

Looking for work: Go digital job hunting

Now that unemployment has grown to 8 percent nationwide and over 10 percent in many states, we are lucky to have less than 5 percent here in Washington County.

That said, there has still been numerous area layoffs and local families have been deeply affected by this worldwide financial downturn.

The last time I had to submit my resume to a perspective employer was back in 1990. Though that was only 19 years ago, it seems like it was back in the stone ages since no one I knew had Internet access or cellular phones back then.

As I can remember, I actually hand delivered my hardcopy resume to a startup company in Houston called Paranet with just a single office and seven employees.

I got the job and six years later Paranet had grown to 23 offices coast to coast, had over 2,000 employees, and was even-



John Deans

tually purchased by Sprint in 1997. Over those years I helped interview scores of people and looked at hundreds of resumes.

Almost two decades later job hunting is performed very differently with the majority of the efforts being done over the

Internet. Gone is the practice of putting your hardcopy resume into an envelope and taking it to the post office for delivery.

Both job searching and resume submittal is done on the web through either employment Web sites or directly to the target company's personnel Web page. If you are looking for a new job in this digital job marketplace there are some new resume authoring and submitting skills that are critically important.

First let's cover some important points in crafting your resume for online submittal. Number one is for Pete's sake use spell check that is built into almost every word processing application.

Keep things simple by using Microsoft Word and then save the file in the default .DOC format. If you are running MS Word 2007 please save it in the older format 97-2003 .DOC rather than its new default of .DOCX which may prevent others from easily reading your resume.

Next get a second view and reality check done by your significant other or friend on it before submitting your resume to a perspective employer or headhunter. My wife proofreads these articles before they go *The Banner-Press*. They corrects all the grammar errors and tones down my colorful rhetoric.

Keep the formatting clean and non-fancy. Stay away from artsy fonts, lines and boxes since it most likely will not go through or look good after it reaches their resume database.

Any resume you submit online should have only basic formatting with appropriate spacing, line and paragraph breaks. Remember that many larger companies have a Web-based job application form that you will copy and paste the contents of your resume into the online data fields.

Now here's the shocking part: Only 6 percent to 25 percent of resumes submitted online to medium and large sized companies are ever read by a human being! The vast majority of submittals are screened by special employment software filtering systems based on certain job elements and specific keywords.

In other words, around 80 percent of the resumes submitted to companies are dumped out by a computer program. To make it by this digital gatekeeper you need to really hone in on the wording of your resume and focus on the keywords big time.

If you are shooting for a specific job posting then use those same keywords and phrases in your modified resume content. You may have to re-word some critical parts of your resume to fit the keywords in the job advertisement, but this a great way to make it passed this software-based resume filtering process.

They may also be a company survey that asks you numerous questions like what your favorite past time, hobby, TV show or movie is. Be careful answering these because the company most probably has polled their own employees with these same questions and you do not want to give the same answers as their low performers did if you get my drift.

Companies may also give you a personality test with some 'what if' questions. These could be a bit tricky to answer but the rule of thumb here is the kind of job you are trying to get. An ethics question may be answered one way in an engineering position compared to sales job.

Another thing is to have multiple versions of your resume each highlighting a different skill set you wish to be employed under. Make sure your resume is available for viewing somewhere online just in case a

potential employer searches for you and needs your latest resume over the Internet.

Do not let the posting and delivery technology dilute the basics of a good resume. Put the meat into the four major sections of your resume being the 1) Objective of what kind of job you are looking for, 2) Education you have accumulated to prepare for this work, 3) Experience you have acquired at past employers and during previous projects, and finally 4) Technology Summary which lists your specific skill sets and actual capabilities.

If you are using the shotgun approach to finding a job there are many online job recruiting sites out there to help you get noticed. Below are the top five places to find a job online:

Monster.com — The biggest job hunting site that caters to technology.

Dice.com — This site mainly focuses on technical positions for full, part-time and contact

opportunities.

Craigslist.com — Great for not only buying and selling stuff, but also for posting your resume and finding a good job.

HotJobs.com — Thousands of employers scan this site for good resumes.

CareerBuilder.com — This site has less technical jobs so if that is not your expertise then check this one out for sure.

Next week will cover the second half of this topic by discussing what you should NOT do while looking for a job.

Bottom line: Gone are days of typing up a paper resume and hitting the bricks so learn some digital job hunting skills fast if your looking for work.

Next week's column: What NOT to do while job hunting.

John Deans of DeansConsulting.com is a Brenham area computer networking consultant who can be reached at 289-2233 or John@DeansConsulting.com for questions and comments.