

3 Secrets to Landing a Home-Based Position

By Sharon Davis

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Landing a telecommute position isn't easy. Finding them in the first place is like looking for a needle in a haystack. Then, when you finally do find one that looks promising, it's filled before you can even click on "apply for this job".

Why are they so few and far between anyway? Don't employers realize the benefits of allowing their employees to telecommute; less sick time, increased productivity, lower overhead, and so forth?

The truth is that you'd be surprised to know just how many companies do hire telecommuters. Most of them simply don't want to advertise those openings on the Internet.

But it's not all bad news. There are three very important rules that you should follow when pursuing a telecommute job. If you do, your chances of getting hired will be much greater. If you break them, your chances are about as good as winning the lottery.

Rule #1: Don't apply to positions that you aren't qualified for.

As the owner of 2Work-At-Home.com, I spend a great deal of my time trying to convince employers to post their telecommute job openings on our site. That's no easy feat either, and I'll tell you why: Most of them have to be convinced that there are quality applicants visiting our site.

One of the most common reasons employers give for not posting their telecommute listings on the Internet is that people who are not at all qualified for the opening apply for them.

Put yourself in the recruiter's shoes. You need to hire a person that can translate a company's training manual into German. So, you post your listing for a German Translator and specify that you're looking for someone who is fluent in English

and German.

Your listing goes up and BAM! You're immediately flooded with responses. As 237 messages are downloading, you marvel at the number of people who are fluent in German. As you start opening the messages, your excitement turns to annoyance when you see your first three responses:

"I can't speak German, but I'm a fast learner."

"Dear Recruiter,
A solid background in Widget Sales makes me the perfect candidate for your position."

"Send Info"

Nobody likes to waste their time, and when a recruiter posts a listing and only gets 1 in 100 responses that are worth looking at, it's counterproductive for them.

I know for a fact that some of our site visitors go through the job listings and methodically apply to every listing in the database, no matter what the position is.

This "throw your resume at every employer and hope one sticks" approach not only makes the applicant look desperate, but it gives the entire telecommute job-seeking community a bad name. It also brings us to the next Rule.....

Rule #2: Follow the application instructions.

One company had posted a listing with us that contained specific application instructions. Recently, their listing expired. When she chose not to renew, I asked her why and this was her response:

"You really, really need to instruct these folks on how to follow directions, write cover letters, apply for jobs. They're lost. So, please, don't bring any more my way."

Now, that's unfortunate. Here is a company that has telecommute openings, but you won't see them advertised because it's easier for them to just hit the pavement and do their recruiting the old fashioned way.

If a listing has specific instructions on how to apply, follow them. If you don't, then the first impression you are giving to your prospective employer is that you don't follow directions.

Even if there are no specific instructions, you should always apply in a professional manner, which brings me to Rule #3....

Rule #3: Always behave in a professional, courteous manner.

Believe it or not, I recently had a complaint from both a company and an applicant when a correspondence over a job opening had escalated into threats and mud slinging.

It all started when the applicant sent an email to the employer that stated, "Send Info" and nothing more.

This is a common occurrence. While it may seem perfectly acceptable to ask for details, usually those "details" are in the job listing itself. A response to a listing should be an application. If you want to ask for more information, the interview would be the appropriate time. Chances are, if you can't apply without getting more information it's due to one of two scenarios:

- The listing is really, really vague (and so most likely a scam).
- You're not qualified for this position (if you're not sure if you're qualified, then you probably aren't).

Unless an employer states that they don't want you to submit a resume, you should always send your resume with a cover letter.

The cover letter should be tailored to the position, not a generic version. This may mean that you have to do a little digging, call the company, etc. but it really does make an impression. It shows that you are really interested in their company, that you're resourceful and that you are professional.

Your resume should be up to date, thorough and professional. Have it done by a resume service if possible. It should not contain personal information such as height, weight or a health history. These things have nothing to do with your qualifications and don't belong on a resume.

Another thing to leave out of a resume is an explanation of why you want to work at home. This is something I see in many of the resumes posted in our database. Not only is it unprofessional to include this type of information, but more importantly- employers don't care.

What they do care about is whether or not you have the skills and experience needed to do the job and why they should hire you.

Home-based positions are rare indeed. Competition is very high, so you must present yourself as the best possible candidate right from the start. Following these basic rules will give you a much greater chance of snagging that much coveted telecommute position.

Sharon Davis is the owner of 2Work-At-Home.Com, the Editor of the site's monthly ezine, America's Home and mom to two girls. In her spare time she reminisces about what it was like to have spare time. To subscribe to her free ezine, visit <http://www.2work-at-home.com/subscribe.shtml>

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