

8 Do's And Don'ts When You Apply For A Job Online

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Job board sites like Indeed or SimplyHired make it seem easy to apply for a job online. They have a system that keeps your resumé in tow to readily submit. And many offer One Click Application services, auto-filling your personal information in the designated areas. However, I'm willing to bet you've never even received a response from one of these applications.

That's why I'm offering eight Do's and Don'ts to effectively guide you through the process of [applying for jobs online](#):

5 Things to Do When You Apply for a Job Online

Here's what you do want to do when you apply for a job online:

1. DO check out the company's website before you apply. This one is two-fold.

First, recruiters want to see that you have a special interest in their company. They're more likely to pursue a candidate who has a history with the company or industry and a story about why they're applying now. Take the time to learn its mission and values. Then, incorporate those into your job history and cover letter. This will help you stand out among other applicants who applied without doing their homework.

Second, checking out the company's website helps you see if the firm is one where you'd want to work. Isn't it better to know before you fill out an application that the business doesn't match your values or is further than you'd like to commute? Save yourself and the recruiter time and only fill out applications for places where you would be happy working.

2. DO tailor your [resumé keywords](#) for each job you'll apply for online. The tendency when applying to jobs online is to quickly submit your resumé and cover letter and move forward. That's a mistake,

The reason? When applying for a job online, there is a high chance your application will go right into an [Applicant Tracking System](#) (ATS) to be reviewed by a recruiter. Applicant Tracking Systems parse and sort resumés by topics or keywords, like education or managing a budget.



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In order to optimize your resumé for ATS, you should match the keywords in it to the job description the company provides. Online tools (shameless plug: ones such as my company's [Jobscan.co](#)) can help you identify the right keywords by copy and pasting your resumé and the job description into the site.

3. DO add your up-to-date [LinkedIn profile](#). More and more companies now request you include a link to your LinkedIn profile in their job applications. Having an active LinkedIn profile helps show a recruiter that you're serious about your job search and career. Many recruiters will search for it anyway, so making their job easier goes a long way toward making yourself a worthy candidate.

You can include more information about your background and skills on LinkedIn than through a normal job application, so take advantage of this opportunity.

Before you link to it, though, make sure your LinkedIn profile is job-search ready. Add a great picture, show some of your recent projects and make sure you're active in relevant LinkedIn networks.

4. DO write a cover letter. Although a cover letter is sometimes optional for an online job application, you should always submit one. A cover

letter is a great way to talk more about yourself and your experience and to incorporate the company's values and mission statement into your application.

Including a cover letter also has a more tactical advantage. Many Applicant Tracking Systems will account for a cover letter when recruiters search by keywords.

5. DO make sure the application on the company site is the same as the one on the job board. This is especially important with job-board features such as "one click apply" or "quick apply." The company site may ask for something specific, like a salary requirement, or request you email someone your resumé and cover letter. If you apply without looking at the instructions and miss something, it will look like you can't follow directions.

3 Things Not to Do When You Apply for a Job Online

And here's what not to do when you apply for a job online:

1. DON'T type lazily or in shorthand. Sometimes, our online habits win out without us even realizing it. I occasionally receive applications where the candidate's name is all lowercase. Not taking the time to capitalize the first letters of your name tells me three things: 1) You lack attention to detail; 2) You are lazy and 3) Working here is not important to you. You don't want a recruiter to think any of those!

Many people also associate writing online with informality. But when you apply for a job online, you want to look professional and that means writing more formally. For example, for a cover letter, fill a page and use a formal heading.

2. DON'T use auto-fill to apply for positions. Sure, this makes things easier, but you'll be trading results for ease. If you have ever looked back at the information loaded into your application when using auto-fill, you may have seen that it didn't align correctly. Your "Position" answer might instead say which college you attended. Or prior employment dates might just show start dates

Auto-fill may also format the details of your job history in a strange or confusing way. Instead of leaving this to chance, fill in the details one at a time, double-checking as you go.

3. DON'T leave sections incomplete. It can feel redundant to upload your resumé and then type in your work history manually, so the temptation can be to leave that section blank. Don't!

On many Applicant Tracking Systems, the information typed in for job history is more visible than the resumé, which someone would have to click to view.

Don't forget to tailor these sections in the same way you would tailor your resumé to match the necessary keywords to really optimize your resumé.