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7 Ways to Avoid the Black Hole of Online Job Applications

By Sandra Long *on* March 9, 2014 / 🔍 Job Search (http://www.blogging4jobs.com/category/job-search/)
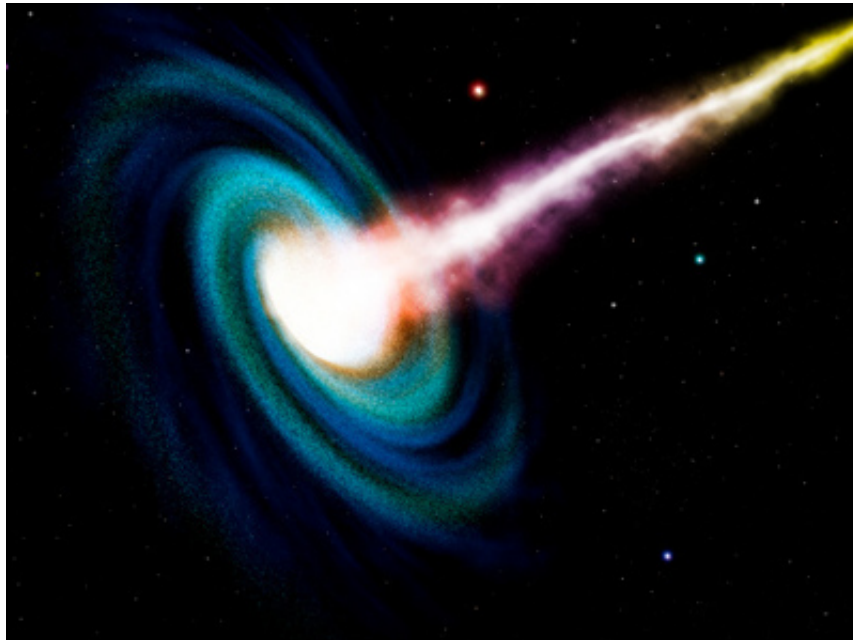
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The allure is so great. Go online and find thousands and thousands of jobs or internship postings. The listings are on job boards, search engines as well as company websites. You read the job descriptions and requirements. Your mind says: Yes! That is me exactly! You apply. You wait. You wait. Nothing.

It's so very easy to get into this routine. The fact is that the online job applications are primarily for the benefit of the employer and not designed to help you or me. The companies use the posts for HR compliance. It is most likely that your application and resume will never be read. It's entirely possible to spend an hour on a job application that was rejected from the very start by the company's screening software.

Your resume is unlikely to be read by an actual human unless you met or exceeded all the specific criteria to the "T" or if it gets noticed because of other connections you may have developed. Despite these odds, many students and new grads spend a majority of their job search time applying online.

Here are seven tips on how to successfully use online job postings:

1. **Prioritize your Time:** Spend less than 20% of your job search time with online applications. Focus on networking (http://www.blogging4jobs.com/job-search/3-networking-ideas-spring-break/)and actively meeting the people at the companies that you wish to work for. Your contacts will then point you to jobs to apply for. Hopefully they are referring you to the hiring manager.
2. **Skip the Long Shots:** Consider finding online jobs and then NOT applying unless you meet every criteria and requirement. If the job posting specifies a 3.0 GPA and you don't have that, it is probably not worth your time to apply. If it's a large company that gets thousands of applications, yours will be screened out immediately. This does not mean you won't ever get hired by the company. It means that if you are only relying on your online application it would be highly unlikely.
3. **Personalize:** If you are applying online, make sure to use the exact keywords (http://www.blogging4jobs.com/social-media/personal/)for your resume, cover letter and application documents, so you will make it through the HR screening software. Be truthful always, but use the words the exact way the company is describing the job. Use their language. So if they want *Microsoft Excel* skills and your resume says *Microsoft Office*, it would be better to use the exact word *Excel*. Also, find out the name of the hiring manager to use on the cover letter.
4. **Use Reputable Sites to Apply:** It is usually best to apply directly on the company website. You can also use a reputable job board, job search engine or specialized Internship websites. You may be required to set up a profile. Be aware of privacy

policies.

5. **Be Prepared Before you Apply:** Have your resume, cover letter, contact information, and calendar all set. You may be uploading documents or using copy and paste to apply. Each online application is different and some of them take some time to complete. Be very careful to double check and track everything so you can follow-up without mixing up various positions. Make sure everything is perfect such as spelling and grammar.

6. **Follow Up:** Follow up directly with the hiring manager through email or social media (http://www.blogging4jobs.com/social-media/its-just-a-fad-2/). This will make you more memorable (http://www.blogging4jobs.com/social-media/personal/) than the rest of the applicants.

7. **Be Referred:** This is the most important tip of all. Find someone at the company who will advise you. Get to know people at the company in advance of any application. You might meet them at a career fair or through networking with your family. Reach out and let them know you have applied and are very interested in the position. Ask for their advice. They might be willing to refer or recommend you to the hiring manager.

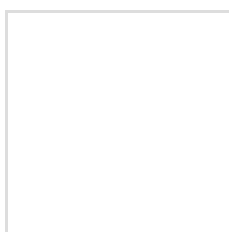*How do you avoid the black hole of online applications?*

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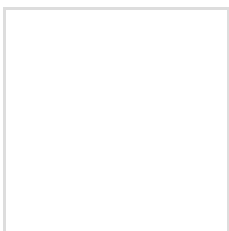
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