



# THE ONLINE JOB SEARCH

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## The Online Job Search

### *Internet and E-mail*

At a recent employment fair in Kamloops, over half of the employers attending preferred work searchers to apply for work electronically. An ability to use e-mail and the Internet as part of a well-rounded work search can give the work searcher a competitive advantage. However, it is important to note that they supplement other work search techniques and should not replace them.

## Online Work Search Techniques and Tips

Today the Internet connects businesses, individuals, schools, government agencies, nonprofit organizations and the news media worldwide. It is a convenient way for people to exchange information as it can be accessed any time and from virtually anywhere.

Computers that are online can be used for many basic work search tasks and have many benefits to the work searcher. Computers can:

- Provide a vast amount of information on companies and employment opportunities (allowing you to identify, evaluate and contact potential employers, tailor a cover letter and resume specifically to the company, etc.)
- Enhance your work prospects and widen your access to position openings
- Provide you with career guidance and work search help (information is available on cover letters, resumes, interview preparation, etc.)
- Expand your network of contacts
- Allow you to store and submit your cover letter and resume electronically

Many people have computers with Internet access in their homes, but if you don't, there are other options. Free computer access is available at:

- The North and South Kamloops Work Search Centres (for work search and career decision making purposes only)
- The Kamloops TNRD Libraries (North: 795 Tranquille Rd., South: 100-465 Victoria St.)
- Various schools, agencies and businesses in the Kamloops area through the Community Access Program (CAP) (see Work Search Centre Staff for an information sheet)

A few tips will help you remain productive during the online work search:

- 1) **Make sure you have basic computer skills.** If you feel that your computer skills need some improvement, there are courses available in the Kamloops area, free of charge or for a fee. (See Work Search Centre Staff for more information).
- 2) **Have a clear work search related goal.** Plan your Internet session ahead of time. The Internet can become time consuming if you do not have a clear plan.
- 3) **Be patient.** Because of the large amount of information on the Internet, it can take time to find exactly what you are looking for.
- 4) **Be "net savvy".** Read the site's privacy policy in detail and don't post private information online unless you are comfortable with how it may be used. Also be aware that some of the information on the Internet is not legitimate. The old saying "don't believe everything you read" applies.

There are two basic ways to gather information while using the Internet - the **general search** and the **specific search**.

**General search:**

- Used when gathering information about various employment fields
- Used when company names and/or website addresses are not known
- Used when looking for information about a company that does not have a website
- Used when job posting website addresses are not known
- Websites (search engines) used to aid in the general search include:  
[www.google.ca](http://www.google.ca)  
[www.msn.ca](http://www.msn.ca)  
[www.dogpile.com](http://www.dogpile.com)

There is a lot of information on the Internet and knowing how to correctly and quickly find what you are looking for is important. When entering information into the search box, try to have it specific enough to bring up only what you want to see. Using quotation marks ("" ) in your search phrases allows you to find words that appear side by side. If no quotation marks are used to group phrases, the words in the search box could be found in websites in any order.

For example, if looking for websites that have tree planting jobs advertised, a good way to search is to enter the following into the search box: "tree planting" jobs "British Columbia". This will result in approximately 4,510 matches. If quotations were not used, there would have been more than 18,000 matches (too many websites to search through).

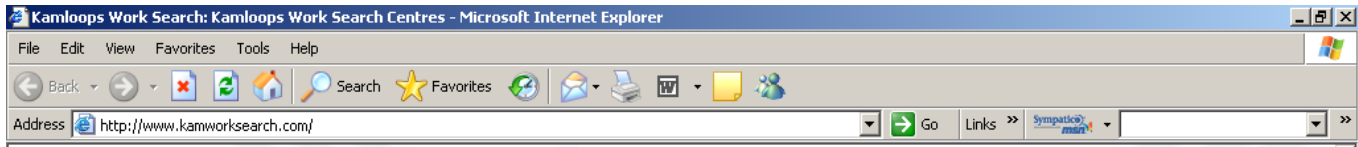
**Specific search:**

- Used when the company website or job posting website is known
- Website address is entered directly into the address bar

See the *Internet Sites for Work Search and Career Planning* handout at the handout section of the resource library for an extensive list of job posting, company, government, and newspaper websites and more.



