

What not to do when hunting for a job

Being a computer guy my whole professional life it has forced me to be a numbers man.

Once Excel came along I based most of my critical decisions on spreadsheet analysis. Whether it was a pros and cons worksheet or a financial breakdown concerning a business decision, the numbers in Excel helped me make logical decisions rather than emotional lunges, or simply think like Spock.

We heard daily how bad the economy is and from some how bad things could get. Just this week, unemployment officially reached 8.5 percent, but is it really that high (or that low)?

If they calculated it the way the government did back in the 1970s, called the U6 formula, which includes people just taking part time jobs, that number is around 17 percent. Throw in the others that have just stopped looking for work or those that are self-employed with little or no business and that number approaches 20 percent.

These more realistic unemployment numbers along with their dataset parameters are available at ShadowStats.com. I find it interesting that the current administration along with the previous one uses the lowest statistic just to make efforts look good.

Another stat just released shows that the average American working is only 33 hours a week. Remember that is the "official" number, so I wonder what the real one is.

With all that doom and gloom we are going to continue with our two part article series on hunting for a job online in today's challenging employment environment. Last week we covered the right way to compose and post your resume online but today let's discuss what NOT



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to do when seeking a new job.

This cannot be stressed enough so here we go again. MUST use spell check which underlines misspelled words in red, and the grammar check which underlines grammar errors in green.

MS Word is very good at helping you quickly see your typed mistakes so use it. MS Word can also accidentally change misspelled words to other words automatically so re-read your resume multiple times to make sure you catch those swap-outs.

Do not be dramatic and write your cover letter or resume in the third person. It may sound cool to you but the perspective employer will dump it in a flash and software screening applications filter that junk out first.

Since only around one out of six resumes submitted online to medium to large companies ever gets read by a human, set the font large enough so a human can read it. Stay away from those tiny 10-point and lower fonts just to cram more text on a single page.

Keep the personal stuff to a minimum by leaving out your personal interests and hobbies. Also to avoid questions of race, do not insert a photo of yourself since that puts the screener in a racial ethics problem.

For contact information use an appropriate e-mail address and not one with a funky name like JohnTheGunner@Gmail.com.

This seems like a big "duh," but verify you are including the correct contact information in the digitally submitted fields. You may want to copy and paste your phone numbers, postal address and email addresses from a verified source rather the rekeying them to avoid online typos which could be disastrous.

If you are attaching your re-

sume in an email or through a browse/upload operation, then have that resume named with your name like "Resume_for_John_Deans.doc" rather than "RJD2009.doc." This will help the screener better track your resume and hopefully give it more attention.

Now that we have covered several technical aspects of online resume submittal, let's talk about your online reputation. With blogs, e-mail, YouTube, MySpace, FaceBook and all the other web store houses that keep legacy personal profiles you can bet the perspective employers check those.

Just last week I heard a real story of an employer who was about to hire the perfect applicant on paper who had the exact background and skill set sought for the job. Just before the call to offer the job was made, a quick Google was done on this girl's name and several hits were list-

ed on MySpace.com and FaceBook.com social networking sites.

After the once impressed employer saw the applicant's blog entries of how she hates working in general and loathes corporations by nature, that call was cancelled and the search renewed.

Those pictures of the applicant wearing all black Goth clothes with numerous piercings and tattoos which were not visible during the previous interview did not help either.

Online activism can get your turned down also if the job screener finds out about certain fringe activities you may be involved in that are noted online.

My goal is to stay employed on my own under Deans Consulting, but if I ever had to apply for a job say in San Francisco at Cisco Systems (God forbid), my conservative political activism that has been documented on-

line could very well come back to haunt me.

All it would take is a sheepish California liberal doing Cisco's applicant screening finding out via Google that I am a member of both the Minuteman Civil Defense Corp and the Texas Border Volunteers would knock me out of the running for a network engineer's position before he even looked at my 20-year Cisco background.

I am fortunate to have a right leaning client base and I actually enjoy annoying the left. Since I am the exception to this common sense rule I recommend you do as I preach and not as I do.

Avoid online controversy, web documented stunts, and polarizing Web personalities if you wish to have a wide base of employment opportunities.

Trust me on this one. I got a friend in trouble at work years ago with a YouTube video of

us with a 55-gallon drum filled with gasoline fumes and a rifle with tracer rounds. Though sonic boom and the mushroom cloud were really cool, his boss was not as thrilled as we were.

What I am saying here is that if you have ANY online content that may cause you problems while looking for a new job, then clean it up.

Google yourself, see what the search engines lists about you and begin the effort in sterilizing your online profile.

Bottom line: With hair trigger silicon and carbon based resume screeners running the show, we all need to cover all the bases while putting ourselves on the job market digitally.

Next week's column: IE8.

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