The Ladders
YOUR CAREER IS OUR JOB

Job Application Checklist

MARIST

Follow the steps below to assess each job listing, effectively apply, and properly follow-up on each application.

Is the job right for you?

- **BEFORE YOU SPEND THE TIME** applying to a job, make sure it's a good fit. Ask yourself the following questions:
  - Am I within commutable distance of this job?
  - Do I have all the required skills and background they are looking for? Is this clear on my resume?
  - If the job requires industry-specific experience, do I have it?
  - If the job requires function-specific experience, do I have it?
  - Do I know someone who works or has worked at this company?

  The more "yes" responses you have, the better. If you can only respond "yes" to 2 questions or fewer, do not apply for the role – it is not a good fit.

Preparation & Submission

- **DOUBLE CHECK CAPITALIZATION, PUNCTUATION AND GRAMMAR** in your cover letter and resume. Poor punctuation and capitalization can confuse the ATS software, which forces the recruiter to enter the information manually, and might lead them to toss your resume.

- **AVOID USING LAZY WORDS** in your cover letter and resume such as "etc.", "et al." and "same as above".

- **MAKE SURE THE KEYWORDS** from the job listing are also incorporated into your resume.

- **DO NOT APPLY TO A COMPANY MULTIPLE TIMES** if the positions do not match your experience and skills. Recruiters notice multiple submissions, and it reflects poorly on a candidate if s/he applies for jobs that aren't a good fit.

- **IF YOU'RE BEING REFERRED BY AN EMPLOYEE**, make sure the ATS knows it; the software's smart enough to care.

- **IF THE ATS OFFERS OPTIONS**, choose to upload your resume instead of cutting and pasting. This feature often parses information and saves it in the optimal format, ensuring the cleanest presentation.

- **USE AN E-MAIL ADDRESS** that incorporates the name you use professionally on your resume and cover letter. Cutesy, offensive, flirtatious or sexual addresses, or addresses shared by family members, send hiring managers the wrong message.

- **USE EFFECTIVE SUBJECT LINES** that reference the position you're applying for, rather than "hello" or "intro".

- **DON'T SEND YOUR RESUME AS AN ATTACHMENT**. To avoid getting caught by security scans, paste it into the body of the e-mail.

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Re-Submission

- **WHEN REAPPLYING AFTER AN INITIAL REJECTION**, tweak executive summaries and bulleted lists of key skills and achievements; never adjust the elements of your work history.

- **WHEN REAPPLYING**, avoid creating a duplicate record in the system by using a different e-mail address than the one you used on your first try. However, this isn't enough to avoid a duplicate record in advanced systems.

- **ONCE YOU RESUBMIT YOUR CUSTOMIZED RESUME**, contact the appropriate recruiter (or sympathetic administrative assistant) and request that they review your updated resume for the open position.

Follow-Up

- **RECORD A PROFESSIONAL VOICEMAIL MESSAGE** for the number listed on your resume. If your resume is strong enough to convince the recruiter or hiring manager to reach for the telephone, be sure what s/he finds on the other end of the line represents you in the best light – this includes recorded messages and whoever might answer the phone.

- **FOLLOW UP ON APPLICATIONS** approximately one week after the application deadline (if listed). If the job posting does not list a deadline, send your follow-up one week after your initial application.

- **READ THE FINE PRINT.** If the job listing states "no calls", do not call to follow up. If no such stipulation exists, call once and ask how to follow up before doing it again.

- **HAVE QUESTIONS PREPARED** for a follow-up call. Find out:
  - If any decision has been made
  - If it's okay to follow up again in another week if you haven't heard anything
  - What is the time frame for the hiring process
  - What technical qualifications the company is seeking

- **RESPOND SWIFTLY** – within 24 hours – to a company that contacts you. Because of the volume of resumes now coming in to recruiters, they're not waiting long to hear back from a candidate.

- **CHECK YOUR SPAM-FOLDER SETTINGS**. Filters are so sensitive today that they can recognize e-mail that's automatically generated; both spam and follow-up e-mail sent from ATSes fall into this category.