## Using the Toolbar for Your Search



The top row of buttons that appear on your screen is known as the toolbar. This toolbar will help you travel through the web. Toolbars may differ slightly depending on the browser you are using (a browser is a program that accesses the World Wide Web). Here are the most common buttons on the toolbar that you will use<sup>1</sup>.



The **Back** button will return you to previous sites already accessed.



The **Forward** button will return to the page you just came from.



**Home** will take you to the home page you've chosen, this being the site you first accessed. (Most browsers will default to their home page but you can customize it)



**Reload** or **Refresh** loads the web page again. Some websites change frequently. To get the most current information, "**Refresh**" the web page.



**Print** lets you make a paper copy of the current page.



The **Stop** button stops the browser from loading the current page (useful if a site is taking longer than normal to access).



**Search** connects to directories and search tools on the Microsoft or Netscape websites.



**Bookmarks** or **Favorites** let you record the addresses of websites you want to continually revisit. Once you have added a favorite, you can return to that web page simply by clicking on the link in your list, instead of searching or retyping the entire address\*.

*\*If you already know a websites address, you can also type it directly in the "Address" box and press enter to access it. Also see our "Internet Sites for Work Search and Career Planning" handout for numerous work search related listings.*

<sup>1</sup> This section includes information taken from the website [www.learnthenet.com](http://www.learnthenet.com) (accessed Oct 27/08). This information has been altered by Kamloops Work Search centre staff for readability.

## E-mailing Cover Letters and Resumes

E-mail stands for electronic mail. Increasingly, employers are asking work seekers to apply for work by e-mail because it is more convenient and it illustrates the applicant's computer knowledge.

To e-mail your cover letter and resume you need an e-mail account. Visit [www.hotmail.com](http://www.hotmail.com) or [www.yahoo.ca](http://www.yahoo.ca) and follow the links to set up a free account. (Remember: your e-mail address will be displayed to the potential employer so you must keep your address professional and not offensive)

There are two **main ways to send your cover letter and resume** to an employer by e-mail:

- Attach the cover letter and resume files
- Copy and paste the documents into the message box in the e-mail

### Anatomy of an E-mail

Although the various e-mail sites and programs are set up differently, the basic layout of the e-mail message is as follows:

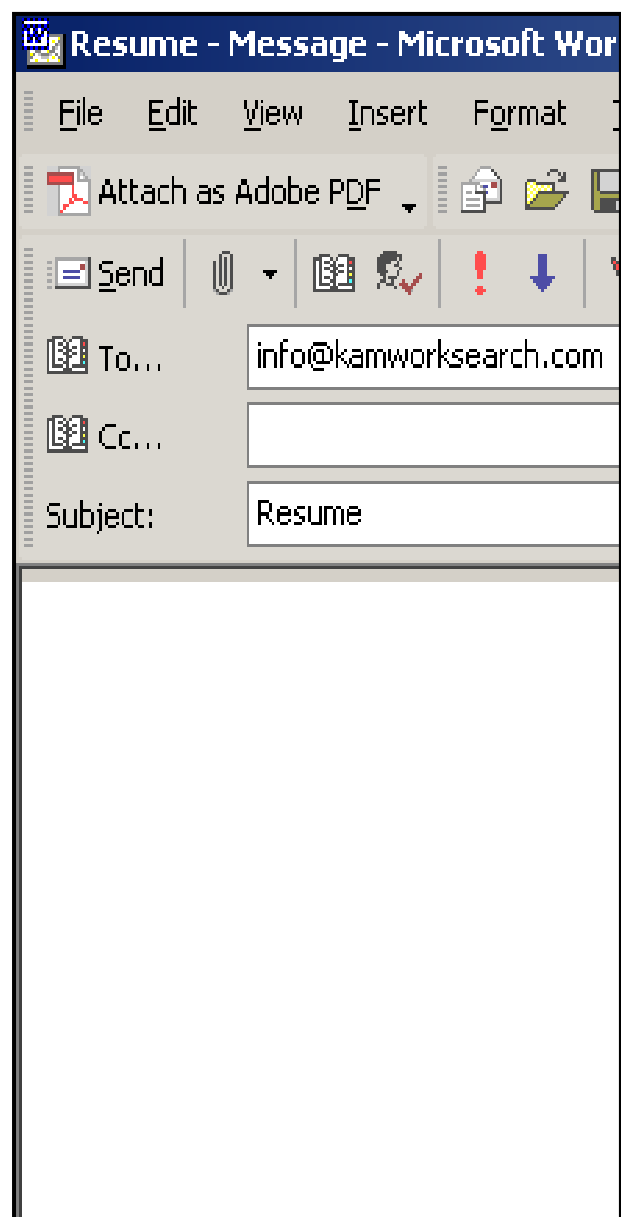
**TO:** This is where you place the employer's e-mail address. Examples of e-mail addresses are [info@kamworksearch.com](mailto:info@kamworksearch.com).

