

ONLINE APPLICATION FOLLOW UP STRATEGIES

If you have invested the time to fill out an online application, it is important to implement an effective follow up process.

DON'T WASTE TIME (YOURS OR THEIRS)

Only apply for jobs that require credentials that you possess. Take time to customize your Resume or CV and cover letter with relevant keywords so you are not screened out by automated systems.

Read every responsibility listed and ask yourself the following questions:

- Have I done this?
- What examples can I provide?
- Did I excel in this area?
- How did I benefit my past employers?

If you do not have answers for some of the responsibilities listed, take time to source other opportunities that better match your skills and experience.

CONDUCT RESEARCH IN ADVANCE

Conduct thorough research, not just reviewing a company's website. Read the press and media and research individuals involved in the hiring process through social media sites. If possible, connect with past or current employees to obtain critical current information. When you follow up it must be apparent that you are aware of growth, issues, challenges and new projects this company is launching. You must conduct more thorough research than other job seekers who are applying for the same opportunity.

MAKE A GREAT FIRST IMPRESSION

The first impression you make during your follow up process is a lasting impression. Your call must offer the hiring authority relevant information vs. just calling them for a status report. Due to the volume of Resumes and CVs received, they only reach out to candidates they feel are the most qualified. They may become irritated by status calls from candidates they have screened out.

By offering relevant information, you are attempting to show your confidence, interest level and qualifications that will benefit them and their company. Refrain from making a bad impression by calling too often or just asking for a status report which is perceived as self-serving.

IDENTIFY THE RIGHT PERSON

Most online applications do not identify the individual who would be your boss. After the automated systems screen Resumes or CVs, you are contacted by an individual in the Human Resource Department. This is someone who is working on many opportunities within their company.

If possible, conduct research to find out the name and contact information of the individual who would be your boss's boss and follow up with them. You want to show your high level of confidence and interest in their position, explaining that you also applied online.

You can identify the right person online using the company website, talking to the gatekeeper at their company, by connecting with past or current employees or by researching social networks.

USE ALL MEANS OF COMMUNICATION

Technology has changed the way we communicate. Your follow up process should include phone calls, email, direct mail and connections made on LinkedIn and other social networks.

CLARIFY THE TIMEFRAME AND PROCESS

Once you have connected with a person, ask about the target date to fill the position and interview process. You can gauge your follow up contacts based on the information you obtain.

REVIEW CHANGES

Employers will often make updates to job descriptions they have posted. You can utilize this as an opportunity to reaffirm that your experience is still a match and that you remain interested. Additionally, the company LinkedIn page, Facebook site and Twitter account or website may show upcoming events or new products and services. You can utilize these updates to correspond with your contact at the company, especially if the changes may be relevant to the opportunity you are pursuing.

By connecting again, you are accomplishing two things. First, you help create TOMA (Top Of Mind Awareness) in order to keep your name in front of hiring authorities. Second, you display that you are knowledgeable about the department, company or industry. You will differentiate yourself from other job seekers by communicating your attention to detail and updates.

WHEN IN DOUBT, BE POLITELY PERSISTENT

After you have applied online, you want to establish and continue a conversation. The messages you send should always be very positive and stress your confidence and high level of interest. If you receive an objection, you must be willing and able to overcome any and all objections.

BENEFITS OF FOLLOWING UP

Your follow up contact shows enthusiasm, ambition and could differentiate you from your competition if done correctly. The follow up strategies we have outlined will distinguish you as a high-performing persistent individual vs. one who is passively waiting for things to fall in their lap.