

NETIQUETTE

While e-mail has opened new lines of communication between job seeker and employers, it is imperative that job seekers follow suggested rules of “netiquette” when using this option. In the real world of work, manners are expected. If any applicant is too casual or familiar in their approach, electronically or otherwise, an employer is turned-off immediately. Communicate professionally at all times.

General Rules of Etiquette for Electronic Job Seeking

- Never address the employer by their first name. Use the proper salutation.
- Always use your full name when signing correspondence. Using only your first name presumes intimacy.
- Watch return addresses (e-mail name). Cute and clever e-mail names are considered unprofessional by most employers. Play it safe and use your own name.
- Avoid slang expressions.
- Do not use “smileys” or “emoticons” (facial expressions made by using punctuation marks). They are inappropriately casual.
- Write in complete sentences. Friends and acquaintances communicating electronically tend to use a type of verbal shorthand; do not do this when contacting employers.
- Never presume on the employer’s time. Always ask if what you propose (e.g., an interview or brief meeting) is convenient. Don’t make demands. Make polite requests, if anything.
- Don’t inundate the employer with a string of messages. Once you have sent the original correspondence (and perhaps resume electronically), follow up at well-placed intervals (about once a week). Employers are receiving hundreds of electronic contacts. Give them time.
- Don’t assume the employer will remember you. In subsequent messages, refer to your prior correspondence and always use both your first and last names.
- Check your e-mail several times a day, every day. You may risk losing an opportunity or alienating a potential employer if messages sit for several days.
- Never keep employers waiting. Answer e-mail messages promptly.
- Be polite and observe proper manners.
- Be friendly but not too familiar. Adopt a professional, yet cordial writing style.
- As with normal cover letters, you need to strike the right balance. Be assertive but not aggressive. Enthusiastic but not pushy. Professional but not stiff. Knowledgeable but not a know-it-all. Persistent but not annoying. Above all, be respectful.