**CC:** Stands for "carbon copy" and is used to send extra copies of a message to people other than the specific recipient as addressed in the TO box (used when the message may also attract the interest of other parties).

**BCC:** Stands for "blind carbon copy" and is a copy of an e-mail message sent to a recipient without the recipient's address appearing in the message

**SUBJECT:** This is a brief note describing what the e-mail is about. If responding to a job posting, the SUBJECT box may read "Cover Letter and Resume for Position of Labourer." If the subject line is not filled in, the employer may delete the e-mail for security reasons.

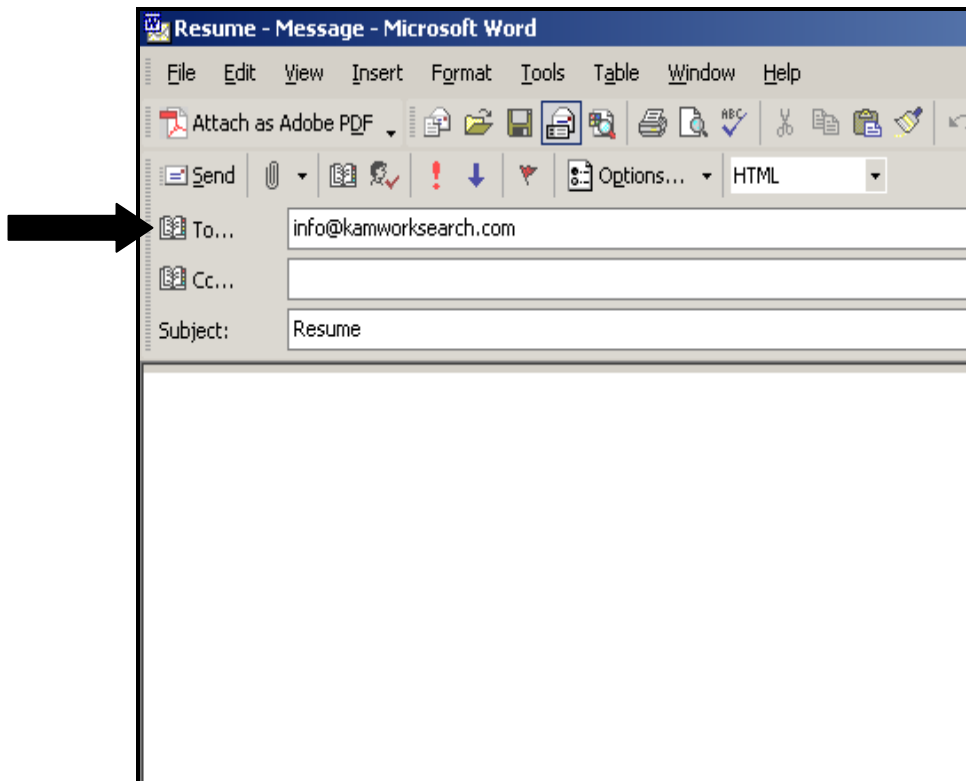
**MESSAGE BOX:** This is the area in the e-mail where the job seeker can cut and paste their resume to, or if sending the cover letter and resume as an attachment, can be used for a brief introductory statement. Remember to follow the employer's instructions carefully.



