

YOUNGALUMNITIPS

Nebraska Alumni Association

For more resume and job search tips, visit <http://huskeralum.org/career/tips.shtml>

Job Search Tip: What you should know before completing an application form

by Kyle Bruss

I hate forms. They take too much time, they are cumbersome to fill out and they always want more personal information than I think I should give someone in writing. They are my own personal form of kryptonite!

That said, if you want a job, you're going to have to fill out an application – Google-willing we will have some sort of futuristic retinal scan that will autofill any digital forms we need in the future. But like the flying car, this remains to be seen. The ubiquitous Job Application has nearly disappeared from corporate America, but its digital cousin now feeds applicants tracking systems that can parse out applicants by skills, degrees earned, college attended and experience.

Basically, companies want to keep track of their applicants so they build their talent pools for the future, but most importantly, powerful search capabilities have allowed companies to create databases of thousands of candidates to find those unique skills they need for hard-to-fill roles.

What are your skills?

What do you do better than most other people?

Are you familiar with Javascript?

Do you have experience doing presentations?

Have you ever lead a team or a Kaizen event?

Are you a Six Sigma Greenbelt?

So you have clicked over to the careers page of the company you want to work for – you now have a few things you need to take into account before hitting the Apply Now button. First, time – plan on 30 minutes to an hour to really make your application perfect – this should not be a whimsical process where you just attach your resume.

Second, details: Nothing is trivial in the application process, so if you are asked what computer programs you know you should include all of the programs you believe you can be proficient in. Give yourself some credit – not everyone knows power point or can run statistics in SPSS or type 80 words per minute.

Third, online assessments and more time: Many companies are becoming more sophisticated in their assessment processes and may include some type of online assessment of your skills and abilities before you even speak with a recruiter or HR professional. Take these seriously and avoid completing them if you have been up all night scouring the internet for open jobs and hiring companies.

Last, but certainly not least: If you apply for a role and haven't heard back from a company, don't get angry – get personal. Most companies receive hundreds or thousands of applications for open positions. To ensure you don't get lost in the fray, or to put your name on the lips of the recruiter, give the company a call. Be pleasant. Let them know you applied for a role and why you want to work for this amazing organization. Chances are, they will look up your application. If they overlooked it before they may even pass it on to the next step in the selection process. A word of caution here – don't stalk the recruiter; being a creepy candidate will ensure you don't get the job.

Ultimately, the application form and process is a necessity in the hiring process. It makes the job of recruiting easier and allows candidates their opportunity to make their talents and skills shine. Be prepared, be specific, and be ready to spend some time making your application a perfect reflection of you.

Kyle Buss is a UNL graduate and Director of Talent Acquisition at Talent Plus, Inc., an international human resources consulting firm in Lincoln, Neb.

