

EMAIL YOUR RESUME, BUT REMEMBER BASICS

By H. S. “Buzz” Patterson

Electronic mail has changed the speed with which we handle written communication. This includes steps in the career transition process as well. Job boards, career sites, newspaper ads, all of these encourage candidates to submit their resumes electronically via email or fax.

Don't have a computer or access to the web? Change that! Most employers expect candidates at almost any level to be computer and web-“savvy.” Can't afford a computer or know how to use one? Go to your local library and ask for help. Most libraries now have computers available for general use and there are several “web-based” email services available for free on-line (Yahoo! www.mail.yahoo.com and Hotmail www.hotmail.com for example). “Web-based” mail means you can access your mail from any PC connected to the web; you don't need your own computer.

One of the great benefits of email is the ability to shorten the cycle-time of any process that involves written communication. However, if you rush to send something out and it goes with obvious errors or hidden messages, you will regret it. Above all else, slow down and be careful. For example, we recently received a response to one of our postings for a top executive position at a public company. The automated response format included instructions as to when to call the candidate. “Anytime” was in this field, but the applicant had omitted the telephone number.

Be sure to make your email quick and easy on the recipient. In another situation, an engineer responded with several files (resume, cover letter, career summary, career objectives) compressed within a “Zip” format. Since multiple attachments may have difficulty passing through some servers, start the process with one attachment only. Above all else, respond in accordance with the instructions and keep it simple! If the response is to be in “.rtf”, “text” or “.html” format, figure out how to do that. Otherwise, use a standard word processor file attachment like MS-Word.

It's fine to emphasize certain skills by re-ordering or otherwise customizing your resume for each position, but watch out for differing file names and the impression you might accidentally create. For example, if you update your resume, it's fine to indicate the vintage in the filename (“resumeBP0601.doc” for example) unless you are sending out a resume that is clearly a year old. The automatic question that comes up is “What have you been doing for the last year”? The best filename to use is your last name first, then your first name. This facilitates electronic filing and retrieval. If you customize and use a filename to indicate which of your skillsets is primary (“resumeBPconsult.doc”), then the reader may feel as though they are on a career version of “To Tell The Truth”!!

Many candidates express frustration that they never receive a response to their contact. When using email, be sure to make responding easy. That is, include your email address on the face of your resume in a “hyperlink” format. With only one click, the reader can

painlessly send you a response, even a standard one. If you are concerned that someone might alter your resume, and then send it on, consider using the “read only” feature or a “.pdf” format such as Adobe Acrobat in saving the file.

There are websites and books that evaluate the various career sites. My favorite is “CareerXRoads 2001” by Gerry Crispin and Mark Mehler (www.careerxroads.com) - go there if you want to find out about hundreds of specialty and general career websites. For more information about how executive recruiters work, the International Association of Corporate and Professional Recruitment has a helpful website (www.iacpr.org). Kennedy Publications (www.kennedyinfo.com/) and the Society for Human Resource Management (www.shrm.org/) are great resources as well. In any case, use email but keep the basics in mind!