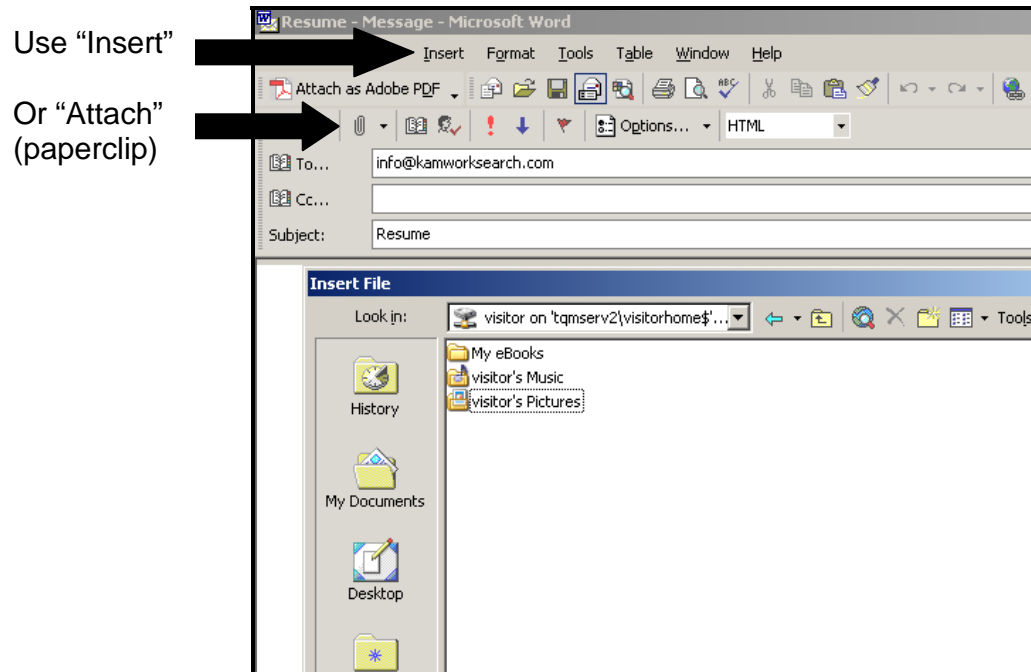
## How to Attach a Document

If the employer requests the cover letter and resume to be **attached** to the e-mail, read the employer's instructions carefully to find out what they are specifically requesting (ie: **what type of file to attach** with the e-mail). If they want a formatted attachment - what program do they want the attachment in? The most common in Western Canada is MS Word. Other programs include MS Works and Word Perfect.

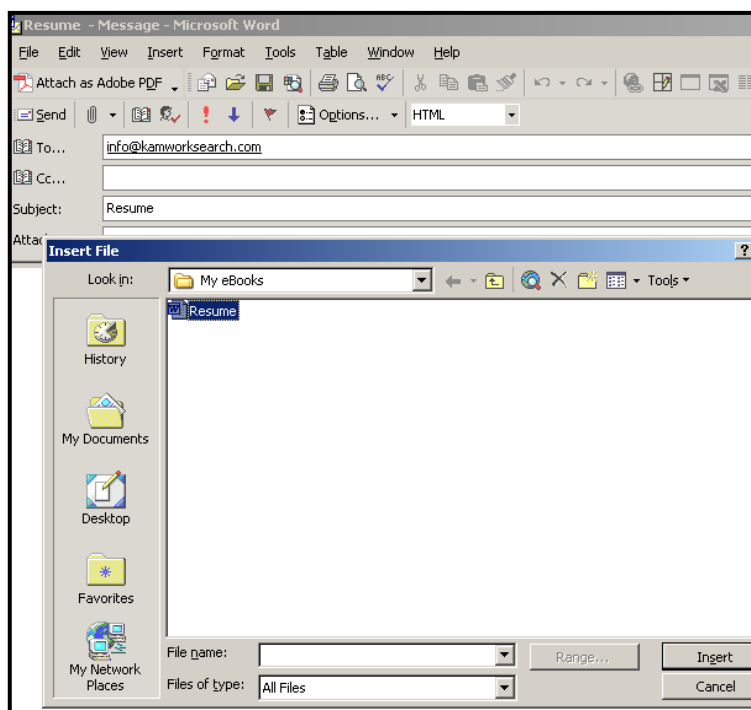
- 1) Open your e-mail program and launch a new message window by clicking on the appropriate icon in the "To" box. Type in the name of the recipient. It should take this form: recipient@domain.com. You can send a message to more than one person by entering multiple addresses. Just put a semicolon (;) between each address. In the subject line, be clear about the position you are applying for or what the content of the e-mail is going to be.



