

Electronic Job Search - - - Quick Guide

Combining Today's Technology with the Tried and True

For many, the Internet has become the primary source for job hunting while snail mail and person-to-person contact have become secondary to ever advancing electronic media. But there are reasons and advantages to combining the traditional and the new job search technique. Over the past twenty years we have progressed from electric typewriters, to wordprocessors, to fax machines, to voice mail, to E-mail, and now to Blackberries. Yet, because most jobs are still not advertised, networking and planning remain necessities.

Technological advances have been a boon in speeding up communication in the job search effort. It is important, however, to remember that all of these are only tools, essential to efficient and effective communication in the 21st century. They carry the message, but marketing must support the message. Traditional approaches (telephone, networking, contacting agencies, cold calls, personal delivery of resume) are still important methods of job searching.



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IMPORTANCE OF ELECTRONIC MEDIA

- The competitive job market requires job seekers to augment traditional methods of sending resumes and cover letters with the more efficient E-mail. Some job seekers use the Internet as their primary job search tool.
- Recently, a number of young, savvy Internet users with superior educational and computer qualifications started their job search by posting their respective resumes on various sites like **Gojobs.gov.on.ca, Workopolis, Monster, and**

WorkstreamInc. They all got feedback from recruiters with varying degrees of professionalism and knowledge but few responses from desirable employers. Currently, many recruiters are utilizing the web to find candidates, build files and get leads, while companies tend to use it for market exposure. There are a growing number of companies, however, that do list jobs on their own website and accept E-mail applications.

INCREASED EASE DOESN'T MEAN BETTER RESULTS

- When faxes came in to their own in the 80's, companies typically received 800+ responses to a newspaper ad. With the ease of E-mail, and two-finger keyboarding skills, one can only speculate that the responses to an electronic job posting could be in the thousands.
- One resume could easily be lost in a sea of electronic information and HR departments become swamped with an abundance of possible (if not probable) candidates.
- How do you get your resume noticed? One innovative recruiting firm has initiated a process of video resumes where the person presents a brief overview of their education, experience and accomplishments for employers. This technique is probably some time away from general usage and there may be some human rights questions to deal with, but the fact remains that **a well-designed resume** will capture someone's attention.

DANGER AND ELECTRONIC MEDIA

- Four main job search dangers present while using electronic media. 1. Assumptions about yourself and how long the search will take. 2. Your approach to fully preparing yourself for the search, and 3. Making sure that your varied audience is attacked planfully rather than entering your resume solely to popular search engines. 4. You wrote your E-mail cover letter and 'attached' the resume...all that remains is to send the message. Each of us by now knows

the importance of **good preparation before clicking the 'send' button**. Once the message is gone, it's too late, and the negative impact created by a poorly worded message could lead to a dead end. It is more productive to do a thing right the first time than to try to recover from a mistake or oversight. **The message you send becomes the recipient's primary evaluation tool.**

VOICEMAIL

- When using voicemail without preparation, you could easily become tongue-tied, unintelligible, abrupt, or sound like you are reading your message to them. Before you pick up the phone, **do some research** on the company and the person to whom you will be speaking. Create a summary of **point form notes**.
- Because of the prevalence of voicemail and call-display, be ready with a **clear, concise set of statements** to record. Don't forget to leave your name and phone number. Also, be prepared to have a dialogue because the person just might answer their phone.

FAX

- Once the mechanics are learned, faxing is a breeze. Yet, faxes still go missing, some end up at other companies; some seem to disappear completely. The 'send' button does not guarantee accurate transmittal. With proper planning - - - confirmation of fax number, placing the document in the machine properly, and dialing the correct number - - - chances are the fax will go through to the right person. It is also your responsibility to ensure that the **content and design of your letter and resume** add to your presentation. Will the recipient **want** to use a fax machine and will the paper be of good quality? You can only hope.

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5650 Yonge Street • Suite 1500 • The Xerox Tower • Toronto ON M2M 4G3

O: 416-229-9905 • F: 416-222-2448 • E: willis@wnassociates.com

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E-MAIL

Just as the fax machine eclipsed mail as a resume-forwarding medium, so too has E-mail surpassed the fax, and portable wireless devices have become the next well-established method of communicating.

Layout, design, content, style and wording are as important here as in faxing a letter or sending one by post. Remember to check that you are sending the correct attachment (your resume, not the latest joke from a friend). The letter and resume can be part of the same attachment with

a brief E-mail message as an introduction. In this way the company representative need only access one 'attachment'.

