letters make the job search easier by allowing you to: make changes quickly and easily, keep several résumés for different target audiences, save paper and quickly send replies to job postings using email. Job seekers can email their résumé as an attachment and/or copy and paste the résumé in the message body. Many company websites have applications built into their website where job seekers may or may not be able to add their résumé and cover letter. Some websites prohibit attachments but offer a large field into which applicants can paste their copied résumé text.

Job seekers have the responsibility to double check spelling and grammar on online applications – often spell check functions are not available. Employers have set systems on their application websites that will weed out applications that contain misspellings. Your applications to a company could be barred permanently in some cases. Refreshing your résumé in a company's database periodically and inserting keywords that were used in the job posting into the job application are important additional steps for success. Follow up with a recruiter by phone or email. You can ask around and search the company website to retrieve names of recruiters. Getting a name is important in effective job searching.

Etiquette & Technology

What do your email address and voicemail greeting say about you? If you are providing an email address on your résumé or job application, it should convey professionalism and avoid controversy. Email usernames such as *spartans-fan*, *dreamydarlene* and *vote-yes-issue-89* are not professional and should not appear on your résumé. Email is often a preferred method of communication for employers and some employers also text job applicants. Always use

professional language in email and text correspondence just as you would in paper based correspondence with an employer. Do not use casual language, abbreviations (l8tr, lol) or emoticons like smiley faces.

We recommend that you use a combination of your first, middle initials and your last name (example: rjsmith07@isp.com). Reserve an email account solely for job search correspondence to help you organize. Check your voicemail greeting too. Poems, songs and other productions need not be on your greeting. Keep it simple and professional.

Electronic Privacy & Protection

Along with the convenience of online job searches and applications come privacy concerns. To safeguard against identity theft, NEVER provide your social security number in online interactions. It IS legitimate to provide your social security number to employers after you have been hired. Be careful with credit card and bank account numbers. Avoid job sites that offer to "blast" your résumé across the Internet. Some sites allow you to hide personal information like home address, and it is a good idea to take advantage of this service.

No matter what resources you choose for your job search, it is important to diversify and help recruiters connect a face with your name by networking with fellow professionals in addition to using the Internet to build and follow up on leads. Think of the Internet as one of many items in your job search tool chest.