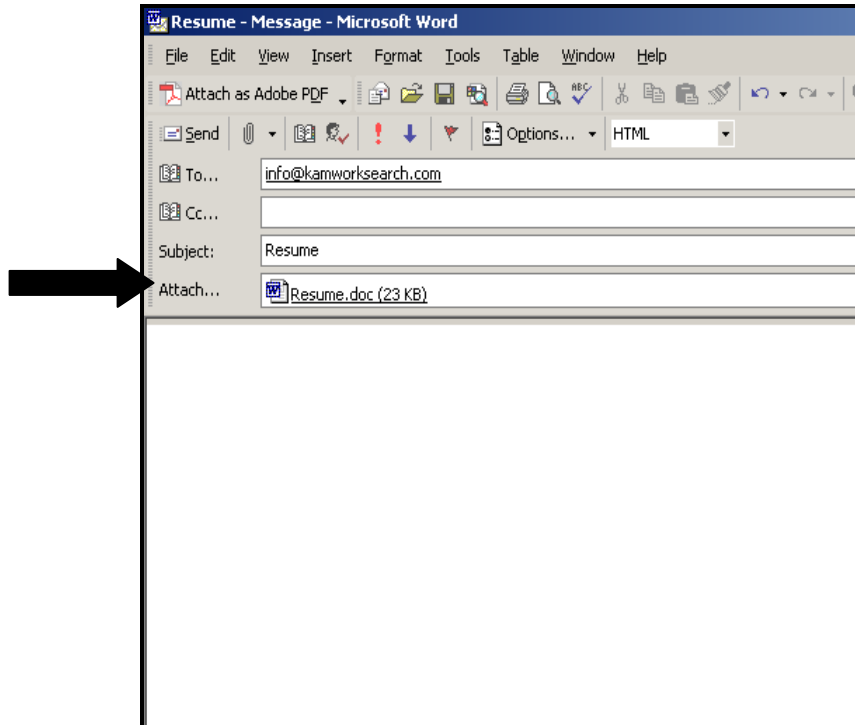
- 2) Click on the attachment icon or insert the file by selecting from the tool bar.



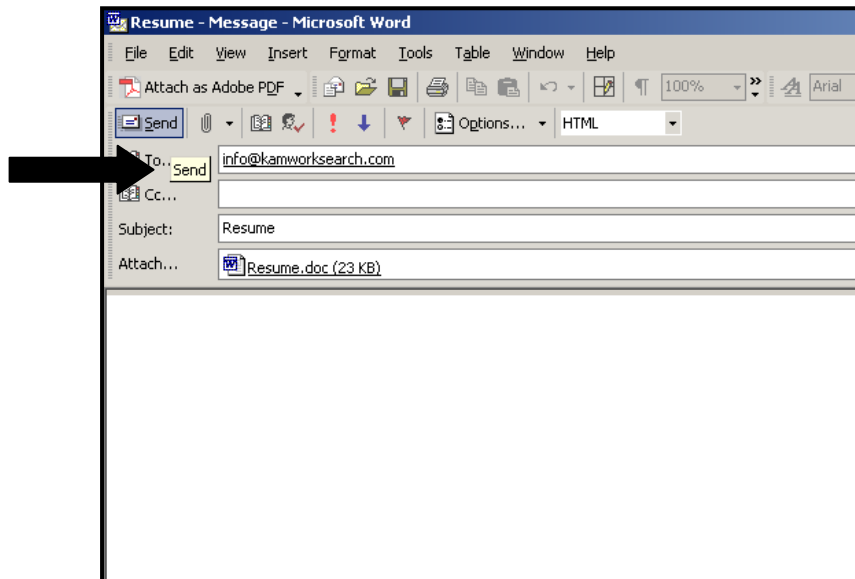
- 3) Browse your hard drive or removable disks to locate the file you want to attach. Once you find it, click on it, then click the OK button.



