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Enhancing Success and Security
when Applying for Jobs Online

Using the Internet to find and apply for jobs can sometimes be frustrating and challenging. However, there are things a job seeker can do to make the process easier, the search more successful, and to safeguard one's privacy and personal information.

A. Efficiency and Success Pointers

Career coaches in New York and Los Angeles suggest the online application be viewed as a "bureaucratic formality", a one-size-fits-all form that has everything on it but which nonetheless doesn't require detailed answers to all questions. Here are some pointers for tackling the online job application process:

1. **Prioritize job listings** you find online. Only apply to those that you really want and that match your skill set – that is, where you meet at least 80% of the requirements. Some qualifications can be more flexible than others. If the listing calls for 10 years' experience and you have 8, you should apply anyway. If it wants fluency in a foreign language and you've only taken a couple of courses, this probably isn't negotiable.

2. **Tailor your resume to the listing** and include key words found in the listing.

3. Whenever possible, **include a concise cover letter** that specifically addresses the job's requirements.

4. **Apply early; try to be one of the first applicants noticed by recruiters**. If a job is posted with an application deadline that's a month from now, this doesn't mean you have a month to apply. Recruiters are eager to review applications in the first few days after posting the job. Once they have a good pool of applicants, the bar to get included in the pool may be raised higher. Or someone may be interviewed and hired before you apply.

5. **Regarding the application itself**:
   a. Don't answer salary inquiries. If an answer is required, enter "$1" or "$10" or "$100", any figure that makes it clear you aren't giving a real salary. It's not fair to discuss compensation before having the job interview.
   b. If it asks the name of your current boss, write "to be discussed".
   c. If you are out of work, you can answer "to be discussed".
   d. Where it asks for a list of references, write "available upon strong mutual interest".
   e. If the application asks for your current position and its description, write "Please see resume". Or, you could cut and paste this information from your resume onto the form.
   f. Be thorough where appropriate to let the recruiter know you are truly interested in the job.
   g. Follow directions closely and proofread well for errors.
   h. Be honest.

6. Don't forget to **use your "face to face" and social media networks**. Use these to find connections to the job you want. The most effective thing you can do is find a personal connection to the hiring manager at the company that made the posting. Ask everyone you know if they know anyone who works at that company.

7. **Complement your online application with direct outreach to the hiring manager.** Send a letter providing a more three-dimensional picture of yourself and the benefits you have to offer to help them address their particular needs.

   Here's a way to find this person on the Internet:
   - **First, search for the hiring manager, department head, or human resources contact:**
     o In your search engine (e.g. Google), enter information corresponding to the following search terms, each in quotes:
       ▪ "The company's name" (for example, "UVM Medical Center")
       ▪ "The department head's job title" (for example, "Manager of Dining Services") (OR "human resources" OR "recruiter")
       ▪ *(NOTE: **IF** you have a LinkedIn.com account, you can also add: "LinkedIn.com")*
   - **Next, zero in on a contact:**
     o Find a name among the search results that seems promising.
     o *(NOTE: **IF** you are also searching **in** LinkedIn.com, click on this name; the person's LinkedIn public profile page will appear. Notice other names you could also contact at the company in the LinkedIn sidebar. ("Viewers of this profile also viewed…")*
   - **Finally, locate their mailing address**
     o This information should be on the home page of the website. Other places to look at the "Contact Us" tab and the "About Us" tab.

B. **Privacy Pointers**

When you apply online for jobs and post your resume to job boards, you are circulating your resume across the Internet. As you do this, is important to know how to protect your privacy while also ensuring you achieve your desired exposure to employers. Here are some pointers to keep in mind.

1. Don't use a job search site that doesn't have a privacy policy posted on its website. Look for specific privacy policy statements about resumes, registration information, and statements about how that information will be used, stored and shared. Links to privacy policies are often found at the bottom of a website's home page.

2. Before you post a resume on a job board or job site, make sure you can delete it later. If you can't find the deletion instructions in the privacy policy, email the site and ask if / how you can delete your resume. Don't post your resume if you don't like the answers.

3. If you are going to post your resume online, pick just a handful of sites with good privacy policies and **that allow you to hide your contact information** (thereby controlling who contacts you).
   - Don't include your full name, your phone number, or your home address on your resume;
   - Use an email address that you can cancel if you start getting spam.

6. Don't put your references' names and phone numbers on any resume posted online. Doing so is giving their information away without their consent.

7. Don't provide any site or employer with personal information such as your bank account number, credit card number, mother's maiden name, or identifying characteristics such as your eye color.

8. Don't provide your social security number and birth date to any potential employer until *after* you have completed the interview process and know the employer is serious about your potential employment. Use of this information to conduct a background check at this stage of the hiring process is legitimate.

9. Ignore vague email "job" offers; they are unlikely to be valid. Red flags include phrases such as "we have thousands of jobs" or "we work with major companies".

10. Don't send your resume in response to general email requests you receive *after* you have already posted your resume online.

11. Keep good records of where you have posted your resume. When you are done with your job search, go back and delete your resume from sites where you posted it.

12. **Where possible, look for a company-related email address to send your resume to. Another option is to post your resume on the website of the company you wish to work for.**

Adapted from:

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