



The Right Way To Use Resumes

Most job applicants make two fundamental mistakes when they submit resumes in response to online job postings.

First, they aren't sufficient selective. At a singles bar, someone who hits on every person seems desperate. And desperation doesn't sell. The same is true with job searches. Employers may not know you are responding to every posting you're remotely qualified for, but you do, and that smacks of desperation. This can and does come across at an interview. There isn't enough time to do a proper research for every position, so focus on those that seem to be the best fit between your skills and interests and what the employer appears to be seeking. That may help you feel less bothered by seeing lots of advertised positions in which you are not interested or qualified.

Second, applicants only submit resumes when they see a specific job posting. Looking for a job by looking exclusively at posted positions is like knowing you need a pair of size 8 shoes, and walking by display windows hoping your shoe size is there. The alternative is to walk into stores that are likely to have shoes in your size regardless of whether those shoes are on display.

The same is true in the job search. The Internet has transformed how people look for jobs. It has enabled employers and applicants to find each other quickly, and websites have added exponentially to the information at your disposal. It would take hundreds if not thousands of hours to identify all of the openings listed online, and it makes sense to use that technology to help you. But don't rely on posted positions as your exclusive means of finding a job.

Contacting selected employers regardless of whether they have posted a position has three distinct advantages. First, you will be focusing on jobs that interest you, and that may make you feel more in control. Second, if you do get a nibble when you contact an employer, you will likely face less competition. Third, contacting employers regardless of whether they have a posted opening will increase the chances that you will talk to other your network of contacts about your situation. The apparent efficiency of responding to posted openings can lead some people to become virtual shut-ins. Don't let that happen to you.

Let the amazing transformative tool of the Internet work for you, but use it as an important part of your job search, not the only part.