- 4) An icon or message should now appear indicating that the file has been attached.



- 5) Click on the Send button or select Send from the File menu.



\*Practice sending a few e-mails with attachments to friends to ensure accuracy and that your e-mails are being received.

## How to Copy and Paste

If the employer requests that your cover letter and resume be placed in the body of the e-mail, the easy way to do so is to **copy** your **PLAIN TEXT** cover letter and resume and then **paste** it into the body of the e-mail.

To do this, you must have your cover letter and resume **SAVED** electronically (in an e-mail account, on a disk, CD Rom or computer hard drive).

- 1) **OPEN** your cover letter.
- 2) Go to **EDIT** and then **SELECT ALL**.
- 3) Go to **EDIT** and then **COPY**.
- 4) **OPEN** your e-mail account.
- 5) Go to **NEW MESSAGE**.
- 6) Click once on the body of the message and then go to **PASTE**.
- 7) Repeat the steps to **PASTE** in the resume.

Each e-mail program or site will have different procedures to attach files. If unsure, please seek the help of a Client Assistance Officer.

## How to Develop a Scannable/Plain Text Resume

If you are **beginning** a *new* resume:

- 1) Open **NOTEPAD**.
- 2) Type up to 55 characters per line (spaces and letters).
- 3) While creating your resume, do not use the tab key, use 5 spaces instead. Space all items to where you would like them to appear. **SAVE** your resume.
- 4) Notepad automatically creates files in Plain Text format with a file extension of **.txt**.
- 5) To spell check your file, **SAVE** your work. Now open your **.txt** file from a word processing program that has spell check (such as MS Word). Run the spell check, and then **SAVE** the file. Make sure that it is saved as a plain text file.

To **change** a *formatted* resume to a *scannable/plain text* resume:

- 1) Open your resume file and change your resume's font size to 12 pt and font type to Courier. Adjust your right margin to between 4.5" to 5". Go to the **FILE** menu and select **SAVE AS**. Select **ASCII** or **TEXT ONLY** as your **FILE TYPE** and rename your file.
- 2) Now exit and reopen your plain text file using the **NOTEPAD** program on your computer (go to **START**, **PROGRAMS**, **ACCESSORIES** and choose **NOTEPAD**).
- 3) Carefully make all adjustments to your resume within this program by realigning any misaligned paragraphs and fixing items which may have been changed while you were saving your resume to plain text (special characters, quotation marks, hyphens, apostrophes, etc.).
- 4) **SAVE** your completed changes.

When applying for work electronically, employers may ask that cover letters and resumes be sent in various ways including formatted, scannable and plain text. The Kamloops Work Search Centres recommend that work searchers have their cover letters and resumes available in two versions: **formatted** and **scannable/plain text**.