Technology affects all parts of our lives and plays an important role in the search for new opportunities. The Internet has become a useful tool in the job search process over the past few years and offers relevant additions to your search strategy. It can be useful, but remember that it is only one among several avenues to explore when sending information.

HOW CAN THE INTERNET HELP IN A JOB SEARCH?

The most direct benefit gained from the Internet is "job postings". Web sites like **monster**, **netjobs**, **workopolis** and **careers.org** offer a place for employers to post their positions directly. When an employer advertises with the Toronto Star, the position is added to Workopolis automatically. Reading or downloading opportunities are free to the job seeker. Many of the postings are for positions in U.S.A. but many Canadian jobs can be found at each of these sites. Remember too, that there are sites that will charge you for finding a job for you. Be circumspect.

You gain exposure within companies and search firms by posting your resume at these sites. Some sites charge a fee for posting your resume. Most do not. By downloading your resume into a database, employers and search firms can select candidates. Some may offer confidentiality

as an option i.e., they won't post your name and address on the resume but merely a reference number, and therefore no personal information will be given without your consent. As with any media, be careful what personal information you divulge. **If it is on the Internet, it is in the public domain - - anyone can get it. Do not divulge your SIN number on the Internet.** Companies are developing their own web pages to offer a wide range of current information such as staff, executives, departments, and career opportunities. Use them.

Some sites like **Yahoo** and **Google** are search engines. The Internet offers job searchers the opportunity of researching online. Some web sites are industry specific such as **hcareers.ca** for hospitality jobs. Using the search engine, key in industry keywords (e.g. **healthcare jobs**) to locate industry specific web sites.

POSTING AN RESUME ON-LINE

Job search web sites will require you to post a resume online in one of two ways: by completing an online application or by cutting and pasting your resume to the e-mail message rather than as an attachment. Look at other posted resumes to get an idea of what is currently acceptable.

- **Save a version of your resume in text only.** This can easily be copied and pasted section by section. After you create your resume in (*.txt), e-mail it to several friends to confirm

clean transfer of the document.

- Keep track of sites where you load your resume. Check the end date so that you can reload it if desired.
- Most sites have guidelines to help you post your resume.
- Most web sites allow you to review your input. Check your resume carefully for correct grammar, spacing and spelling.

WHAT MAKES A RESUME SCANNABLE?

Computer programs examine resumes to find keywords. This is called a key-word search that will identify certain desired qualifications.

This is a critical aspect to consider when forwarding your resume through the Internet. Electronic scanning software is in use by many HR departments. The scanner basically tries to find specified words or phrases within a document. For example, the words: "executive", "accounting", "MBA", "financial", "team player", "problem solver", and "strategic plan" might be the important key words to find in a document. From the scanned resumes, only those that included the above key words or phrases would be singled out. The danger for both company and candidate is that the best candidate for a job might be overlooked because the program failed to trigger his/her resume due to a missing word.

Therefore:

- Add a number of significant key words to illustrate your accomplishments. Expand your resume to ensure an adequate number of key words are written. Include professional memberships.
- Avoid columns, parenthesis, bullets, brackets, bolding, abbreviations, lines, and obscure fonts.
- Use Courier or Times New Roman 11 point; set margins between 1" & 1.5" and change bullets to dashes. Use only recognized industry jargon.
- Use a simple format when constructing a resume for electronic conveyance. Computers can alter your resume thereby making it hard to read.

WHERE CAN THE INTERNET BE ACCESSED?

If you do not have the Internet at home, here are some places to go: 1. Your local library, 2. Canada Employment Centre, 3. Places that allow you to use their service at an hourly rate (e.g. Kinko's and Internet Cafes) and 4. Your outplacement firm. To save time later, record the addresses

of the best sites you find. 5. With up-to-date equipment, Wi-Fi technology enables mobile device users to access the Internet almost anywhere in large cities without the constraints of wires.

SUMMARY

There are many ways to present yourself and get noticed (personally, fax, E-mail, voicemail, Internet). Your concerns remain the same. **PLAN, RESEARCH, PREPARE, and PRESENT** so that you increase your chances of being selected as a candidate from all others who apply. Remember business etiquette and the power of your network of friends, colleagues, and acquaintances and the introductions they can generate. Contact selected recruiters who work in your field. Continue to look for leads in newspapers and on the Internet and continue to cold call

companies where you would like to work. Yes, job search on the Internet will continue to expand and improve as technological advancements take hold and ease of use increases. It comes to mind that in the years to come, a well-written old fashioned thank-you letter sent by snail mail will get more attention than an E-mail, fax or voicemail message, possibly because of the novelty factor.

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"I found Willis to be a client-oriented professional and trusted coach."

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