How to Apply For a Job Online

Since the beginning of the 21st century, medium to large companies have changed the way that they recruit candidates, capture and evaluate information about applicants and select possible employees. Companies are now using computer programs to assist in all phases of the hiring process. Job seekers must be familiar with these procedures in order to successfully secure employment.

Manual versus electronic applications

Manually processed applications

Even before the development of employee recruitment computer software in the early 1990's, all employers manually processed submitted job applications and résumés. Today, employers who do not rely on a recruitment computer program recruit using the following process:

- They usually recruit prospective employees by placing an ad in a local newspaper or registering the job opening with the local state employment office.
- They require all applicants to complete a company supplied paper job application or have the applicant submit a written résumé.
- They have a company employee (usually in the Human Resources Department) evaluate every application and résumé. That employee determines if the applicant, based on the applicant's submitted application or résumé, qualifies for the job opening(s).
- Rejected applications and résumés are either discarded or filed. If filed, the application or résumé is usually filed in a file folder with all the other submitted applications and résumés, and is labeled with the name of the open job.
- Employers rarely have a system to permit applicants to update their application or résumé. They require the applicant to resubmit either a new application or an updated résumé.
- Employers also rarely have a way to retrieve previously submitted applications that might match a new job opening.
- Employers rarely accept unsolicited applications and résumés.

Electronically processed applications

Recruitment computer software is used by most employers with more than 100 employees. Recruitment computer software permits the employer to:

- Recruit nationally. By placing an ad either on a Mega Job Board or on the company website, employers can reach potential applicants from wherever applicants have computer access.
- Standardize the information that they receive from all applicants. Applicants usually are required to complete the employer-designed online application. The application focuses on the information that the employer needs from the applicant. Additionally, the employer can embed in the application, or ask in a separate questionnaire, questions that assess the applicant's skills, abilities, values and integrity.
- Have the computer program select only those applicants who meet the specific job requirements. The employer has the computer program identify only those applicants that match the selected skills, abilities, values, etc. of the job. The program reviews each application and résumé and notes if and how often the applicant mentions the selected phrases and words. See Key words on the next page.
- Select out applications and résumés that do not meet the selection criteria. These documents are then electronically stored and can be easily retrieved.
- Easily retrieve a submitted application and résumé. This permits the applicant to update and make changes to their application or résumé.
- Retrieve previously submitted applications based on the criteria of a new job opening.
- Accept, evaluate and store electronically unsolicited applications and résumés. These applications or résumés can be retrieved when a job opening occurs that calls for the applicant's skills.

Note: Most employers, especially those with fewer than 100 employees, continue to manually recruit and process new employees. Since approximately 95% of all employers have fewer than 100 employees, it is critical that job seekers be familiar with both the manual and the electronic recruitment methods.

Before you begin

Before you begin applying for any job online, it is critical that you:

- Review the **JobSearch Guide** ***How to Complete a Job Application***. After reviewing this **Guide**, complete a blank application, **JobSearch Guide** ***Sample Blank Employment Application***. Make sure that all information is current and accurate. Check all dates of employment. Identify people who can serve as references. Double check all spelling and grammar.
- Review the **JobSearch Guide** ***How to Write an Internet Résumé***. Prepare a résumé that can be submitted electronically.

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The Importance of Key Words

The power of electronic recruitment software lies in the key words. The computer permits the employer to quickly evaluate every submitted application and résumé to determine if the candidate possesses a set of specific skills and/or traits that are required on the job. The employer provides the computer program with a list of words and phrases that describe the skills and traits critical to the job. The computer program then compares this list to the phrases and words mentioned by the candidate in the application or résumé. Those candidates that mention the specific words and phrases in their application or résumé may be selected for an interview. Applications and résumés that do not mention enough skills and traits are kept on file but probably will not get selected.

Hint: Not sure what key words or phrases you need to include? Key words are the words and phases that describe the job.

- Google "Job Description for [insert the job title]." Review several of the listed web sites that give job descriptions. Jot down key phrases and words that describe the skills and traits of people in that occupation. These are key words!
- Check the company's web site. The company may publish a job description. Closely review the job announcement. Pay special attention to the words and phrases that the company uses to describe the job. These are key words!

You need to load your application or résumé with key words. They should be nouns and noun phrases, and industry specific. Try not to repea key words and phrases since the computer only counts the inclusion once. Try to mention at least 20 different key words in your application o résumé. This is one time that more is better.

Where should I insert the key words? If you are submitting an online application, use key words to describe your past work experiences. I submitting a résumé, load the description of your work duties for your past employment with key words. Consider submitting a Skills (Functional) résumé. Review the **JobSearch Guide** *Components of a Résumé.*

Ways to apply for a job online

Job Boards

A job board is an electronic bulletin board where employers can post job openings and job seekers can post their résumé. There are hundreds of job boards listed on the Internet. Some are large (Mega Boards) like ***www.careerbuilder.com*** and ***www.monster.com***. Other boards are small and focus on a specific occupational or geographic area. Google the title of the job you seek. You will likely find several job boards that focus on that occupational area.

Job Boards typically permit a job seeker to post their résumé on the board's site. Employers frequently search the list of résumés for ones that match the company's job opening. Many companies have computer software that permits them to access most job boards and identify potential candidates.

All job boards require the applicant to register with the board; some charge a fee for this service. When you register, be sure to write down the user name and password that you selected.

Follow the board's instructions for how to post your résumé or to respond to a company ad. Review the **JobSearch Guide** *How to Write an Internet Résumé.*

Company web sites

Company web sites are an excellent source of information about job openings. You will have to know, however, which companies employ people in your occupation. Most company web sites post job openings on their web site.

Many companies permit you to submit a résumé. Be sure to carefully follow the instructions for submission. You will be asked to register. Be sure to note the User Name and Password you selected. If you are asked to submit your résumé as an attachment, be sure to name it [your name]resume (for example, JohnDoeResume) and not simply, "resume."

There are many advantages to applying directly to the company rather than going through a Job Board. Studies have shown that as many as 10 times more people apply for a specific job using a job board than do people applying directly to the company. Better yet, network and find someone in that company who will refer your name and résumé to the personnel office. See the **JobSearch Guide** *How to Use Your Network to Locate Job Openings.*

On-site computer kiosks

Many retail establishments are using self-service employment kiosks to obtain applications. Kiosks consist of a desk, computer screen and keyboard. Once applicants log on to the program, they simply follow the programs instructions.

Applicants essentially complete an online application and often are asked to respond to questions that assess skills and traits required on the job position sought.

Most applications take approximately 30 minutes to complete and require a minimum amount of computer knowledge. Do not start the process unless you have time to complete it.

Because you will be supplying information about your work history and references, be sure to bring your completed **JobSearch Guide** *Sample Blank Employment Application* with you.

Practice online application

If you have access to a computer, go to ***www.nicic.gov/library/022996*** and download the Simulated Online/Kiosk Application program. This program walks you through the process of completing an online or kiosk application. Click on each of the "help" buttons for information on how to respond to each question.

Internet resources

www.thebalance.com/job-application-guide-2061575-- Good information on how to apply for a job online.
https://careertrend.com/how-2005354-apply-job-online.html-- Step-by-step guide to applying for a job online.
www.myperfectresume.com/how-to/career-resources/kiosk/-- Practical information on applying for a job at a company employment kiosk.