| <b>Formatted</b>  | <b>Scannable/Plain Text<br/>(also called ASCII)</b>  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ A cover letter and resume developed using word processing program (MS Word, MS Works, Word Perfect &amp; Winway Resume). May have a fancy format and more of a defined style.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ A cover letter and resume most often developed using the Notepad program. It has a simple layout and a basic style. There is little if any formatting.</li> </ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Most common type of cover letter &amp; resume.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Common for large organizations as the cover letters and resumes can be sorted through electronically.</li> </ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Use when asked to submit a formatted cover letter and resume.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Use when asked to submit a scannable/plain text cover letter and resume.</li> </ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Use when submitting <u>paper</u> copies of cover letters &amp; resumes.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Use when <u>pasting</u> cover letter and resume into the body of an <u>e-mail</u> or an <u>online application form</u>.</li> </ul>                                |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Use when attaching formatted cover letter and resumes by e-mail.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Use when attaching plain text or scannable cover letters and resumes by e-mail.</li> </ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Can use tabs, graphics, shading, italics and bolding.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Stay away from tabs, graphics, shading, italics and bolding.</li> </ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Font size should be 12.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Font size should be 12.</li> </ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ A lot of white space is recommended but not necessary.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Have a lot of white space around the text.</li> </ul>   |

## Follow Up Suggestions

It is just as important to follow up on an electronic job application as it is to follow up on an in-person application.

**A few days after** you submit your cover letter and resume to a company, e-mail them a quick note asking if they received and were able to read your resume, or if they require a different format for their database.

*"Dear Ms. Smith, I submitted my cover letter and resume for the position of Store Manager by e-mail on Friday March 29th. I am writing to confirm that you received the e-mail and that you were able to open the attachments. I was also wondering if you had any questions I could answer for you. Please let me know, thank you. Your Name."*

**The day after that**, print and send a hard copy version of your resume to the hiring manager (if you indicated that you would do so in your cover letter).

**One week after** your initial contact, send an e-mail to the hiring manager inquiring if you can supply any further information not included in your original resume.

*"Dear Ms. Smith, I am writing to ensure that you received my cover letter and resume, e-mailed on Friday March 29th. I am extremely impressed with your firm and want to re-emphasize my strong desire to work for you as Store Manager. I look forward to hearing from you soon. Thank you for your time and consideration."*

If you are very interested in the position, follow up your e-mail with a phone call but keep in mind that there is a fine line between strong interest in a position and harassing an employer. Don't call every other day or show up unannounced in the lobby. One call per week is all that is necessary until the company makes a decision.

If calling, have a 15 second description of yourself (a sales pitch) that explains who you are, what job you are calling about, and why you are so interested. See the *Sample Dialogue for Cold Calls* handout in the handout section of the resource library.



## Online Application - Things to Note

- Follow the employer's instructions on how to apply for work
- Review the online job bank privacy policy (make sure your personal information is not available to individuals and/or companies who may use it for unwanted purposes)
- Ensure that you only include necessary information on your cover letter and or resume (do not including social insurance number, marital status, number of children, average earnings, etc.)
- keep track of where you have sent your cover letter and resume or where they are posted
- Use the Internet to research companies including identifying potential employers, evaluating them and contacting them. Customize your cover letter and resume based on your research and then dazzle them in the interview with your insight into their product, services, market, competitors, etc.
- Try not to focus all your attention online. People are hired by people, so the Internet is a useful way to reach some of the people with the opportunities.
- Avoid using crazy, cute or weird e-mail addresses (ex. [2cute2betru@hotmail.com](mailto:2cute2betru@hotmail.com) or [foxy@yahoo.ca](mailto:foxy@yahoo.ca))
- Please watch your "netiquette". Just because you are not face-to-face with potential employers does not mean that you can approach them with any less tact and respect. It is important to be extra diligent because you can't use your voice or body language to express yourself. Approach your electronic communications as you would communications by mail or fax. Use correct business English, do not use common online jargon such as "i" vs. "I", "IOW" instead of "in other words", etc.

## Additional Resources

More information can be found in the Centres' Resource Library. Recommended titles include:

- [The Cyberspace Job Search Kit 2001-2002](#) by Mary B. Nemnich & Fred E. Jandt.
- [The 2002-2003 Guide to Internet Job Searching](#) by Margaret Riley Dikel & Frances E. Roehm.
- [Landing a Job for Canadians for Dummies](#) by Dawn McCoy.
- [Best Keywords for Resumes, Cover Letters and Interviews](#) by Wendy S. Enelow.

***If you have any questions, please ask a Client Assistance Officer.***