



## Job Seekers Part 3: Applying to Jobs Online

### Goals for this session:

- Convert a resume / cover letter to PDF, including correct file naming.
- Understand the steps and learn some tips for applying to a job online.
- Review email etiquette and maintaining an appropriate online presence.
- Review strategies for staying organized during the application process.
- Gain awareness of online job scams.

### Tips for Applying to Jobs Online

#### Applicant Tracking System – ATS

- What is an ATS? An ATS is a type of software that manages the recruitment process, mostly by sorting through resumes, to determine which ones are the best fit for a position by searching resumes for keywords.
- Why do employers use them? Applicant tracking systems help employers save time and paper and stay organized. An ATS is a simple way for employers to keep tabs on the hiring process and to communicate with applicants directly.
- How does an ATS work? An ATS processes and stores resumes submitted by applicants in the database. Recruiters then search for keywords for the particular job opening. If your resume contains the keywords the employer wants, then the ATS will rank you higher in the search results. The employer can even command the ATS to search the company's entire database of resumes to look for candidates with certain qualifications. This means that if the company kept your resume on file the ATS might identify you as a good candidate for a different position long after you originally submitted your resume.

#### Do's

- Research the company – Take the time to learn its mission and values. Then, incorporate those into your job history and cover letter. This will help you stand out among other applicants who applied without doing their homework.
- Follow directions and create one profile per company – Read the job listing and follow instructions to the letter.
- Tailor your resume and cover letter to each job application – Ask not what the company can do for you; ask what you can do for the company. A winning cover letter speaks directly to the needs of the employer. Write about your experience, but put it in the context of the potential employer and how your skills are relevant to the job.
- Add your LinkedIn profile information.
- Write a cover letter – Including a cover letter also has a more tactical advantage. Many Applicant Tracking Systems will account for a cover letter when recruiters search by keywords. Address the cover letter to an actual person.
- Cherry-pick your opportunities – Rather than firing off 30 applications in a single hour, spend the same amount of time writing one powerful and persuasive cover letter. Random spamming with the same cover letter and resume will not get you any closer to employment. Recruiters won't consider you as a serious candidate.
- Proof read on paper.

## Don'ts

- Don't leave sections blank: On many Applicant Tracking Systems, the information typed in for job history is more visible than the résumé, which someone would have to click to view. Don't forget to tailor these sections in the same way you would tailor your résumé to match the necessary keywords to really optimize your résumé.
- Don't type in shorthand.
- Don't apply for a job that's completely out of your league – This approach simply clogs the recruitment pipes and won't land the job of your dreams.

## **Preparing Your Cover Letter & Resume to Upload or Attach**

Once you have customized your resume and cover letter for a particular position, these documents need to be prepared in the following ways:

- Name the file appropriately:
  - Name\_Resume\_Company
  - For example: CMarsh\_Resume\_Wellesley; CMarsh\_CoverLetter\_Wellesley
- Save the file as a:
  - Word document (.docx)
  - PDF (.pdf)
  - Plain text (.rtf or .txt)

## **Completing and Submitting an Online Application**

Before starting an online application be sure to give yourself time to complete it with no distractions. Each application is different and directions may vary.

- Create an account
  - Some employers and job search websites require you to create a personal account.
  - Be sure to save your username and password so you can access it in the future.
  - Follow all directions carefully and thoroughly.
  - \*Practice: [http://www.experienceworks.org/site/PageServer?pagename=Practice\\_Online\\_application](http://www.experienceworks.org/site/PageServer?pagename=Practice_Online_application)
- Email
  - Some job postings ask for a resume and cover letter via email. Some things to remember:
    - Subject line should be the job title or what is requested in the job posting.
    - Attach your documents to the email in the format requested by the job posting.
    - The body of the email should be professional, like a business letter:

Dear Ms. Chang,

I am applying for the Reference Librarian position at the Wellesley Free Library, which I saw posted on the town website. I am enthusiastic about the position and believe I am well qualified. My cover letter and resume are attached, please let me know if there is trouble opening the attachments. Thank you for your consideration and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,  
Cara Marsh

- \*Practice: Create a practice email to yourself. Put an appropriate subject line, write an appropriate message, attach your resume and cover letter and send to yourself.

## Staying Organized

Documenting all actions taken during the job search and application process is an effective way to stay organized. You may be applying to over 10 jobs and all the information and task associated with each one is overwhelming. The following are strategies you can use to keep yourself organized throughout the process:

- Keep a journal
- Create a spreadsheet in Excel
- Print job postings and applications

Key information and tasks to track:

- Job posting link and date
- Application link and deadline
- Date applied
- Form of application (email, online application, print application, etc.)
- Dates of any correspondence

## Your Online Presence

Employers will search for potential new hires on the Internet to see their online activity and digital footprint. Be sure you are representing yourself appropriately online.

- Google yourself to see what others will see.
- If you use social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.) be aware of what others will see. Change your privacy settings and clean up pictures and comments if necessary.

## Online Job Scams

- Never pay to view or apply to a job posting online.
- Be wary of multi-level marketing schemes. If you are unsure Google the name of the company, product, or industry and 'scam' to see if there are any articles written.
- Work-at-home ads are usually scams. Be sure the source is reputable.
- More information on job-related scams: <http://www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0243-job-scams>